

COPING WITH CONFLICT: A STUDY OF SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP IN THE  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

by

STEPHEN A. HOLLAND

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of STEPHEN  
A. HOLLAND find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Chair

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COPING WITH CONFLICT: A STUDY OF SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP  
IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Abstract

by Stephen A. Holland, Ed.D.  
Washington State University  
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Chair: Paul Goldman

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not there are noteworthy differences in role expectations and perceptions between superintendents and board chairs. The study used the previously-developed Situational Expectation Record (SER) which asks both superintendents and their board chairs 1) what *should* be done by the superintendent in a given scenario and 2) what they believe would *actually* be done in that given scenario. The SER consists of 25 scenarios, divided into five leadership strands: Finance, Personnel, Public Relations, School Programs and Superintendent/Board Relations. The scenarios consisted of situations that might occur in a school district and were followed by four possible responses. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide free-form comments.

Responses were classified in terms of who was taking action in the given scenario, i.e., as either “superintendent” or “board/other”. Comparisons were then made in each leadership strand, using both district characteristics (district size and location) and individual characteristics (tenure, experience and gender) to assess whether or not there were differences in how respondents believed each scenario should be addressed.

Analysis of this data revealed several interesting trends. Rarely did perceptions of what *should* be done differ appreciably from *would* be done in a given situation. It was also evident that the finance strand was most fraught with differences, and personnel the least. Additionally, it was found that while district size often had a major impact on responses, any difference in east-side/west-side responses was usually a function of district size, rather than an east/west divide. Both tenure and experience were useful in analyzing differing responses; men and women superintendents did not differ notably in their responses. Female superintendents and female board chairs showed some tendency to view the expected response in a given scenario differently.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The rapport between a school board and its superintendent is both important and highly individualized by district (Peterson, Murphy, & Hallinger, 1987). Since superintendents work for their boards only as long as those boards say they can, it would seem that understanding the relationship of board expectations and superintendent actions is critical to understanding the milieu of any particular district. Relevant literature has recently become increasingly available. While the descriptions of the roles of the superintendent and board are codified in state law, literature concerning exactly how those roles vary from district to district and what the potential is for role conflicts between the superintendent and the board is not so readily available. In order to understand the relationship of the modern superintendent and the modern school board, perhaps a brief review of their history is in order.

#### *The Superintendency*

In colonial America education often took place in private schools or at home. The public schools that did exist were either managed directly by the public (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996) or through an elected board of trustees (Cuban, 1976). These boards consisted of leading citizens and/or leading church members who were influential in guiding the curriculum and day-to-day operations of the schools, including the hiring of teachers and the supervising of instruction and examinations. The first such permanent board was established in Boston in 1721 (Sharp & Walter, 1997). Over time, these citizen boards hired principals and superintendents to lighten the load they bore. The first full-time superintendent was hired in Providence Rhode Island in 1839 (Norton et al., 1996). The

position of superintendent was not one of teaching but of executive officer charged with implementing the board's decisions. In many ways, the job of the superintendent has not changed much, as illustrated by the following, taken from a Cincinnati job description in 1853. The superintendent

[I]s responsible for the observance and enforcement of the rules and regulations of the Board . . . He is to classify the pupils in the different grades . . . He shall employ half an hour each day in visiting the School . . . He shall promulgate to all the Teachers such rules and regulations as he may receive from the Board. . . . He shall transmit to the Clerk, at the close of each school month, all bills for salaries of teachers and report monthly to the Board according to the blank forms furnished him. . . . He shall see to the safe keeping and protection of the house, furniture, apparatus, fences, trees and shrubbery and maintain the strictest cleanliness in the school and out houses. . . (Cuban, 1976, p. 10)

Certainly some requirements have been added, but the basic job remains much as it was in the mid-1800s. However, some changes in the last 150 years are worthy of comment.

The early 1900s saw the industrialization of America, and with this industrialization came the era of scientific management. Because school boards were largely dominated by businessmen, they often insisted that superintendents apply the principles of business when running schools (Sharp & Walter, 1997). These business principles included task identification (to find efficient and effective ways to execute every task), controlled conditions, incentive/punishment systems, and long-range planning (Norton et al., 1996)

This drive to manage scientifically led to the demand for trained superintendents. In 1900, Columbia University had only two courses in educational administration. By 1917, there were eight courses offered, as well as two practicums and a seminar. By 1924, 29 courses were available to administrators (Callahan, 1962). This trend was repeated across the nation's teacher training institutions.

With the crash of the stock market in 1929, America's faith in the free-market system and its accompanying scientific management was severely tested. During this time, the role of the superintendent went through a noticeable change as the job came to demand more personnel skills. There was also an insistence that there be an emphasis on democracy in the schools, both in the operation of the schools and in the curriculum (Norton et al., 1996). Human relations theory began to have an impact and schools began to be seen not so much as factories, but as living, breathing organizations. This focus on democracy did nothing to simplify the relationship between the board and administrative staff. One additional effect of the belief that schools should involve their patrons in their operation and cater to them is the readiness of parents to sue when they feel their or their children's rights have been infringed upon. Since *Brown v. Board of education* in 1954, schools have become instruments of social policy and superintendents the focus of such policy (Norton et al., 1996). A natural outgrowth of this belief has been the site councils that have become popular in recent years.

During the reform movements of the 1980s and 1990s, the superintendency saw another shift in job function. As the various state legislatures and the federal government became more and more involved in the operations of the schools, the superintendent was forced to become a savvy political actor (Blumberg, 1985). The superintendent is in charge of a system that must at once (1) teach to state-prescribed standards, (2) inculcate children

with democratic values, and (3) attempt to represent the desires of an often-factionous community. Democracy is a messy business, and never messier than in the public schools system. As W. L. Boyd noted “We can never expect that school board-administrative staff relationships will be easily defined or regulated. This is the price of the simultaneous pursuit of democracy and efficiency” (Crowson, p. 63).

What then is the role of the superintendent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? One author describes the work of the modern superintendent as communicating and mediating (Pitner & Ogawa, 1981). In these roles the superintendent is responsible to assist the communication flow between subordinates, boards and the community and to smooth the interactions within the social system in which s/he is involved. In fact, it is the structure of the social system that constrains superintendents, though they moderate this influence somewhat by acting within their own belief structure.

How exactly are superintendents able to mediate the disparate preferences inherent in any school system? Pitner posits that there is little help to be found in legal definitions of the superintendent’s responsibilities; rather, the “duties, responsibilities, and role” are negotiated between the superintendent and the board (1986, p. 14). Of course, the art of the superintendency is contained in how superintendents choreograph all of the various factions of the district. “Conflict is the DNA of the superintendency,” writes Larry Cuban (1985, p. 28). This appears to be true in all districts, regardless of size or geography. School boards, community members, students, teachers, unions and parents must all have their say, and what one says often contradicts the others. “I believe in a zero-tolerance policy concerning violence (unless my child was involved in the fight).” “We’re here for the children (as long as we get our raise).” “We have to educate for today and tomorrow, not yesterday (just don’t

change those things I believe are essential).” What superintendent has not heard variations on these themes on a weekly basis?

However, the popular conception of the superintendency being conflict-laden has been challenged by some who believe that boards often become nothing more than a rubber-stamp agency that defer to the expertise of the superintendent (Crowson, 1987). Those who hold this view believe that communities tend to stay out of the decision-making process as long as the superintendent does not attempt to do something that challenges the core values and beliefs of the community.

While superintendencies may rightly be described as highly individualized, this individuality of roles does not prohibit generalization. Though the ways superintendents react in certain situations will differ due to their individual characteristics and those of their particular environment, the skills which superintendents must use are common to all districts. Developing a positive climate, promoting a sense of mission and supervising the implementation of that mission are the overarching requirements of all superintendencies (Crowson, 1987). In the simplest terms, the superintendent of schools is charged with ensuring that children learn.

In order to accomplish this, superintendents must control and coordinate the resources of their district and then assess the impact on student learning. Organizations survive and thrive based on the strength of their technical core (Thompson, 1967). According to Peterson, Murphy, and Hallinger (1987), districts that accomplish their mission well do so by focusing on student achievement in virtually all facets of their operations. Districts with high student achievement often have similar characteristics. They require research-based methods of instruction that the superintendent monitors and reinforces through ongoing staff training.

They ensure that the teacher and principal evaluation process emphasizes following the curriculum. They create a process for controlling curriculum and textbooks. They use student test results in evaluating individual schools. Simply put, everything successful superintendents do stresses the importance of having goals that are focused on student learning, and reaching those goals.

Given the foregoing, the general functions of the modern superintendent might be summarized as (1) ensuring that all children learn; (2) making the best use of other people—allowing them to use their own creativity and initiative to help ensure that all children learn; (3) ensuring a positive work place and a positive relationship with the community; and (4) making certain that continual improvement is possible, expected and accomplished.

According to Griffiths (1966), all superintendents operate within this framework and utilize three types of skills to support this work; these skills include the conceptual (the ability to see the big picture), the human (the ability to build cooperative effort) and the technical (the ability to use specialized knowledge).

### *The Board*

School Boards have their roots in the public's desire for local control. As the nation clamored for educational reform in the early 1980s, school boards largely responded by doing more of what they had been doing, i.e., writing general policies rather than specific strategies of improvement. Specific strategies were seen as the purview of the professional educator (Danzberger, Kirst & Usdan, 1992). In particular, boards expected superintendents to focus on the priorities of "finances, facilities, operations, personnel management, board relations and community relations" (Carter, Glass & Hord, 1993 p. 3).



More recently, however, boards seem to be looking beyond these basic proficiencies. According to a study conducted in 2000, over 90% of boards hired their superintendent for one of these three reasons: the personal characteristics of the superintendent, the ability to be a change agent or the ability to be an instructional leader (Glass, Bjørk & Brunner, 2000).

This study, sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators, reveals some interesting facts about modern school boards and their views of superintendents. For example, 91% of board respondents rated their superintendents' performance as "good" or "excellent." Their primary expectations for their superintendents were that he/she be an educational leader (40.1%), managerial leader (36.4%), political leader (12.7%) and a leader of reform (2.8%) (Glass, Bjørk & Brunner, 2000, p. 63).

When questioned about what problems they faced, 35.2% of board members identified financial issues as their number one concern, community pressure (17.2%) and understanding their role (16.5%) (Glass, Bjørk & Brunner, 2000). Recent research also shows that superintendents identified as "exemplary" share their responsibilities, working as partners with their boards (Carter, Glass & Hord). It appears that the ability to trust and respect each other allows board chairs and superintendents to work collaboratively on such district matters as developing the board agenda, the board president's role how he/she leads board meetings. This is integral to a successful board/superintendent relationship and to making progress on educational reforms.

Petersen and Short (2001) also found that the tenure of the board president seems to influence their view of the superintendent. The longer a board president had served, the higher their rating of the superintendent in such areas as expertise and trustworthiness. This same pattern was revealed when board chairs said they knew the superintendent well.

Interestingly, male superintendents were rated higher in these two areas than female superintendents, while female superintendents were seen as more assertive than the males. This may be one reason that male superintendents had 82% of their recommended agenda items approved by the board, while female superintendents had only 75.4% of their agenda items approved (Petersen and Short, 2001).

It is critical in this era of reform that we understand how superintendents and boards work together to ensure all children learn. Washington State (among many other states) is beginning to require standardized outputs from dissimilar settings; school boards and superintendents are ultimately accountable to ensure those standards are met.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review Of Related Literature

Due to the inherent interdependency of the board/superintendent relationship, the theoretical framework employed in this study had to account for organizational, leadership and decision-making theory. While it is true that boards make policy and superintendents execute it, the line is rarely so clearly drawn. The school board, by law, is charged with educating the children within the district according to state standards. However, the board depends largely on one person (the superintendent) to execute its policy. The board also depends on the superintendent for educational expertise and makes decisions based on, among other things, the superintendent's input (Halpin, 1967). This unusual combination of layperson participation with a professional employee results in a complex organization not easily described by any one theory. While some authors successfully outline the relationships within an organization, they do not specifically address the effects of a particular leader on that organization (Norton et al., 1996). Similarly, leadership and decision-making theories address the role of the individual leader (Cuban, 1988), but have little to say on the effect the organization has on that leader. Therefore, a brief summary of current thought on all three topics seems appropriate.

#### *Organizational Theory*

For the last fifty years, organizations have often been analyzed in terms of system theory. Systems theory is concerned with analyzing the organization as a whole. Systems are often viewed as having interacting and interrelated parts that are open enough to allow information, energy and people to flow freely across organizational boundaries. Systems

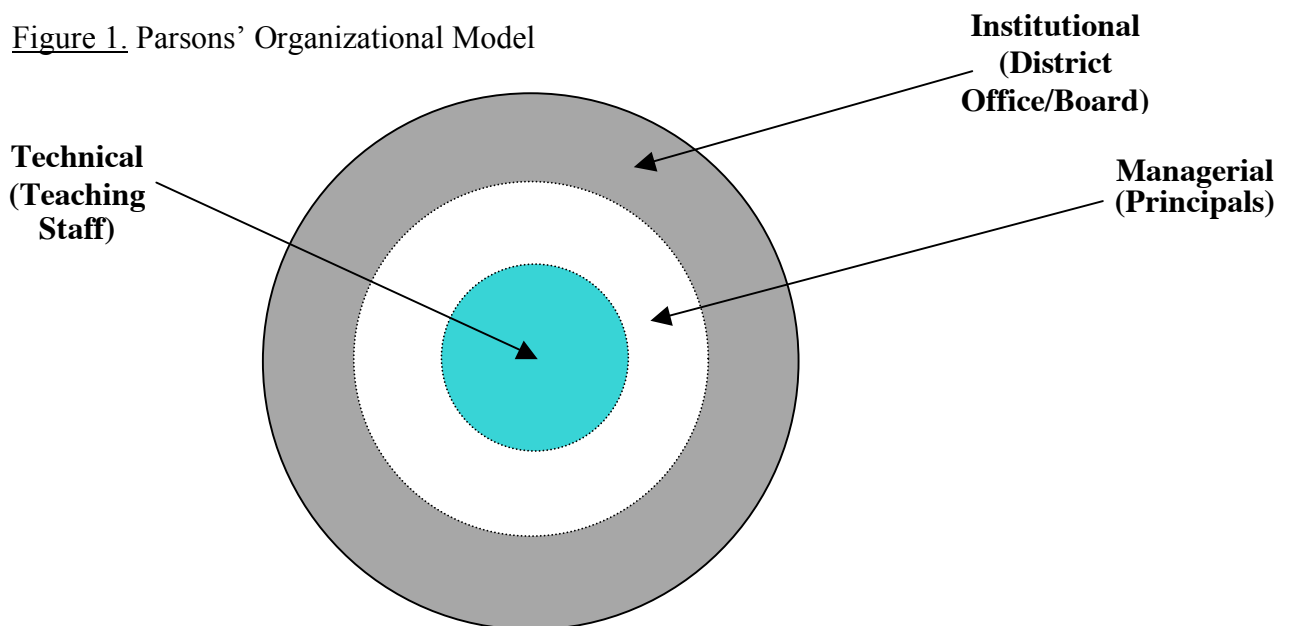
need to produce outputs in exchange for needed inputs, contain subunits, are synergistic and naturally seek equilibrium (Bolman & Deal, 1984).

There are variations within systems theory. For example, although the above attributes apply to all systems, various schools of thought focus on different elements in their study. *Open* system analysts tend to concentrate on how organizations seek equilibrium. *Rational* system analysts concentrate on the role of goal specificity and the degree of formal structure within the system. *Natural* system analysts direct their attention to the interactions between actors within the system rather than the formal structure (Scott, 1992).

Talcott Parsons, a natural system analyst, developed a model that is useful for the purposes of this study (Parsons, 1960). His model describes organizations as consisting of three layers: technical, managerial and institutional. Often, these hierarchical organizations are portrayed as a pyramid, but such a description would be inaccurate, according to Parsons. His model is more properly thought of as a series of concentric circles with semi-permeable membranes separating the divisions, allowing a crossover of functions in the organization.

This model could be used to depict a school district in the manner shown by Figure 1.

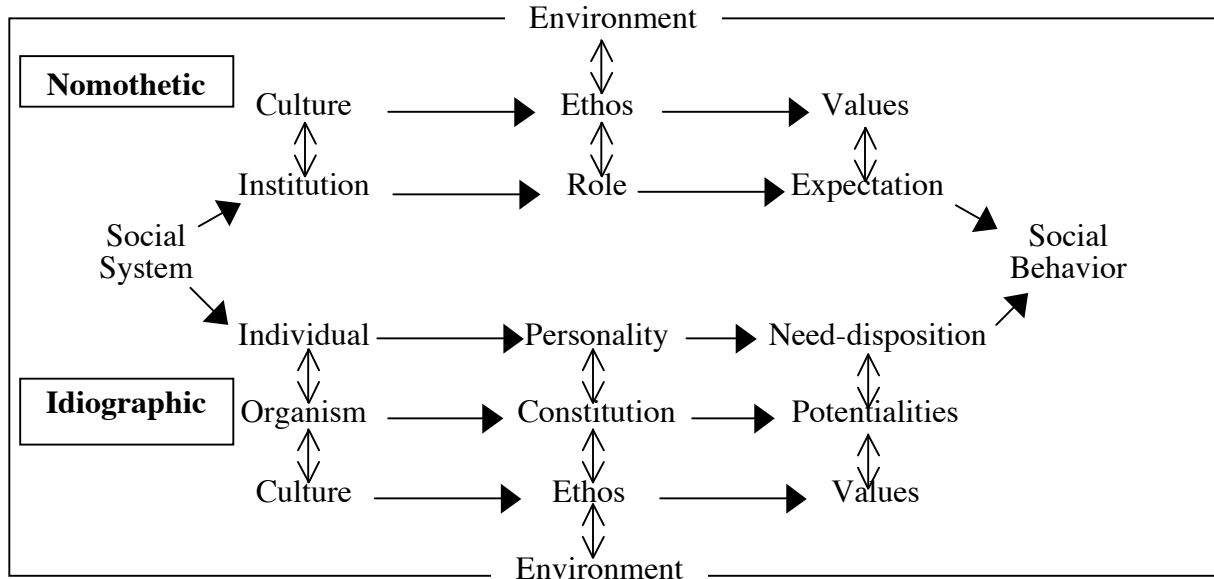
Figure 1. Parsons' Organizational Model



As used in this model, the technological core would consist of teaching staff. All other functions of the district are in support of this mission. The principals are mid-level managers who help coordinate resources to support the mission. Central office staff (in particular the superintendent), as well as the school board, are charged with maintaining the institutional focus and norms. Parsons defined schools as “pattern-maintenance organizations” (Parsons, 1960, p. 46), or, in other words, as organizations that impart learning and attitudes to maintain social stability. In such organizations the institutional layer must procure personnel and other resources in such a way as to accomplish its mission and maintain organizational integrity (Halpin, 1967). It is the interactions within the institutional layer between the superintendent and the board that are the subject of this study.

In order to further delineate these interactions, the Social Systems Model of Getzels and Guba may be useful (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). It hypothesizes that interactions within an organization are a function of two specific dimensions: the nomothetic (organizational) and idiographic (human), as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Social Systems Model (Hoy & Miskel, 1987)



The nomothetic tier (the top half of the diagram) consists of those institutional expectations for various institutional roles. However, each role is influenced by those people filling those roles. These individual roles comprise the idiographic dimension. It is the interplay between the nomothetic and idiographic which shape both the behaviors of members of the organization and the outcomes of the organization. Thus, the observed behavior of an organization is a function of its institutional role and the individuals' personalities and need dispositions.

It is precisely the interaction between these two dimensions that leads to the variability we know exists in what superintendents do in different districts. Superintendent actions vary because of both district expectations (as expressed by the board) and the individual need-dispositions of the sitting superintendent. In a very real sense, the superintendent defines his/her job in terms of laws of the state, knowledge of the craft, culture of the district and personal characteristics. This was amply demonstrated in study recently conducted by Munther (1997).

Munther analyzed the work activity of superintendents from around the state of Washington; this represented a cross-section of geography, experience and district size. The study used seven key work activities to describe the superintendents' use of time and asked the participating superintendents to track their own time in 15-minute increments for two weeks. The results, expressed as the percentage of time devoted to the listed areas, are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences in Superintendent Work Activity by District Size (Munther, 1997)

Work Activity	0—499 Enrollment	500—1999 Enrollment	2000—4999 Enrollment	5000—9999 Enrollment	10,000+ Enrollment
School Board Relations	22.7%	12.3%	10.0%	11.7%	9.5%
Public Relations	10.0%	17.3%	17.0%	19.3%	39.0%
Personnel Tasks	13.7%	15.8%	20.3%	20.3%	14.0%
Budgeting	7.0%	9.0%	8.3%	5.3%	9.0%
Other admin. tasks	18.3%	19.5%	17.3%	14.0%	8.5%
Instruct. improvements	15.3%	14.5%	14.3%	18.0%	14.5%
Student Affairs	12.7%	11.8%	12.0%	11.7%	5.0%

It is interesting to note that while there were many similarities across the districts, school board relations took a much greater percentage of time in the smallest districts than they did in districts of 500 and greater enrollment. Conversely, public relations became more important as the districts became larger. Subsequent interviews with the participating superintendents indicated that not only were these results indicative of institutional requirements, but they also flowed from the preferences of the respondents. In other words, both the nomothetic and idiographic elements were active in shaping how the superintendents accomplished their job.

#### *Leadership Theory*

It is perhaps because leadership is so situational that leadership literature has been unable to define leadership in a universal way. Leadership theorists have examined leadership in numerous ways; there have been lists of leadership traits generated, roles defined, behavior examined and situations cataloged. An analysis of the literature reveals at least four models of leadership: structural, political, human resource and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

Each of these perspectives (or “frames”, as they are called by Bolman and Deal) defines leadership differently. The *structuralist* believes that leadership consists largely of

being rational and efficient. Policies are developed which set a clear direction and hold people accountable. Structuralists keep the organization on track to its goal, believing that the bottom line is indeed the bottom line. When adjustments must be made, they are made in the structure of the organization.

Those who view leadership using the *political* frame see leadership as a power relationship in which some govern and others carry out their directives (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Those who adhere to this view believe that: (1) allocation of resources is the chief job of the leader; (2) interest groups exist within the organization which must be managed; (3) leaders must balance the varying beliefs of the members of the organization both collectively and individually; (4) goals and decisions are made as a result of negotiation and jockeying for power; and (5) scarce resources demand that power and conflict are at the core of that with which a leader must cope.

Political theorists do not believe that following a list of certain behaviors guarantees success; rather, they believe that successful leaders (1) maintain their legitimacy by their personal qualities, positional inertia and reasonableness; and (2) solve human problems.

The *human resource* frame focuses on the relationship of the organization and the people within the organization. Leaders working in this frame (1) value relationships and feelings, (2) attempt to lead by being a facilitator, and (3) solve problems through processes which emphasize retreats, empowerment and participation.

The *symbolic* frame views leaders in the context of the situation. Symbolic leaders (1) see the world as chaotic; (2) honor and establish ritual and ceremony as a way to reach the organization's goals (3) solve problems by developing and refining the organization's vision; and (4) project themselves as symbolic of that vision.



Obviously, even if leaders have a preferred frame of guiding their organization, successful leaders move from frame to frame as the situation dictates. This study will use both organizational theories and leadership theories to analyze data concerning the difference in role expectations in various-sized districts and how the superintendent accommodates these differences.

### *Decision-making Theory*

How then do superintendents bring these skills together to make decisions and further the work of the district? There are several models of decision-making, as reviewed by Daft (1983) which will be briefly described. It is important to realize that none of these models is inherently more correct than the others. Models are only useful insofar as they describe reality, and each school district has its own reality.

The first model is the *Systems Analysis* model. Systems analysis may be used when one believes that the problem and the solution can be clearly defined. Using this type of decision-making model requires that the organization identify the relevant variables and build a model that depicts their relationship to each other. If this is done correctly, the solution will present itself (Daft, 1983).

The second model is the *Carnegie* model. The Carnegie model may be used when decisions must be based on political coalitions. Organizations that use this model tend to have ambiguous goals that are inconsistent from department to department. This model also recognizes that human beings are not rational and cannot be analyzed as if they were. Organizations that use this model tend to look for a satisfactory solution rather than the right solution because the situation is ill-defined and filled with the potential for conflict (Daft, 1983).

The *Incremental Decision Process* model focuses less on the political factors than the Carnegie and more on the process of decision-making. This model holds that most organizational decisions are the result of small incremental steps rather than large abrupt changes. Problems demand customized solutions and this takes time. As small changes are completed, feedback is gathered and adjustments are made (Daft, 1983).

The *Garbage Can* model is used to explain organizations that have difficulty identifying with certainty both their problems and their solutions. This model refers to such situations as “organized anarchy” (Daft, 1983, p. 359); such organizations have three characteristics: (1) ambiguous goals and solutions are the norm, (2) cause and effect relationships are poorly understood, and (3) high turnover of those who solve problems due to limited time and energy. The Garbage Can model suggests that it is futile to try to find simple, sequential steps to solving a problem. Rather, it is better to recognize that there are four streams which interact in decision-making situations. These streams are problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities. These streams result in a decision-making process that appears to be (and often is) random. Trial and error are used to attempt to solve a problem, but there is no guarantee that the problem will be solved. It may be dropped when another problem arises which demands immediate attention; in fact, there may be no solution to some problems. Additionally, this process results in solutions being proposed when there is no problem and solutions being proposed which do not work. If all goes well, there are times when solutions are actually found to a problem.

These four models are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Decision-making Models (adapted from Daft, 1983)

	Agreement About Goals	Disagreement about Goals
Agreement about Cause-Effect Relationship	Systems Analysis	Carnegie
	Problem Identification: Relative Certainty Solution Identification: Relative Certainty	Problem Identification: Relative Uncertainty Solution Identification: Relative Certainty
Disagreement about Cause-Effect Relationship	Incremental Decision Process	Garbage Can
	Problem Identification: Relative Certainty Solution Identification: Relative Uncertainty	Problem Identification: Relative Uncertainty Solution Identification: Relative Uncertainty

Each of these models may be valid, depending on the particular situation in which a decision must be made. According to Peterson, Murphy and Hallinger (1987), superintendents must be adept at assessing their district’s situation and choosing the best method to accomplish the mission. Successful superintendents align their vision with their district’s expectations. They ensure that the big picture that they see is aligned with the community’s vision by using their technical skills to build consensus within their district and community. This reality begs the question: can superintendents be themselves and be successful? Martin Burlingame gives this startlingly pessimistic description:

I seriously doubt that honesty is the best policy for superintendents who wish to retain power. It may well be that honesty does work well if there are agreements about goals sought, means used, roles of participants, and

historical precedents—but superintendents know well that schools as organizations lack these characteristics. As superintendents in the field know all too well, there are numerous conflicts over goals, means, roles, and the past. (Bacharach, 1981, p. 429)

Is this a true representation of the modern superintendent's current quandary? Or, have we, as one author suggests we should, used these unavoidable conflicts to encourage individual and organizational ingenuity (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1973)? Thirty years ago, Boone (1971) found there were significant differences in role expectations between superintendents in Washington State and their board chairs, and that the differences varied by location, district size and experience level. Do these differences still exist, and if so, do they exist to the same degree as they did in 1971?

Specifically, Boone found that the expected and perceived role of the superintendent in Washington State varied by demographics. Superintendents and boards of larger districts agreed more with each other than did the superintendents and boards of smaller school districts. Not surprisingly, he found significant differences in the viewpoints of smaller-district boards and larger-district boards. Finally, he found that the differences between superintendents and their board chairs concerning financial matters tend to diminish as superintendents increase their experience beyond the 10<sup>th</sup> year (Boone, 1971, p. 207).

The current study's intent was to duplicate Boone's work and see what, if anything, has changed in the 36 intervening years, as well as analyze the responses in terms of organizational, leadership and decision-making theory. Which models best fit the superintendent's world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology And Design

The questions addressed by this study are:

1. What, if any, are the differences in role expectations and perceptions between superintendents and board chairs
2. Do these differences vary by district according to demographic make-up?
3. Can organizational, leadership and decision-making theory be used to explain these differences?

While disparate expectations between disparate districts may be a sign of healthy systems reacting to their different environments, disparate expectations between superintendents and their board chairs are a sign of an inefficient, and to some extent, ineffective system. The purpose of this study is to analyze these differences so that they can be understood.

Boone's (1971) study was designed to report the variances in what board chairs expect of their superintendents and what they perceive their superintendents actually doing. He defines these expectations as "the behavior expected of the occupant of a defined position in a group" in a given situation (p. 6). Perceptions, on the other hand, consist of what the respondent believed the superintendent would actually do in a given situation (p. 221). He used these same definitions in asking the superintendents of his study to make the same judgments about themselves relative to expectations and perceptions. He found that there were significant differences in both role expectations and perceptions between superintendents of eastern and western Washington school districts, superintendents in districts of varying size and superintendents and Board Chairs of varying experience levels.

This study used essentially the same research methodology used by Boone some 36 years ago. Analysis was used to find noteworthy differences between superintendents and board chairs.

Most of the 91 districts that Boone selected were included in this study (see Appendix A), though there were some necessary modifications. Five of Boone's districts have been renamed and/or consolidated since 1971. One of the districts has disappeared and was replaced in the study by another small district in eastern Washington. (Appendix A indicates the districts invited to participate; the six districts which have been renamed, consolidated or added are indicated by an asterisk being placed next to their name.)

Harlan Riese developed the survey entitled the Situational Expectation Record (SER) in 1960 (Riese, 1960). His intent was to make superintendent administrative behavior less abstract and to illustrate these behaviors through concrete situations drawn from actual experiences of practicing administrators. Riese intended to move away from the studies of the 1950's that were based largely on personal characteristics of good administrators (Boone, 1971). In fact, in order to be included in the SER, Riese required that the situation be real, common, meaningful, written in the present tense and emotionally neutral in tone (Boone, 1971, p.36). The SER was specifically designed to be a tool that allowed researchers to compare different reference groups via situational factors that might affect administrative behavior.

In 1971, Boone altered the SER somewhat, though not "substantially" (Boone, 1971, p. 37), to reflect the then-current concerns in administrative practice. These changes were arrived at by searching current resources on educational administration, writing new situations to include the data found and submitting these rewritten situations to a panel of

educational administration professors and graduate students. The arrangement of alternatives was altered somewhat and the population to whom the survey was distributed was changed somewhat to accommodate the Washington educational structure of 1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-class districts. Additionally, a biographical data sheet was included in the 1971 study in order to allow statistical analysis of possible commonalities of judgment.

The original districts were selected for their size and geographical location. The composition of these districts, both at the time of the original study and the current study, is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Composition of District Enrollment

Student Enrollment	Number of Invited Participants
1971	
11,000+	15
2,500+	56
< 2,500	20
2002	
11,000+	27
2,500+	43
< 2,500	21

The superintendents and board chairs of the listed districts were sent a cover letter and a copy of the SER utilized by Boone. The SER (Appendix C) was updated to reflect current legal and societal norms. The SER requests demographic information about the respondent and then details 25 situations with which a superintendent could very possibly find himself/herself faced during any given year. The questions posed comprise five areas typically associated with the role of superintendent: finance, personnel, public relations, school programs, and superintendent/board relations.

As in Boone’s study, respondents were asked to choose from four responses to the given situation. Both superintendents and board chairs were asked to:

1. Pick a response that indicates what should be done (role expectation)

2. Pick a response that indicates what the respondent believes the superintendent actually would do (perception). In order to insure that any changes made to the SER are in keeping with the original intent, all changed questions were submitted to a panel consisting of educational administration professionals and graduate students for their review and comment. However, because the SER has only been administered twice, and then to substantially different populations, validity and reliability were very difficult to determine.

After the surveys were collected, analysis was done to determine important differences in the responses comparing superintendents and board chairs to each other and to their peers in each leadership strand by location, size, tenure and experience level of the respondent. One critical change to the analysis, compared to the 1971 study, was a focus on *superintendent activism*, defined as action taken by a superintendent that could reasonably be anticipated as leading to a specific result. Any choices that did not fit this definition were classified as “board action/other”. This change allowed for a broader analysis, and was important given the small sample size and some statistical issues that presented themselves in the 1971 study. Specifically, the original study defined the responses as ordinal, when in fact this relationship was weak in some scenarios.

When analyzing the data, it is necessary to keep in mind the small number of respondents in some categories. The “n” of each category is described in Table 3. Please note that one superintendent did not identify himself as an east or west side superintendent and one board chair did not identify his/her gender. The limited response must be recognized when considering the general applicability of the findings. Additionally, while an attempt was made to update the scenarios for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, after reading the responses it became



obvious that some of the scenarios remained somewhat anachronistic and led to some frustration on the part of the respondents. For example, there is no longer a functioning Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	<b>East</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Total</b>
Board Chair	16	32	48
Superintendent	23	32	56
Small District (<2,500 FTE)	17	7	24
Medium District (>2,499 FTE)	15	31	46
Large District (>11,000 FTE)	7	26	33
<=2 Years Tenure as Chair			29
3-5 Years Tenure as Chair			9
>=6 Years Tenure as Chair			10
<=2 Years Tenure as Superintendent			16
3-5 Years Tenure as Superintendent			20
>=6 Years Tenure as Superintendent			20
<=5 Years Experience as Chair			15
6-10 Years Experience as Chair			18
>=11 Years Experience as Chair			15
<=5 Years Experience as Superintendent			2
6-10 Years Experience as Superintendent			8
>=11 Years Experience as Superintendent			46
Male Board Chairs			25
Female Board Chairs			22
Male Superintendents			45
Female Superintendents			11

The board president and the superintendent from each of the ninety-one districts received a cover letter asking them each to complete a Situational Expectation Record (SER) posted on a web site (Appendix B). They were also asked to complete a demographic data sheet. In order to ensure that board presidents and superintendents did not collaborate on their answers, the invitation to participate was sent first to the superintendents, and, one month later, to the board presidents. A reminder was sent two weeks after each initial invitation. Finally, those who had not responded within one month were sent a final

reminder. A few respondents requested paper surveys and these were sent with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Each completed survey was assigned a code number that was used to track the data. The data were compiled into a spreadsheet and analyzed. After the surveys were compiled, comparisons were made in order to check for large differences between expected behavior and perceived behavior of the superintendent as reported by both superintendents and board presidents.

The data were analyzed in terms of the five leadership strands of the SER that describe the traditional roles of the superintendent: finance, personnel, public relations, school programs, and superintendent/board relationships. The responses were categorized to reflect whether it indicated a “superintendent-as-activist” or “board/other” orientation. Each of the 25 questions was analyzed in terms of district size, location, tenure, experience level and gender. The data were presented both in numerical form and narrative form with analysis.

This study was limited to a sample of the districts in Washington State, and only to the role expectations and perceptions of the superintendent of schools as reported by that superintendent and his/her board chair. There will be no attempt to generalize these results across different geographical or organizational boundaries.

This study also assumed the school board chair represents the majority interests of the members of the board and that these are the people who have the right to set expectations for their superintendent.

Finally, in replicating a study, there were certain inherent limitations. The SER was adjusted to fit the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and was therefore not an exact duplicate.

Some changes have occurred within the surveyed districts that make an exact match impossible. These include districts that have been absorbed into other districts, as well as a shift in demographics that has changed the number of districts in each of Dr. Boone's three levels. Reliability and validity across the two samples from different eras are therefore problematic.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### *Organization of Data and Analysis*

This chapter is divided into five sections, one for each of the leadership strands addressed in the survey. Each strand has between three and seven scenarios that focus on a realistic event and ask the respondents to choose from four options to describe what they believe the results would be in their district if such an event occurred. The Finance section has four scenarios, Personnel has seven, Public Relations has six, School Programs has five and Superintendent/Board Relations has three.

Each section has the following parts:

- (1) An overview of the strand and the scenarios included in that strand. (The complete scenarios are included in Appendix C.)
- (2) A table that details the aggregate results for each scenario in that section by referring to the two questions attached to each scenario: what *would* the superintendent do in the given situation and what *should* the superintendent do in that situation? These two questions were posed to both superintendents and board chairs.
- (3) Two tables that disaggregate the data based on 1) district characteristics and 2) individual respondent characteristics.

## *Finance*

Both law and local tradition define the financial roles of the superintendent and board. In Washington State, the superintendent develops a proposed budget based on his/her perception of the district's needs. Typically, some 80% of a district's budget is devoted to pay and benefits, while the remaining 20% is used to pay for everything from books, to lights to busses. Local, state and federal requirements all impact the budget; by law it is the board that approves both the budget and all expenditures. The superintendent's role is to manage district resources in a way that supports the budget adopted by the board, while at the same time managing the education process and its multitude of actors.

The intersection of these distinct and sometimes conflicting roles can lead to tension between the board and the superintendent. Some of these potential conflicts revolve around pay, contracts and program implementation. Money is often an emotional issue; with 80% of a district's budget devoted to staff remuneration, it is perhaps not totally unexpected that the financial scenarios indicated the greatest difference in opinions of the five leadership strands.

Of the four scenarios, the first three can be analyzed in terms of superintendent versus board chair action, while the fourth offers only superintendent action. "Coaches Raise" poses the dilemma of managing a contractual expense in a budget that is insufficient to support the expense and requires more local money.

The next two scenarios involve the proper use of unanticipated cash, perhaps even more problematic than not having enough money. "Extra Cash" is purely a question of whether the superintendent or the board should make the decision of what to do with the windfall, as it has no particular advocacy groups clamoring for the money.

The “Hire Aides” scenario mentions specific action the teacher’s union would like the district to take, while the final finance scenario, “Cut Programs,” did not allow for any choice other than superintendent action.

Table 4. Responses to Finance Scenarios (Ranked from most active to least active, when appropriate; “Action” responses in italics)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Coaches’ Raise</u>				
<i>Insist that the teachers be granted the salary increase and that the election be held as soon as possible.</i>	24%	9%	24%	9%
<i>Ask the teachers to remain at the same salary level without a raise.</i>	15	15	16	16
<i>Recommend to the board that raises not be granted this year.</i>	17	15	18	17
Let the board decide what action to take.	44	61	42	60
Total “Action” responses	57	39	58	40
<u>Extra Cash</u>				
<i>Use the money to purchase equipment needed but not included in this year's budget.</i>	20	13	22	13
<i>Use the money for an advance purchase of school supplies for next year.</i>	22	6	20	4
Consult with the executive committee of the teachers' association as to how to use the money.	0	4	2	2
Inform the board of the existence of the money and let them decide what is to be done.	58	77	56	81
Total “Action” responses	42	19	42	17
<u>Hire Aides</u>				
<i>Inform the president that the hiring of personnel is an exclusive administrative matter.</i>	16	21	13	27
Agree to discuss the matter with the president.	76	40	82	35
Agree to bring the matter to the attention of the board.	7	38	6	35
Agree to recommend the hiring of additional aides.	0	2	0	2
Total “Action” responses	16	21	13	27
<u>Cut Programs</u>				
Recommend that the athletic program be cut.	46	63	56	67
Recommend that the music program be cut.	6	14	3	6
Recommend that the hot lunch program be cut.	23	11	18	11
Recommend that the testing and guidance program be cut.	26	11	24	17

Note. “Not Applicable” refers to a scenario in which the division of who may take action is not applicable in the given scenario.

*Coaches’ raise.*

Due to increased operating costs, the superintendent finds that in order to give the coaching staff the raise called for in the salary schedule, it will be necessary to ask the people of the district to vote a substantial increase in property taxes.

The superintendent could insist that the teachers be granted the salary increase and that the election be held as soon as possible, ask the teachers to remain at the same salary level without a raise, recommend to the board that raises not be granted this year or let the board decide what action to take. (Scenario 14)

This scenario goes to the heart of the inherent differences in superintendent’s and board chair’s roles. While the budget is approved by the school board, it is rare that they have intimate knowledge of the details of that budget. As illustrated by some of the comments from the respondents, the idea that an unanticipated cost of this type would eventuate was unacceptable. One board chair in a district of some 24,000 made the comment that “This should have been anticipated. It is the superintendent’s job to run the district. A board does not always know all the nuances of the budget.” Some board chairs expressed disbelief that such a scenario was possible, perhaps reflecting their district culture. “I am confused by the question. Why are coaching salaries the cause of a special levy? That seems absurd. I also cannot understand how an agreement for salary increases can be made without a source from which to pay,” said one board chair in a 4,000+ FTE district.

Some superintendents also expressed their disbelief that such a scenario could arise. “This is not applicable given the state-wide salary schedule,” noted one small district superintendent inaccurately. Another small district superintendent had a different view, “This is not a possible scenario. We may have to limit other things, but we would honor our

contract. Local levy helps, however, we would not be surprised by a raise in coaching salaries. Further, we have other options to address this situation than those given.”

Most responses, however, indicated the need and desire to work through the situation in a collaborative and proactive manner. “This decision needs to include board discussion and action, after thoughtful and responsible superintendent recommendations. I would expect that the superintendent would recommend that no raises be granted for the year while also establishing a budget review committee to look at the long-term picture. Ultimately, the board needs to make the call,” said a board chair. Superintendents largely echoed this theme. “I would not do any of these things. I'd talk with the teachers and build a coalition of parents and teachers to build community support for the program. If the election could happen to support the program, we'd work it together after community engagement,” was typical of many of the superintendent comments.

Of the 104 respondents, 56 of them were matched pairs, i.e., both the superintendent and the board chair in those 28 districts responded to the survey. The first three options in this scenario are categorized as “superintendent as activist”; option four is designated as “board as activist/other”. Within these parameters, 7 matched pairs agreed with each other, 12 disagreed and 9 had one non-response to this scenario. In other words, only 28% of the matched pairs agreed on the role of the superintendent in this scenario.

#### *Extra Cash.*

It is evident that at the end of the present school year the district will have about \$45,000 cash left on hand. If this amount is not spent by the end of the school year, it must be reported as cash balance and thus will serve to reduce taxes in the district next year.

The superintendent could use the money to purchase equipment needed but not included in this year's budget, use the money for an advance purchase of school supplies for next year, consult with the executive committee of the



teachers' association as to how to use the money or inform the board of the existence of the money and let them decide what is to be done. (Scenario 18)

This scenario also elicited some interesting comments, some of which may be due to the amount of money in question; \$45,000 in 1970 had considerably more buying power than \$45,000 in 2001. As a point of reference, the average spent per pupil in the United States in the 1970 school year was \$820, which would be the equivalent of \$4,065 in adjusted dollars in 2004 (National Center for Education Statistics). The amount of money spent per student in 2004-2005 dollars in the 2004-2005 school year was \$8,468. In other words, the \$45,000 put forth in this scenario would have supported almost 55 students in 1970, while its dollar equivalent in 2004 would have funded just over 26 students. The relative small amount of money may have influenced the decisions expressed by the superintendents. As one superintendent of a very small district (~500 students) commented on his choice, “None of the above. \$45,000 above or below projections is such a small percentage of the budget. It would be allowed to be carried over into the following fiscal year.”

As can be seen in Chart 5, superintendents were much more likely to make decisions without board input; 42% said they would unilaterally make the choice as to how to spend it, compared to only 19% of the board chairs being comfortable with that decision. However, a majority of both board chairs and superintendents believed consultation was necessary. Typical of the board chair response was this comment made by the board chair of a large district: “The Board should be informed, listen to the recommendations of the superintendent, give some parameters--what does the strategic plan say are the priorities?” Superintendents also believed that acting unilaterally was not the preferred method. “If we have additional funds on hand and have addressed our planned goals, then the money is added to the ending

fund balance. If we have unaddressed and urgent needs, then we would utilize our advisory councils to prepare a recommendation for the School Board. As administrator, I make the financial decisions; however, this is within the plan submitted to the School Board. If I intend to deviate from the planned budget, the school board should have approval rights,” explained a superintendent from a small school district.

Of the 28 matched pairs, 10 agreed, 8 disagreed and 10 had one non-response. This equates to 34% agreement in who should have the locus of control.

#### *Hire aides.*

Last year's budget allocated funds to hire several experienced teachers. But nearly all of the new staff who were hired were recent college graduates with no teaching experience. Thus some un-obligated funds for the employment of personnel are available.

Today the superintendent received a letter from the president of the teachers' association demanding that the unexpended funds be used to hire additional teachers' aides.

In response to the letter, the superintendent could inform the president that the hiring of personnel is an exclusive administrative matter, agree to discuss the matter with the president, agree to bring the matter to the attention of the board, or agree to recommend the hiring of additional aides. (Scenario 19)

Once again, this scenario asked the question of what to do with additional funds that became unexpectedly available. Only one of the options given in the scenario gives complete control of the situation to the superintendent, and this option was the least popular of all for both groups of respondents at 16% for superintendents and 21% for board chairs. Both groups believed that agreeing to discuss the matter with the teachers' association president was the best choice. However, while the superintendents supported this option overwhelmingly (76%), the board chairs were virtually split between that option and bringing

the matter to the board (40% vs. 38%, respectively). This split may be due to the political reality the superintendent faces each day; he/she must work with the unions.

Typical of board responses was this comment from a board chair in a 25,000+ FTE district: “Levy funds would have to be spent for their intended purpose; the board adopts the budget; the superintendent should always be available to discuss issues with the teachers’ association president.” Board chairs also seemed most apt to discussing the issue openly. “Not only should the board be involved, but this is a community matter. If there are voted-upon funds that are not needed for those purposes, then the board must represent the community in what should happen to reallocate resources,” commented the board chair from a large district. “The union president may also be invited to share his/her perspective of needs in the district.”

Superintendents were very open to discussing the matter with the association president, but also recognized that there were many other factors that would play into their decision. “Automatically responding to union demands sets a dangerous precedent. But the Supt needs to understand why additional teacher aids are being requests. Based on the merit of the rationale, the current contract, class sizes and Board policy, then a decision can be made about what to do,” was typical of the written responses by superintendents. One very small district superintendent was quite comprehensive in his response: “I would be happy to discuss the issue with the president. However, there is a lot more to creating positions than just having some available funds. I would share the request with the school board and give them my position and thoughts on the topic.”

Of the 28 matched pairs, 9 agreed, while 19 disagreed. Once again, approximately 1/3 of these respondents agreed on who should have control in this scenario.

*Cut programs.*

In order to balance next year's budget it will be necessary to cut at least one element from the school program. Those elements that have been suggested are: the hot lunch program, the interscholastic athletic program, the music program, and the testing and guidance program. The board has requested that the superintendent investigate and make a recommendation as to which program to cut. The superintendent could recommend that the athletic program be cut, recommend that the music program be cut, recommend that the hot lunch program be cut or recommend that the testing and guidance program be cut. (Scenario 22)

This scenario was not differentiated in the choices regarding who should be in control, however it is interesting to note the differences in opinion regarding which programs should be cut in a time of fiscal tightening. Both chairs and superintendents agreed that cutting athletics was the most likely program to be cut. However, agreement diverged in the rest of the choices. Superintendents had very clear preferences indicating that they preferred cutting the testing and guidance program (26%), the hot lunch program (23%) and the music program (6%). Board chairs were not nearly as certain, with the music program being a distant second choice at 14.3% and both the hot lunch and testing and guidance program garnering 11% each.

Several board chairs mentioned that they were not happy with the options given, saying they “were not real choices” and “No answer is right; it would be a combination of cuts.” A board chair representing a 20,000+ school district responded that “The next school board meeting will be well attended and then the discussion can involve the people who need to be aware of a clearly desperate situation. The community can then work together for a solution,” highlighting the desire of most chairs to discuss these options and come to consensus.

Superintendents were also keen to work with other stakeholders. One typical response came from the superintendent of a very large district: “The next school board meeting will be well attended and then the discussion can involve the people who need to be aware of a clearly desperate situation. The community can then work together for a solution. The next school board meeting will be well attended and then the discussion can involve the people who need to be aware of a clearly desperate situation. The community can then work together for a solution.” Some superintendents also believed the choices were artificial; as one large district superintendent wrote “This question does not allow for portions of each program to be cut. That would be of interest to me.”

Table 4 illustrates that there was usually very little difference between what a respondent believed should happen and what the respondents believed would happen, with the notable exception of the “Cut Programs” scenario where 56% of superintendents believed they should cut athletics but only 46% actually would, perhaps indicative of the political reality of the importance of sports that superintendents live with. Of the three scenarios that address activism vs. referral to the board/other, both “Extra Cash” and “Cut Programs” point out that superintendents were more activist oriented than board chairs. However, this unsurprising tendency for superintendents to believe they should be more autonomous is not seen in the “Hire Aides” scenario, where 21% of the board chairs took an activist position and only 16% of superintendents did likewise. However, this difference is mitigated by the fact the vast majority of responses were in favor of the board playing a role in the decision.

Table 5 describes any differences in action responses based the district characteristics of size or geographic location.

Table 5. Action Responses to Finance Scenarios by District Characteristics

	Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
Coaches' Raise	37%	67%	35%	40%	50%	64%
Extra cash	19	47	20	45	18	30
Hire Aides	13	19	29	12	18	23

	Region			
	East		West	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
Coaches' Raise	47	48	35	62
Extra cash	25	41	23	41
Hire Aides	19	17	22	16

It is interesting to note that district size seems to make very little difference in the tendency of superintendents to be more action oriented than the board chairs. Since much of the east/west division is a function of the size of the district, this is perhaps not much of a surprise. The lone exception is in medium-sized districts in the “Hire Aides” scenarios; however, this aberration is in keeping with that scenario in general, as evidenced in Table 4. Geography also seems to make little difference in this pattern.

A review of the comments of the board chairs reveals an attitude that is perhaps more confrontational than superintendents feel they can be. “I am open to the discussion with the association president; however, the decision to hire is the responsibility of the district,” said one small, east-side board chair. Another medium-sized district chair commented, “There are always unique circumstances that should be examined. We don't let the CEA president push us around.”

Table 6 describes respondents in terms of their individual characteristics: tenure, experience and gender.

Table 6. Action Responses to Finance Scenarios by Individual Characteristics

	Tenure in Current Position					
	Chair		Supt		Chair	
	<=2 Years		3-5 Years		>=6 Years	
Coaches' Raise	29 %	64 %	33 %	65 %	78 %	40 %
Extra cash	21	43	11	56	20	27
Hire Aides	17	25	11	25	40	0
	Experience in Position					
	Chair		Supt		Chair	
	<=5 Years		6-10 Years		>=11 Years	
Coaches' Raise	27	50	50	43	43	57
Extra cash	33	50	7	18	7	41
Hire Aides	13	50	28	13	20	16
	Gender					
	Male		Female			
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt		
Coaches' Raise	37	56	67	38		
Extra cash	29	39	56	9		
Hire Aides	24	16	20	18		

The trend of superintendents being more action oriented continues here, but with some fascinating exceptions. Once again, the “Hire Aides” scenario is an exception, with no high tenure superintendents responding with unilateral action, while 40% of high tenure board chairs making such a choice. Some of this may be due to the difference in the number of respondents in these categories; there were twice as many high tenure superintendents as board chairs. 40% of board chairs in this category represent only four people. However, the fact that not even one superintendent of the 20 who responded believed an active response to be the best response is remarkable.

This counter-trend is continued when the responses are analyzed in terms of total experience. The action response for “Hire Aides” was chosen by a higher percentage of experienced board chairs than experienced superintendents, though half of new

superintendents made that choice. The middle level of experience also shows a reversal of the trend of superintendents being more action oriented. However, some of this may be due to the small number of superintendents (8) within this category.

When analyzed in terms of gender the same trends are evidenced. However, the counter-trend observed for the “Hire Aides” scenario disappears for female board chairs. The size of “N” does not appear to be very much of a factor, as the number of female board chairs is very close to the number of male board chairs.



## *Personnel*

Almost without exception, both board chairs and superintendents tended to see these scenarios as situations in which the superintendent should take action. The only exceptions to this involved individual teacher autonomy, i.e., “Staff Freedom” and “Teacher Offer”. This tilt toward superintendent activism is not surprising, given the state-defined role of school boards as overseers and not practitioners. Personnel matters are often quite technical, requiring an in-depth knowledge of such things as school law, negotiated contracts, professional standards, due process and district policy. Given these requirements, when analyzing the data in this leadership area it is important to keep in mind that it is the only one in which board members could not reasonably be expected to have much background. School programs, finance, public relations and superintendent/board relations are all subjects that lend themselves much more to lay judgments.

Of the seven scenarios given, two are staff management issues, two are staff independence issues and three are labor issues. The first management scenario (“Mental Illness”) involves a request for a recommendation for a teacher who was removed from the classroom because of behavior that was the result of a diagnosed mental illness. “Teacher Offer” is the second management scenario; it concerns the dilemma often faced by administrators competing for and retaining good teachers. In this scenario, an outstanding teacher has been offered a position in another district that will pay him more.

“Staff Freedom” involves teachers actively campaigning for a bond issue and the school board candidate that supports the bond. Similarly, the “Music Teacher” scenario concerns a teacher who conducts private music lessons after school and charges for them.

The central question in both of these scenarios is what is the boundary between a teacher's profession and his or her private life.

The final three scenarios all deal with various labor issues. "Employee Refusal" is a clear-cut case of insubordination by a classified staff member who has refused to perform as directed. The "Missing Teacher" scenario concerns a teacher who took a position in another district in the middle of the school year without notifying his/her prior district. Finally, the "Alternative Association" scenario involves a teacher new to the district who is trying to bring an alternative association into the district and what effect, if any, that should have on his or her contract.

Table 7. Responses to Personnel Scenarios (Ranked from most active to least active, when appropriate; “Action” responses in italics)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Mental Illness</u>				
<i>Recommend that the teacher not be hired because of his previous record of mental illness.</i>	2%	0%	2%	0%
<i>Inform the inquiring district that the teacher had been relieved of his duties because of mental illness but had been treated.</i>	94	87	96	87
<i>Omit any mention of the teacher's classroom difficulties or doubts as to his effectiveness.</i>	0	11	0	11
Ignore the request for a reference.	4	2	2	2
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	96	98	98	98
<u>Teacher Offer</u>				
<i>Try to persuade the teacher to stay in the district at his present salary, but with reduced teaching load and extra-curricular activity responsibilities.</i>	21	25	19	21
<i>Take the matter to the board and request an additional raise over the salary schedule to keep this teacher.</i>	4	14	4	14
Take the matter to the board without recommendation.	15	30	15	27
Ignore the matter and do nothing about it.	60	32	63	39
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	25	39	23	35
<u>Staff Freedom</u>				
<i>Order the teachers to desist from all political activity in connection with the election.</i>	2	0	2	2
<i>Inform the teachers that they may continue working for the bond issue but must remain neutral as to board candidates.</i>	4	15	4	17
<i>Request that the board issue a policy statement covering teacher behavior in this type of a situation.</i>	4	4	4	0
Consider the teachers' actions in accord with their rights as citizens and do and say nothing about it.	90	80	90	80
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	10	20	10	20

Cont.

Table 7 (Cont.)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Music Teacher</u>				
<i>Inform the teacher that his conduct was unethical according to the NEA Code of Ethics and that he must stop accepting money for private music lessons for students in his classes.</i>	23%	23%	27%	25%
<i>Inform the patron that since the lessons were given after school hours, the district had no control over them.</i>	50	41	46	46
<i>Inform the patron that it was not in the interest of the children or of the school to stop those who wished from obtaining private music instruction.</i>	23	30	23	27
<i>Bring the matter before the board and let them take some action.</i>	4	7	4	2
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	96	93	96	98
<u>Employee Refusal</u>				
<i>Fire the custodian immediately.</i>	0	2	0	4
<i>Suspend the custodian from his job until a satisfactory explanation had been received.</i>	96	96	96	94
<i>Ignore the situation.</i>	2	0	2	0
<i>Request that the custodian appear before the board for a hearing.</i>	2	2	2	2
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	96	98	96	98
<u>Missing Teacher</u>				
<i>Inform the state Superintendent of public instruction, requesting that the teacher's certificate be revoked.</i>	30	5	36	12
<i>Instruct the district's legal counsel to bring suit for breach of contract.</i>	19	28	17	30
<i>Contact the teacher by registered mail asking for an explanation.</i>	51	49	47	42
<i>Request the teachers' association to investigate the matter and make recommendations.</i>	0	19	0	16
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	100	82	100	84
<u>Alternative Association</u>				
<i>Recommend dismissal for the union leader because of "poor professional attitude."</i>	0	2	0	0
<i>Recommend that the union leader be rehired only if he joins the professional association.</i>	0	12	0	14
<i>Recommend that the union leader be rehired.</i>	82	49	81	51
<i>Present the situation to the board without recommendation.</i>	19	37	19	35
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	81	63	81	65

*Mental illness.*

Upon the advice of the superintendent the board relieved a teacher of his classroom duties because of behavior over a period of years that was diagnosed as mental illness. After a period of treatment the teacher applied for a position in another school. Today the superintendent received a request from the superintendent of a neighboring district for a confidential recommendation for this teacher.

The superintendent could recommend that the teacher not be hired because of his previous record of mental illness, inform the inquiring district that the teacher had been relieved of his duties because of mental illness but had been treated, omit any mention of the teacher's classroom difficulties or doubts as to his effectiveness or ignore the request for a reference. (Scenario 1)

This scenario illustrates some of the pitfalls inherent in today's litigious educational environment. Board members were quite aware of these potential liabilities, as illustrated by comments such as "Current law requires nothing more than verifying the fact that an individual did indeed work for the district during a certain time period. To indicate otherwise or comment on the "mental condition" of that individual would expose the district to litigation" and "The superintendent would follow the law. He would discuss what information can be shared with the Human Resource Manager." Both of these comments were made by medium-sized districts, however, such caution seems to be the rule, rather than the exception.

Superintendent responses tended to be equally legalistic, but filled with more detail. "A recommendation would be made if proof of a medical release was given to share this information," reported a small district superintendent. The superintendent of a medium-sized district was similarly cautious. "I would first of all check to see if former employee had given written ok to talk to me." A large-district superintendent went even further: "This situation would be covered under the ADA---I do not believe any of the responses would comply with the law."

As shown in Table 7, 11% of board chairs did prefer that the superintendent deal with the situation in a different way. These chairs felt that firing the teacher would be either illegal or unwarranted, given the facts as presented. Comments from medium and large district chairs included: “Firing a teacher because of a mental illness could be improper in the first place” and “Current law requires nothing more than verifying the fact that an individual did indeed work for the district during a certain time period. To indicate otherwise or comment on the "mental condition" of that individual would expose the district to litigation.” Legal issues were also at the forefront in this comment, “Since our district does not have current knowledge of teacher's condition, our Supt would indicate the dates of service and grade level taught, period.”

Matched pairs comprised 56 of the responses. Of these 28 pairs, three included one non-respondent. The first three options in this scenario are designated as “superintendent as activist” while option four is categorized as “board as activist/other”. Of the 25 remaining pairs, all but two agreed that this scenario was best resolved by the superintendent. The two school districts in which there was disagreement included a very large district and a very small district. Interestingly, in these two districts, the board chairs believed the superintendent should take an active role, while the superintendents chose option four, i.e., “ignore the request”.

*Teacher offer.*

A teacher in your district with an outstanding record of teaching ability has been offered a position in another district at a salary above what your district is paying him. He has told the superintendent about the offer and is seriously thinking of accepting it.

The superintendent could try to persuade the teacher to stay in the district at his present salary, but with reduced teaching load and extra-curricular activity responsibilities, take the matter to the board and request an additional raise

over the salary schedule to keep this teacher, take the matter to the board without recommendation or ignore the matter and do nothing about it. (Scenario 16)

This scenario resulted in split decisions and disagreement between superintendents and chairs. Though the most popular choice, option four, was the most popular for both chairs and superintendents, the level of support was considerably different. Sixty percent of superintendents made this choice, while only 32% of board chairs believed this to be the best option. Almost as many chairs thought they should review the situation without recommendation of the superintendent and a full 25% wanted the superintendent to manage the situation—an option also supported by 21% of the superintendents. Very few superintendents felt they had the freedom to go to the board and request a pay raise, while 14% of board chairs thought this option was viable.

Most chairs recognized that bargaining agreements and/or the state salary schedule controlled teacher salary. The state salary schedule was not in place at the time of the original survey in 1971, so this scenario may have caused some confusion. (One superintendent noted that the question was “really dated”.) “Teachers pay in Washington is set by the state and collective bargaining agreements. We do not have the ability to arbitrarily give a teacher a raise,” was the observation of a new board member in a large district. Another chair in a large district said “It is possible that this teacher could be offered additional dollars for extra duties, such as extended learning instructional time, leadership training, master teacher responsibilities, an administrative internship, etc. But no extra dollars can be offered that would be in conflict with negotiated agreements, etc..” Finally, one small district chair said “I would review the teachers’ current assignment and see if there was a desire on the part of the teacher to assume additional curricular and extra curricular activities. I would not create

something just to keep a quality teacher, nor would I pay this teacher more than what the salary schedule calls for. I would look to see if the individual was placed properly on the district salary schedule. It is rare that a public school would pay a teacher more than what the state-wide salary schedule warrants.”

Superintendents were also quite clear about the role of bargaining agreements and the state salary schedule. As one in a large district said, “Teachers in our state cannot be given special deals as we negotiate the same contract for all teachers.” A mid-size district superintendent expressed his frustration by asking if the questioner even knew “what union contracts are?” However, more than one superintendent recognized that there is some wiggle room. Typical of these sentiments was the response from a large-district superintendent “You cannot alter the salary schedule to keep a teacher. But you can recommend a teacher for increased duties according to the pay schedule.”

Of those who chose option three, the comments were mixed. A board chair from one of the larger school districts said, “The issue is bigger than one teacher. The board needs to discuss compensation philosophy.” Another chair from a large district had a similar comment. “The superintendent should do what they can to hang on to a good teacher. The fact that good teachers are leaving is a situation that the board must be aware of and attempt to resolve.” The only superintendent that made this choice and commented on it was from a small district. He said “I would applaud the teacher for his good fortune, thank him for his years of service to the district, and wish him well.”

The 28 matched pairs yielded five non-responses and four disagreements. Interestingly, the disagreements all went the same direction, with the board chair always



calling for the board to resolve the issue with a recommendation from the superintendent for an additional raise and the superintendents saying the matter should be ignored.

*Staff freedom.*

A school board election is to be held in your district next month. At the same time the community will vote on a bond issue to build a new school. One of the two candidates for a seat on the school board favors the construction while the other opposes it. Today the opposing candidate complained to the superintendent that certain teachers were calling on friends and acquaintances and urging them to vote for the construction levy and the candidate who favors it.

The superintendent could order the teachers to desist from all political activity in connection with the election, inform the teachers that they may continue working for the bond issue but must remain neutral as to board candidates, request that the board issue a policy statement covering teacher behavior in this type of a situation or consider the teachers' actions in accord with their rights as citizens and do and say nothing about it. (Scenario 3)

There was wide agreement that this scenario was not an issue the school should deal with. Almost all of the comments regarding this scenario referenced the need to ensure these calls were not made on school time or equipment and did not portray the teacher as representing the school while making the calls. Other than this caveat, there was near-universal concurrence that such teacher action was protected speech; even those who wanted the superintendent to take some action primarily wanted that action to be a reminder to the teachers what type of speech was protected. “The issue here is whether or not the action was taken on school time and facilities,” said the board chair of a medium-sized district. Echoing these sentiments was this comment from a superintendent, also from a mid-sized district that such speech was protected “Provided the actions did not take place on school time or property.”

As Table 7 shows, 15% of board chairs did choose to ask the superintendent to inform the teachers about the need to remain neutral; a position that might be more politically

palatable to the board but would likely run afoul of free speech. The seven board members who chose this option were from all sizes of districts. One chair from a medium-sized district commented that “Teachers may need to be reminded that working for the bond issue must happen when they are not in school--such as during their lunch hour or after school hours and not on campus.”

Of the 28 matched pairs, five included one non-response, while five disagreed with each other. Of those who disagreed which choice was proper, all of them included the fourth option, while four of them included option two. The remaining disagreement included option three. In other words, the vast majority of the matched pairs that responded recognized that this was a free speech issue and did not want to be involved beyond that. Only one board chair (from a mid-size district) felt it appropriate for the board to create a policy statement relative to proper teacher behavior.

*Music teacher.*

A patron of your school district has informed you that the music director is giving private music lessons for payment to many of the members of his school band as well as to other students in his music classes. The patron maintains that since the music director is paid a salary to teach music, it is not right for him to charge parents for this.

The superintendent could inform the teacher that his conduct was unethical according to the NEA Code of Ethics and that he must stop accepting money for private music lessons for students in his classes, inform the patron that since the lessons were given after school hours, the district had no control over them, inform the patron that it was not in the interest of the children or of the school to stop those who wished from obtaining private music instruction or bring the matter before the board and let them take some action. (Scenario 4)

Both board chairs and superintendents were nearly unanimous in their opinion that this was a superintendent matter; however, there was much less unanimity as to exactly how the situation should be addressed. Approximately one-quarter of all respondents felt such

conduct was unethical. “I do think it is ethically and professionally inappropriate for a teacher to charge his/her students for private lessons,” opined a large-district board chair, while at the same stating “I am guessing on this one, as I am not familiar with the NEA Code of Ethics.” This was a common theme, with comments such as “I am unfamiliar with the NEA code of ethics,” and “[I am] not familiar with the NEA Code of Ethics, if there is one,” being the widespread refrain.

Superintendents were much more sure of their rationale, focusing on the need to ensure school time and school property were not involved. “Provided school time and resources were not involved in promoting or recruiting for the lessons,” stated one superintendent. “If the lessons are before, after school, on weekends or during the summer, I have no objection to private lessons for pay. The issue would be different if the music teacher were collecting money during his assigned school day,” said another. Other superintendents made specific reference to board policy. “The district has a policy that addresses this. If the lessons take place on school grounds, then the facilities use policy governs procedures. If the policy is not being followed, then I would inform of the board. If they wanted to change the policy, they would be given the opportunity to do so,” was the opinion of a mid-sized district superintendent.

Demonstrating the difference in board policies was this comment made by the superintendent of a small district, “Our district policy permits employees to provide private lessons or tutoring beyond the school day. If provided for a fee, then written permission is required from the superintendent.” Even those without such a policy cited the need to check the policy manual. “My response may change depending upon if there is a school board policy or contract language forbidding private lessons.”

Six of the 28 matched pairs included a non-response. Of the remaining 22 pairs, 21 were in agreement that this was a superintendent issue. The remaining matched pair, from the same small school district whose board chair wanted a board policy to deal with the previous scenario, agreed that this issue should also go before the board.

*Employee refusal.*

A custodian in your district has been in the same school for a number of years. Upon several occasions the principal has remarked that the custodian's work was not what it should be and that he refused to take any suggestions from the principal. This morning when school opened, the building was very cold and it was obvious that none of the rooms or halls had been cleaned. When the principal asked the custodian for an explanation, he refused to discuss the matter.

The superintendent could fire the custodian immediately, suspend the custodian from his job until a satisfactory explanation had been received, ignore the situation or request that the custodian appear before the board for a hearing. (Scenario 5)

Responses and comments on this scenario showed little patience with the truculent employee. Almost unanimously, both chairs and superintendents believed the employee should be suspended and an explanation sought for his failure to do as instructed. However, their comments illustrated that the scenario was not as cut-and-dried as their choice indicated. "Normally intervention would occur with the employee's union rep first over the period of time when the principal felt that the duties executed were below par," was the response of a board chair from a large school district. Another stressed that it was important to follow due process. "It could be the custodian went home from work ill or was taken to the hospital with a heart attack. We listen first, follow the improvement plan and fire when absolutely necessary."

Superintendents emphasized similar themes. "This assumes that prior warnings about unsatisfactory work performance have been communicated to the custodian," wrote one.

“Due process, due process. Ask first before you act,” warned another. Superintendents also emphasized the need to follow the collective bargaining agreement. One small-district leader stated bluntly “This is a personnel matter. The contract spells out disciplinary procedures.”

There were some differences in the perception of whether the superintendent should even be involved in the situation. Unsurprisingly, given the many roles small-district superintendents play, respondents from small districts did not question this as much as larger districts. One large-district superintendent commented that he “would expect the principal to supervise and evaluate, and if appropriate, discipline the custodian!” Echoing this sentiment was a large-district board chair. “I would hope this would not start at the superintendent level. Head of custodians should correct the situation.”

Of the 28 matched pairs, seven of them had one non-response. The remaining 21 pairs were unanimous, not only stating that the superintendent should take action but agreeing that option “2” was the best choice.

*Missing teacher.*

On the day after Christmas vacation one of the teachers in your district did not return to work. After a time it was evident that the teacher did not intend returning to the district. Today the superintendent learned that the teacher was working in another district across the state.

The superintendent could inform the state Superintendent of public instruction, requesting that the teacher's certificate be revoked, instruct the district's legal counsel to bring suit for breach of contract, contact the teacher by registered mail asking for an explanation or request the teachers' association to investigate the matter and make recommendations. (Scenario 7)

This scenario showed considerable variation in response, though there was universal agreement among the superintendents that they were the proper person to handle the situation. The great majority of board chairs also believed the superintendent was the proper person to take care of this teacher issue. However, 19% of the board chairs believed the issue

should be brought to the board. Virtually all respondents stressed that any action taken had to be preceded by an appropriate investigation. “Determine the facts before taking any legal action. If the teacher has two contracts, there is a violation of the law,” a comment made by a mid-size board chair, was typical of most statements.

Superintendents were in agreement in their need for a proper investigation. “This situation requires a full range of investigation and action pending the response from the teacher -- finding out what intentions -- then reporting to OSPI for code of conduct violation would be appropriate,” was the solution offered by a superintendent from a mid-size district. However, many superintendents also focused on the need to take action beyond the choices available. “Terminate the contract and pursue the certificate revocation,” was the terse recommendation by the superintendent of a medium-sized district. “The teacher is in violation of stat laws that call for only one valid contract to be held by a teacher at any given time,” stated a large-district superintendent.

One other interesting fact showed up in a medium-sized district superintendent’s comments; reference was made to the fact that someone else would handle this situation in his/her district. “Several of the questions so far assume a small district where the superintendent is responsible for many administrative functions. I would turn this matter over to the Human Resources Director.”

The only board chair who both thought the incident should not be handled by the superintendent and also commented on it had this to say: “Do nothing if the person does not want to work for you, maybe they were not such a good teacher to have.” This sentiment was repeated by a board chair in a large district as well. “An unusual scenario, but in the coming

teacher shortages certainly possible. If the teacher does not want to work for your district fine . . . . they need to move on. The receiving district needs to know they left without notice.”

Six of the 28 matched pairs included one non-response, while three of the 28 disagreed with each other. Of these three, all of the board chairs chose the response stating the incident should be turned over to the teachers’ association for investigation and recommendation. All of these board chairs were from medium-sized districts.

*Alternative association.*

The teachers on your staff have always belonged 100 percent to the state professional association. Three years ago, the association was recognized as the bargaining agent for the staff. Its authorization, however, ends this year and a new election is to be held. Last fall a teacher, new to the district, received a charter for a local of the AFT and has organized a union including about 5 percent of the district staff. He intends to contest the election with the professional association.

The superintendent could recommend dismissal for the union leader because of "poor professional attitude“, recommend that the union leader be rehired only if he joins the professional association, recommend that the union leader be rehired or present the situation to the board without recommendation.  
(Scenario 8)

This scenario is a particularly delicate situation, a condition that is reflected in the atypical distribution of responses. 82% of superintendents would recommend the union leader be re-hired, while 19% would go to the board without comment. Contrast this with the 49% and 37%, respectively, marked by the board chair. Additionally, 12% of board chairs would expect the union leader to be re-hired only if he joined the professional association.

The comments reflected this diversity. Very few board chairs commented, but one medium-sized district chair who did comment was very clear on his/her discomfort with the situation. “I frankly don't know the rules about unions and who represents teachers under these circumstances. My instinct is to step away and let the teachers resolve the issue of

representation or seek direction from PERC.” One large-district chair summed up his similar feelings in this way: “There is no policy issue here. It sounds like the superintendent needs to keep informed and keep the board informed on the basis that the fight between the two sides may be disruptive to the education of students.” Another chair from a medium-sized district stressed the common belief that the qualities of the teacher, not his union activities, are the sole requirement for rehiring. “The Board hires upon the recommendation of the superintendent. If the teacher is qualified, a good teacher, etc., then his should be rehired. My question concerns the activities of this teacher regarding recruiting to be part of the AFT--do the activities interfere with his teaching?”

Superintendents stressed this same point, regardless of the size of their districts. “Whether the teacher is/is not rehired depends on his/her performance--not union preferences,” stated the superintendent from a medium-sized district. A superintendent from a small district agreed. “I do not have enough information related to the issues to make a firm decision in this matter. If this teacher is not disturbing the educational process and is performing his role as a teacher, which is what I would focus on.”

The matched-pairs indicated disagreement with six of the 28 pairs, while eight of the pairs had at least one non-response. Of the six disagreements, four of them involved superintendents who believed that presenting to their board without recommendation was the best choice. “Seeking legal counsel would be my first step. Based on legal counsel's recommendation I would then make a recommendation to the school board,” was the comment made by a mid-size district superintendent. The board chairs had no comment.

Table 8 describes any differences in action responses based the district characteristics of size or geographic location.



Table 8. Action Responses to Personnel Scenarios by District Characteristics

	Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
Mental Illness	100%	93%	95%	100%	100%	92%
Staff Freedom	6	0	20	12	40	12
Music Teacher	93	100	100	96	82	91
Employee Refusal	100	93	100	100	90	92
Missing Teacher	87	100	75	100	87	100
Alternative Association	64	86	72	86	45	67
Teacher Offer	38	21	21	36	46	8
	Region					
	East		West			
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt		
Mental Illness	100	100	97	93		
Staff Freedom	29	1	16	4		
Music Teacher	93	100	93	93		
Employee Refusal	93	95	100	96		
Missing Teacher	93	100	77	100		
Alternative Association	67	75	61	85		
Teacher Offer	53	15	31	33		

Little regional variation can be seen in these responses in most instances. “Mental Illness”, “Music Teacher”, “Employee Refusal” and “Missing Teacher” show the same patterns across districts of varying size. However, “Staff Freedom”, “Alternative Association” and “Teacher Offer” do have some interesting size-related discrepancies.

It appears that district size is inversely proportional to the percentage of people choosing superintendent action responses. While only 6% of board chairs in large districts take an action stance, 40% in the smallest districts do so. A similar pattern is seen in superintendent responses as well. This is particularly noteworthy when compared to the overall results that stated that only 10% of superintendents and 20% of board chairs took this position.

Although a majority of all superintendents and board chairs took an activist position to the “Alternative Association” scenario (81% and 63%, respectively), small school board chairs did not follow this trend. Superintendents in these districts were also less likely to take such a position than their peers in the larger districts. This may indicate the different roles unions play in the smaller district, or even lack of experience in dealing with unions at all.

Finally, while action responses were low in all categories, superintendents in small districts were almost uniformly inclined to not to take any specific action. Additionally, board chairs in these districts were the most likely to expect the superintendent to address the situation. Such a mismatch seems likely to result in role conflict in the given scenario.

The east/west geographic division is largely non-existent in this leadership area, though there may be a couple of notable exceptions. Given the small sample size, it would be unwise to read too much into these differences, but they are at least worth reviewing. Why is there such a gap in the “Teacher Offer” scenario? The comments of the respondents really do not give much insight into this discrepancy, nor into the gap seen between east-side chairs and west-side chairs concerning the “Missing Teacher” scenario.

Table 9. Action Responses to Personnel Scenarios by Individual Characteristics

	Tenure in Current Position					
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
	<=2 Years		3-5 Years		>=6 Years	
Mental Illness	97 %	100 %	100 %	90 %	100 %	96%
Staff Freedom	17	13	0	12	44	10
Music Teacher	92	100	100	95	89	94
Employee Refusal	96	92	100	95	100	100
Missing Teacher	76	100	100	100	81	100
Alternative Association	64	69	67	82	63	81
Teacher Offer	31	29	56	28	44	19
	Experience in Position					
	<=5 Years		6-10 Years		>=11 Years	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
Mental Illness	93	100	86	89	100	98
Staff Freedom	13	0	18	33	15	17
Music Teacher	92	100	94	87	93	98
Employee Refusal	100	100	94	86	100	97
Missing Teacher	84	100	83	100	79	100
Alternative Association	57	0	60	57	72	90
Teacher Offer	31	50	39	14	46	26
	Gender					
	Male		Female			
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt		
Mental Illness	96	98	100	78		
Staff Freedom	17	10	19	11		
Music Teacher	96	98	95	90		
Employee Refusal	100	97	95	100		
Missing Teacher	83	100	80	100		
Alternative Association	59	77	65	100		
Teacher Offer	50	23	26	33		

Tenure seems to make little difference in how these scenarios are viewed, with a couple of noteworthy exceptions. In the “Staff Freedom” scenario, experienced board chairs were much more likely to take a superintendent activist position. This is more than twice as much as the newest chairs and it is especially interesting when viewed against the back drop

the 20% of board chairs overall who took such a stand. Both the “Alternative Association” and “Teacher Offer” scenarios, indicate differences in the opposite direction, with the most junior board chairs differing with the most junior superintendents very little. The differences are larger in both the other tenure categories, though superintendents always take a more activist stand than the chairs in the “Alternative Association” scenario and less activist in the “Teacher Offer” scenario. As indicated by the comments, this is may be due to a more complete understanding by superintendents of what the law and bargaining agreements actually allow.

Some of the total experience numbers are skewed due to the small sample size of superintendents who had less than five years experience (2) and the great majority who had at least eleven years (46).

Finally, major gender differences are very difficult to identify, though there are some differences evidenced in the “Mental Illness”, “Alternative Association” and the “Teacher Offer” scenarios. The 20% gap between male and female superintendents in the “Mental Illness” situation is interesting, especially given the virtual unanimity in seen in the overall responses. The small number of female superintendents (11) may be one reason, but it seems that female superintendents are more likely to ignore the request than their male counterparts or the board. Interestingly, this is reversed in the “Alternative Association” scenario in which males are less activist than female superintendents. The same trend is seen between male and female board chairs. There is also a large gap in the “Teacher Offer” scenario between male and female chairs, as well as a bit of a gap between male and female superintendents, though in the opposite direction. Once again, the female superintendents are slightly more activist oriented.

## *Public Relations*

Public Relations are a core function of the superintendent. He or she is the public face of the district and as such must constantly balance the desires and needs of the students, staff and community. At the same time, the board is ultimately responsible for the direction of the district and since they are elected politics is inherent in the process. The first two scenarios, “Hometown Applicant” and “Bus Route” do not allow for an interpretation of whether or not the resolution of the issue should be board directed or superintendent directed. However, it is interesting to note that there is near unanimity in the first scenario while the second scenario consists of a plurality of responses.

“Hometown Applicant” highlights some of the political aspects of board life. While the vast majority of respondents chose the first option, 9% of board chair chose to “hire the home town applicant to please the citizen.” Of those five respondents who made that choice, three of them were from small districts and two of them were from medium districts. This may indicate increased pressure in a smaller community to meet the public’s expectations of favoritism based on the relationships in that community. Note also that two respondents admitted that what should be done was different than what would in fact be done.

However, comments indicated that hiring locally was not exclusively a small-town issue. A superintendent at a large district said “Given that they are both equal in ability and experience, it would benefit the district more by hiring the hometown applicant unless there was some known negative about that person’s personal life or associations in town.” A small-district superintendent echoed those comments. “I do understand the public relations and the importance of hiring a local for political reasons. I do try to hire the best candidate. I will

confess to a preference to hiring locals because they are more inclined to stay with the district. This is really important in small rural communities.”

“Bus Route” is also indicative of the stresses seen in a public position. The percentage of responses in each option was very similar, regardless of who responded. Both superintendents and board chairs indicated that what would be done was not what should be done, so there appears to be recognition of the ethical dilemma being posed. Based on the comments, there appeared to be considerable confusion regarding state bid law and board policy. “After new bids are advertised, the lowest, qualified bidder should be accepted, regardless of relationship,” stated a mid-size district board chair. However, a board chair in large district believed “No one related to a board member should get a contract. The appearance creates resentment in a community. The board should also not take a high bid.”

The confusion was nowhere more clear than when comparing these two comments, the first from a superintendent in a small district and the second from a mid-size district superintendent. “[In this instance] state law precludes the low bidder being given the contract” versus “State law requires us to award to the lowest bidder.”

The remaining four scenarios in this section continued to place the superintendent and/or board in similar dilemmas, speaking to the constant tension that exists in many communities regarding the role of the schools and how they should meet the numerous and competing non-academic expectations the community has.

The “SDS” scenario highlights the pressure that can result from a political group that has nothing to do with the school but wants to influence student activities; specifically, a nearby active chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society is attempting to organize a high school chapter. The challenge is to respect students’ rights to hear competing

viewpoints, maintain an educational environment and help the community to understand these competing roles.

“Labor Federation” explains a situation in which a labor organization wants the curriculum to be changed to reflect labor’s point of view as well as the current curriculum that the Labor Federation believes presents only management’s point of view.

The “Chamber” scenario describes an annual event, sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, to welcome new faculty. At the most recent event, the Chamber altered the program to feature a guest speaker who spoke disparagingly of schools.

Finally, the “Citizen Council” scenario concerns the desire by the superintendent to form a citizens committee in order to foster better communication between the district and the community with the intent to bring the district and community closer together. At the first meeting, nominations are accepted for president of the committee; one of the nominees is known to be a strong critic of both schools and the administration. The question concerns the proper response of the superintendent.

Table 10. Responses to Public Relations Scenarios (Ranked from most active to least active, when appropriate; "Action" responses in italics)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Hometown Applicant</u>				
Hire entirely on the qualifications of the applicants.	98%	91%	98%	96%
Refuse to consider either applicant and seek new ones.	2	0	2	0
Refuse to consider the hometown applicant further because of the incident.	0	0	0	0
Hire the hometown applicant to please the citizen.	0	9	0	4
Total "Action" responses	NA	NA	NA	NA
<u>Bus Route</u>				
Recommend that under the circumstances the board refuse both bids and finance a bus of their own.	10	10	20	20
Recommend that the route not be established until new bids are advertised.	25	23	14	18
Recommend that the low bidder be awarded the contract regardless of relationship.	25	27	18	14
Recommend that since the low bidder is related to a board member, the high bidder be awarded the contract.	40	40	48	49
Total "Action" responses	NA	NA	NA	NA
<u>SDS</u>				
<i>Try to stop the campaign with legal action.</i>	4	0	2	0
<i>Allow the campaign to take place but insure that the student body has an opportunity to hear other groups opposed to SDS principles.</i>	51	51	50	54
Ignore the matter as outside the jurisdiction of the school.	38	31	39	28
Let the board decide what action to take.	8	18	10	17
Total "Action" responses	55	51	52	54
<u>Labor Federation</u>				
<i>Refuse to order any more films from the National Association of Manufacturers.</i>	0	4	0	4
<i>Request the labor federation president to submit a list of films to you for approval which he thinks will represent labor's viewpoint adequately.</i>	51	60	52	53
<i>Instruct the social studies teacher to give equal attention to labor oriented films.</i>	47	31	46	36
Ignore the matter entirely.	2	4	2	7
Total "Action" responses	98	95	98	93

Cont.



Chart 10 (Cont)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Chamber</u>				
<i>Express his displeasure over the matter to both the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee and to the teachers.</i>	64 %	49 %	68 %	48%
<i>Express his personal displeasure over the matter to the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee.</i>	25	28	26	33
<i>Express his displeasure over the matter to the school board and recommend that the board exercise a closer supervision over future such affairs.</i>	8	19	2	17
<i>Inform the board of what had happened but make no recommendation.</i>	4	4	4	2
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	97	96	96	98
<u>Citizen Council</u>				
<i>Campaign for the other nominee.</i>	0	2	2	2
<i>Try to influence the unfriendly nominee to take a friendlier view of the schools.</i>	50	49	49	53
<i>Withdraw from the Council.</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Ignore the situation and try to live with the nominee should he win.</i>	50	49	49	45
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	50	51	51	55

*SDS.*

The state college located in a nearby community has an active chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society. Today, it is learned that the group has rented a house f near your town's high school from which they intend to conduct a campaign to organize a high school SDS chapter.

The superintendent could try to stop the campaign with legal action, allow the campaign to take place but insure that the student body has an opportunity to hear other groups opposed to SDS principles, ignore the matter as outside the jurisdiction of the school or let the board decide what action to take. (Scenario 17)

Clearly, the most popular choice was to allow the political speech and to ensure that other points of view were also heard, with 51% of superintendents making that choice and 50% of board chairs. The choice to “ignore the matter” was also popular with both groups,

but board chairs were more likely to say they should decide what action to take (18% vs. 8%).

Comments from board chairs ran the gamut, ranging from a hands-off approach to “If the organization is not conducting its campaign on school grounds the district has no authority,” stated a board chair from a medium-sized district. Alternatively, a chair from a similar district claimed “Until the group applies for official recognition in the school, no action is required.” Many board chairs referenced the need to consult policy; one of the most comprehensive replies came from a medium-sized district chair. “What are the policies regarding matters similar to this--may recruitment occur in the high school? Meeting with this group and explaining the policies is very important. This is not a black and white decision--to ignore is not facing reality. To stop the campaign without reason is not feasible. Communication is the key here. Involve the high school admin, students, board members and super and policies--try to reach a decision that is good for everyone--win-win.”

Superintendents tended to view this as primarily a legal question, using such terms as “open forum” and “equal access”. “District policy determines whether the school is an an "open forum" or "closed." If open to outside groups, other groups must be given an opportunity to present,” noted a small-district superintendent. The superintendent of a large district approached this question through his/her attorney. “District's legal counsel needs to outline the issues and present options to the Board and administration. The high school principal should be involved to express his/her concerns and all should agree on a course of action.”

There was considerable disagreement between the matched pairs. Of the 28 pairs, 11 disagreed about whether or not the superintendent should take an active role in deciding this

issue and five pairs had a non-response. Interestingly, there was no pattern in the disagreement; i.e., the disagreement was just as likely to be that the respondents thought the situation should be resolved by themselves rather than the other party as it was that they thought the other party should resolve it rather than themselves.

*Labor federation.*

The president of the local federation of labor appeared at a recent board meeting. He expressed general satisfaction with the schools but was disturbed that one of the social studies teachers was showing a number of films put out by the National Association of Manufacturers. He and his organization feel that this is presenting only one point of view to the students. The board has placed the matter in the hands of the superintendent to handle as he sees fit.

The superintendent could Refuse to order any more films from the National Association of Manufacturers, request the labor federation president to submit a list of films to you for approval which he thinks will represent labor's viewpoint adequately, instruct the social studies teacher to give equal attention to labor oriented films or ignore the matter entirely. (Scenario 23)

Though there was near unanimity regarding the need for the superintendent to be actively involved in the resolution of the situation, responses were equally split as to what the resolution should be. A majority of chairs and superintendents agreed that the proper role of the superintendent was to approve a list of films, though board chairs were more likely to choose this option than superintendents. Alternatively, superintendents were almost as likely to choose to dictate to the teacher what should be taught while that was a much less favored option of board chairs. Interestingly, these differences narrowed in the responses concerning what should be done.

Both board chairs and superintendents made the same type of comments and in approximately the same ratio. They fell into two categories; either the respondent spoke to the need to be fair or to the process required to assure fairness. For example, the board chair of a large district made stated that "A balanced viewpoint should be presented to students.

The mission of schools should include a wide range of information.” The board chair of a small district was more concerned with the process; “In our district all films go through approval processes already.”

Similarly, a superintendent in a medium-sized district believed the correct action to take was to “Discuss and review guidelines for materials and "balancing" controversial positions. Make teacher aware of the perceived imbalance.” The superintendent of a large district said he or she would “convene the district's instructional materials committee to consider the concern and to recommend an appropriate course of action.”

This scenario was much less controversial to the 28 matched pairs of superintendents and board chairs; only two disagreed with each other, though there were eight non-responses. Of those who disagreed, the board chairs wanted to ignore the matter while the superintendent wanted to instruct the teacher to give equal attention to labor oriented films.

#### *Chamber.*

Each year a social hour is held to welcome new faculty to the district. The affair is sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce. In years past the format has been set: the superintendent introduces new faculty members, the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee welcomes them to the community and then all adjourn for refreshments. Without informing the superintendent, the Education Committee chairman altered the program. Instead of the usual welcoming remarks, the new teachers were treated to a long speech by the president of the local John Birch Society on "Creeping Communism in the Schools."

The superintendent could Express his displeasure over the matter to both the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee and to the teachers, express his personal displeasure over the matter to the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee, express his displeasure over the matter to the school board and recommend that the board exercise a closer supervision over future such affairs or inform the board of what had happened but make no recommendation. (Scenario 24)

The first option was the overwhelming favorite of both superintendents and board chairs, though the second option was also quite popular. Responses from superintendents tended to focus on prevention while board chair responses encompassed a variety of concerns. “The superintendent should be able to handle it without input from the board,” said a chair from a large district. Conversely, a board chair from a medium-sized district thought that it was “important for the Board & Supt to discuss the appropriate course of action.” Some chairs focused on the need to keep communication flowing freely. “We would probably not participate in such an event in the future if there was not good communication between the organizations,” noted the chair of a large district. This same belief was put forth by the board chair of a mid-size district. “What the superintendent should do is talk with the education committee chairman and find out what happened. This event is not part of the board's responsibility even though they may attend. After the investigation, then the apology should follow. Communication is so important.”

One superintendent of a large district saw this incident as “a set-up deal to bush-wack the superintendent and teachers. Include school board and chamber board in [developing a] list of folks to contact and discipline. End participation in the event in the future.” Several superintendents expressed this belief that such problems could be minimized by tighter control. “The superintendent should exercise closer supervision over future such affairs,” observed a superintendent from a medium-sized district. A superintendent in a similar district noted that “If you are doing your job this shouldn't happen. If it did however, you would have more cleanup than just meetings. You would inform board and would need to ensure it didn't happen again.”

The matched pairs showed no disagreement in whose role it was to fix the problem.

There were five non-responses.

*Citizen council.*

Considerable criticism of the school and the administration has been circulating in the community recently. The superintendent feels that this is caused by a lack of information in the community as to what the schools are trying to do. To bring school and the community closer together, the superintendent has invited several parents to form a lay Citizens Council for Education. At the first meeting of the Council officers are nominated and one of the nominees for president is known to be a strong critic of the school and the administration.

Campaign for the other nominee, try to influence the unfriendly nominee to take a friendlier view of the schools, withdraw from the Council, or ignore the situation and try to live with the nominee should he win. (Scenario 25)

This scenario is interesting, if for no other reason than its polarizing effect. The difference of opinion was within the two groups, rather than across the groups. Half of both superintendents and board chairs believed option two to be the correct course, while the other half believed option four was best. There were only 11 comments concerning this scenario, fewer than normal. Of those who did comment, seven were made by board chairs and four were from superintendents. There was no clear preference of those who made comments. Respondents seemed equally likely to make comments whether they chose option two or option four, as well as whether they were superintendents or board chairs. However, most of the comments were along the lines of looking at this as an opportunity to build understanding.

Large-district board chairs had such comments as this “Brings your strongest critics to the table - let them contribute clearly at the table so it isn't happening "under the table” and “This is an opportunity to turn one of your worst critics to a supporter. If they are elected that will be OK. The person will at the very least, be better informed.” Medium-sized district

board chairs said “Does the critic have legitimate concerns? The superintendent can introduce the critic to the positive aspects of the schools” as well as “After the election, the influence could come--this is a great opportunity to educate and let everyone know about the district.”

Superintendents were largely positive as well, with only one large-district superintendent saying “The superintendent made a mistake and now must live with it. [We seem to believe that] "to know us is to love us." Don't create forums for critics!” The other comments were very much like what the board chairs said. Another large-district comment was “Critics should be openly included in the dialogue. To shun them, only increases their hostility and deepens their suspicion. Besides, the school district might learn something valuable from him!” Two small-district superintendents commented: “Communication is an important tool. It is a good time for the superintendent to use this tool” and “Embrace the situation. If we can't convince the critic, trying to change the direction at this point will only reinforce his/her issues.”

There were only two non-respondents within the 28 matched pairs. However, of the 26 who did respond, 17 of them disagreed with each other regarding the appropriate response.

Table 11 describes any differences in action responses based the district characteristics of size or geographic location.

Table 11. Action Responses to Public Relations Scenarios by District Characteristics

	Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
SDS	50%	50%	39%	58%	73%	54%
Labor Federation	97	100	94	96	100	100
Chamber	94	100	100	96	91	92
Citizen Council	50	56	48	35	60	75

	Region			
	East		West	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
SDS	57	50	48	60
Labor Federation	100	100	93	97
Chamber	94	95	97	93
Citizen Council	53	64	47	42

The “SDS” scenario was essentially equally divided overall. However, when disaggregated by district size, some differences emerge in the medium and small district board chairs. Chairs in the medium-sized districts were more likely to expect the superintendent not to take direct action, while small districts believed their superintendents would do so.

Responses to the “Labor Federation” scenario were virtually uniform, as were “Chamber” responses. However, once again, medium-sized and small districts viewed the “Citizen Council” quite differently from the average, with superintendents in the medium group less likely to be activist, while the superintendents as well as board chairs in the smallest districts preferred the superintendent to be more activist oriented.

The “SDS” scenario was very similar to the average on both sides of the state, though superintendents on the west side tended to be somewhat more activist. “Labor Federation” and “Chamber” also saw few differences, though some of the comments may point to a



cultural divide. For example, a board chair on the west side asked “Is the John Birch Society still around?!” and a superintendent, also on the west side said “Since this possibility no longer exists it is difficult to respond adequately.” Any superintendent that has worked on the east side knows that the John Birch Society is alive and well.

The “Citizen Council” scenario indicates that superintendents on the east side were considerably more activist than their west-side compatriots. Again, this is in agreement with the expectations of their board chairs.

Table 12. Action Responses to Public Relations Scenarios by Individual Characteristics

	Tenure in Current Position					
	Chair		Supt		Chair	
	<=2 Years	3-5 Years	>=6 Years			
SDS	54 %	67 %	44 %	47 %	50 %	53 %
Labor Federation	93	94	100	100	100	100
Chamber	96	94	100	100	90	94
Citizen Council	50	50	56	74	40	26
	Experience in Position					
	<=5 Years		6-10 Years		>=11 Years	
SDS	57	50	44	29	54	66
Labor Federation	93	100	94	100	100	98
Chamber	93	100	100	87	93	98
Citizen Council	29	50	67	88	53	43
	Gender					
	Male			Female		
SDS	52	55	47	55		
Labor Federation	96	98	95	100		
Chamber	96	100	95	80		
Citizen Council	44	52	50	40		

There appears to be no overall trend related to tenure. Superintendents with less experience appear to be more forceful in the “SDS” scenario, but there is no indication as to why this is the case. Similarly, superintendents with 3-5 years experience tended to act more

precipitously in the “Citizen Council” scenario. Both superintendents and board chairs with longer tenure tended to want the superintendent to take a step back from the situation described in this scenario.

When using overall experience as a discriminator, some differences in response are seen, but the reasons are elusive. The “SDS” scenario indicates that mid-term superintendents are much less likely to take the lead and much more likely to do so if they have been superintendents for 11 years or more. This may be due to having more experience, but that would not explain similar behavior in the “Citizen Council” scenario at the mid-level experience. However, in this case, it appears that the increased activism is also expected by the board chair, unlike the least experienced group of board chairs in that same scenario who expect their superintendents to be less activist.

There is little deviation from the average and no pattern when respondents are separated by gender. Male board chairs were more activist than female board chairs in the “SDS scenario, but when looking at the “Citizen Council” scenario, male board chairs tend to be a little less activist-oriented than male superintendents and female board chairs. However, female superintendents were the least activist of all.

### *School Programs*

The school programs leadership strand includes scenarios in which the core operations of schools are under scrutiny. They include curriculum topics, as well as dealings with students and their behavior. The first two scenarios address the rights of those who are part of the school community to criticize either a political stand or a stand taken by the administration with regard to the operation of school programs. “War Protest” deals with students and their right to protected speech as exercised through the wearing of black armbands to protest the current war, while “Teacher Letter” concerns the failure of a levy and the subsequent reallocation of funds to various programs.

The final three scenarios concern the operation of school programs and those programs constituents. “Diversity” highlights the role of the schools in being responsive to race-related issues in both hiring and program development. “Sex Education” posits the implementation of a mandatory sex education program and the resulting threat by a group of parents to withdraw the children from public school. Finally, “Culturally Different” describes a situation in which a citizens committee petitions the superintendent demanding classes be added to benefit those students who are different from the dominant culture.

You will note that the responses from board chairs and superintendents, in terms of superintendent activism, are remarkably similar, though there was a slight preference by board chairs for letting the board handle the situation.

Table 13. Responses to School Programs Scenarios (Ranked from most active to least active, when appropriate; “Action” responses in italics)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>War Protest</u>				
<i>Suspend the students immediately.</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Telephone the parents of the students involved and inform them that their children will be suspended if disturbances occur.</i>	15	17	16	19
<i>Take no action since the students were exercising their right of free speech.</i>	83	73	84	75
Inform the board of what has occurred and let them take appropriate action.	2	10	0	6
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	98	90	100	94
<u>Teacher Letter</u>				
<i>Recommend that the teacher be fired.</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Invite the teacher in for a talk.</i>	64	75	60	65
<i>Take no action since the teacher is exercising his right of free speech.</i>	33	26	36	35
Refer the matter to the board for action.	4	0	4	0
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	64	75	60	65
<u>Diversity</u>				
<i>Dismiss the students' demands out of hand.</i>	0	2	0	2
<i>Accede to the students' demands.</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Agree to recommend the demands to the board.</i>	100	98	100	98
<i>Agree to discuss the demands with the board.</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	100	98	100	98
<u>Sex Education</u>				
<i>Refuse to eliminate the program.</i>	12	8	15	8
<i>Maintain the program on a voluntary basis.</i>	34	35	33	35
<i>Eliminate the program as the parents demand.</i>	0	0	0	0
Recommend that the parents and the board meet to discuss their differences.	54	56	52	56
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	46	43	48	43

Cont.

Chart 13 (Cont.)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<u>Culturally Different</u>				
<i>Suggest to the committee that it was not the job of the school to care for those who could not learn in regular classes.</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Inform the committee that such a program would be too expensive to operate considering the number of students involved.</i>	5	12	7	14
<i>Inform the committee that he will recommend to the board that their program be adopted.</i>	26	21	29	16
<i>Inform the committee that he will bring the matter before the board without recommendation.</i>	70	67	64	70
<i>Total "Action" responses</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>30</i>

*War protest.*

A group of adults and students from your district hold a meeting at which they determine to publicize their opposition to the war on terror and their support of an immediate cessation of hostilities. Today, small groups of students appear at the schools wearing black arm bands which, they say, are symbols of mourning for soldiers killed in the war.

The superintendent could suspend the students immediately, telephone the parents of the students involved and inform them that their children will be suspended if disturbances occur, take no action since the students were exercising their right of free speech or inform the board of what has occurred and let them take appropriate action. (Scenario 2)

The vast majority of respondents chose option two, allowing the students to exercise their free speech rights. This scenario, of course, was taken from the famous "Tinker v. Des Moines" case of 1969, a case that every educator who responded was almost certainly familiar with as it is the basis of all student freedom of expression issues that arise throughout every school year. The court ruling was that students have the right to express their views as long as they are not disruptive to the operation of the school. Superintendent comments were largely along this line, as were many board chair comments. However, chair comments tended to be philosophical rather than legalistic (there was only one direct "Tinker

v. Des Moines” reference, perhaps indicative of the manner the Tinker ruling has become part of schools’ normal mode of operation.

“If the students’ interaction becomes an interruption of the educational process only then should steps be taken to close down the activity,” wrote a board chair from a large district. The chair continued, “It is better to turn a negative into a positive for students, perhaps by providing a forum for their feelings.” A medium-sized district chair repeated this theme: “As long as the students’ silent protest does not interfere with student learning there is not an issue.” Board chairs at the small-district level echoed these sentiments, with this comment being typical: “Provided demonstration does not impact the learning environment, take no action. Otherwise, calling parents (or depending on the level of disruption...the police) is appropriate and probably what the superintendent would do.” Four board chairs, all from mid-size districts, indicated they would prefer to deal with the situation, rather than the superintendent. The single comment from this group was their action would “depend upon district policy”.

As stated, superintendents viewed this scenario in more legalistic terms. “District’s legal counsel will be informed,” noted a large district superintendent who chose option two. “There is current case law around this issue,” said another. One mid-size district superintendent noted specifically “The Tinker case deals with this issue and should be followed. Free speech until the school environment is disrupted and then Supreme Court decisions allow for suspension if the behavior is not stopped.”

There was only one disagreement in the matched pairs group, from a medium-sized district. In this instance, the board chair believed this to be a board issue. There were three non-responses.

*Teacher letter.*

Last November the voters in your district defeated a school levy. The local teachers' association supported the levy and campaigned vigorously for its passage. Today, a letter-to-the-editor, written by a member of the teachers' association appeared in the local newspaper. The letter attacked the manner in which the superintendent and the school board had handled the election and denounced as unfair the proportion of funds subsequently allocated to the school's education and athletic programs.

The superintendent could recommend that the teacher be fired, invite the teacher in for a talk, take no action since the teacher is exercising his right of free speech or refer the matter to the board for action. (Scenario 9)

64% of superintendents and 75% of board chairs believed the proper response to the teacher writing a letter to the editor was to talk to the teacher. Only a third of superintendents and roughly a quarter of chairs believed the letter warranted no action, as it was protected speech. The comments made do not shed much light on the reasoning behind the choices made. A chair in a small district said, "Free speech applies, but a conversation is in order." Another suggested that the board could write their "own letter to the editor if deemed important."

Superintendents were somewhat more helpful in explaining their preferred course of action. "It is important for the superintendent to hear all voices, even those that are critical. I would ask to meet with the teacher to listen to his perspective and if warranted to offer other information that he may not have (e.g., budget showing where funds were spent)" was the rationale offered by one large-district superintendent for choosing option two. Another such superintendent who chose option three mentioned that "The superintendent may choose to respond by writing a letter clarifying the facts, or he/she can remain silent. This also could be addressed at the next public meeting of the Board -- for information."

A superintendent from a mid-sized district that chose to take no action with the teacher thought that being pro-active in the community would be most helpful. “We would be putting out factual information, a committee would have been part of the budget development, and we would give little time to addressing individual concerns. I may try to use the letter to bring the topic back before the community for discussion regarding the defeat of the levy. I would certainly have laid groundwork with the community and staff before presenting a budget for adoption. Given the history of the teacher, and my personal relationship with the staff member, we possible could have a discussion.” Finally, a superintendent from a small district who chose option two took a similar tack; “I would want to fact find and make sure the teacher understands the process for involving people in determining levy amounts and procedures. After a better understanding the individual may choose to write a retraction letter.”

All of the matched pairs responded to this scenario; 13 of them disagreed with their counterpart. Of these, only two were from small districts. The board chairs thought that the superintendent should talk to the teacher (option two), while their superintendents thought either that no action should be taken (option 3) or that the board should handle the situation (option 4). The remaining respondents showed no clear pattern in their disagreement, alternating between options two and three.

*Diversity.*

Over the past few months several incidents involving white and black students have occurred in your district. Today, a delegation of black students called upon the superintendent and presented him with a list of demands, among which are demands for more black teachers and counselors, a black principal for one of the high schools in the district, and a black studies curriculum.



The superintendent could dismiss the students' demands out of hand, accede to the students' demands, agree to recommend the demands to the board, agree to discuss the demands with the board. (Scenario 15)

There was very little disagreement in this scenario. The single board chair who made a dissenting choice was from a medium-sized district and said only that “The superintendent would also discuss the matter with the board.” There was one non-response in the group of matched pairs. Representative of the comments was the following from a board chair in a large district: “There is clearly an issue here that should have been addressed earlier. The board's interest is not in individual hiring decisions but in the potential for incidents disrupting the educational process at that school. The superintendent should investigate and report to the board.” A small district superintendent made a similar comment: “It is my duty to try and keep a racial balance of staff to students, and if the students were right, I should advocate their position to the School Board. However, I may not be in a position to recruit the talent we want for these roles. We may not have vacant positions. I do believe anytime students see an issue, we need to hear them and think through their point of view.”

*Sex education.*

Last year your district decided, after much debate, to inaugurate a new sex-education program. The program will be compulsory for all students grades 6 through 12. Today the superintendent learns that a group of parents are planning to withdraw their children from the public school as a protest over the sex-education program and to enroll them in a specially organized private school.

The superintendent could refuse to eliminate the program, maintain the program on a voluntary basis, eliminate the program as the parents demand or recommend that the parents and the board meet to discuss their differences. (Scenario 20)

There was no such unanimity in this scenario, though there were very similar responses by both superintendents and board chairs. Even those who chose the most activist

position (option one, “Refuse to eliminate the program”) often had comments that indicated their desire to work the problem out. “He should, and would, discuss the issue with the board,” said a one such board member from a large district. The superintendent of a medium-sized district who chose option one wrote that he “would ask to meet with the parents. Obviously, if there was much debate previously, the interests of this group of parents should be already known. Because the subject was controversial, it should be expected that some parents would remove their children from school.”

The most popular choice, made by a majority of the respondents, was for the parents and boards to discuss their differences (option four). Typical of these was the comment made by a board chair in a large district: “It is important to hear what parents object to in the program. Perhaps the program needs to be refined; surely it will need an advisory committee for evaluative purposes. Additionally, it may be possible for parents to “sign their children out” of the program, as most sex ed programs are not compulsory and have that option. It is important to meet all federal and state mandates regarding HIV/AIDS and Health Education requirements.” One superintendent who felt this way was from a small district: “We work for the community. If a group has issue, their position should be heard. In most cases we have a policy that permits the providing of other curriculum in cases of controversial curriculum. We would need to explore this situation in light of that policy and determine if this situation meets the intent of that policy.”

The second most popular option was to “maintain the program on a voluntary basis” (option two). This position was summed up by a chair from a medium-sized district: “Parents have always had the right to exclude their child from the sex education and HIV/AIDS classes.” A superintendent in a similar-size district said, “Parents always have the right to

request their children not participate in certain instructional activities. Prepare a form for parents to request release of their children for an alternate activity.”

There were nine disagreements between the matched pairs and three non-responses. Of these, the most popular option for the board chairs was to discuss the differences, while the most popular option for superintendents was to main the program on a voluntary basis.

*Culturally different.*

For the past few years the superintendent and the board have worked closely with a community citizens committee on problems related to the improvement of the school. Recently this committee elected new officers who obviously feel that the school is not doing enough for the "culturally different" student in the school. Today the officers of the committee met with the superintendent and presented a petition demanding the establishment of special classes for those students who are "culturally different. A previous survey of the school indicated about 100 to 125 students who would qualify for these special classes.

The superintendent could suggest to the committee that it was not the job of the school to care for those who could not learn in regular classes, inform the committee that such a program would be too expensive to operate considering the number of students involved, inform the committee that he will recommend to the board that their program be adopted or inform the committee that he will bring the matter before the board without recommendation. (Scenario 21)

Given the similar subject matter of this scenario and the “Diversity” scenario, it is interesting to note the differing results. Both scenarios included an option to recommend action to the board; virtually all respondents chose this option for the “Diversity” scenario, but approximately one-quarter of respondents chose this option for this scenario. Some of this difference may be accounted for in the formation of the scenario. A board chair from a large district complained that the “question and options are too vague” while a superintendent from such a district said “I don’t like any of the choices.”

A chair from a mid-size district that did not make a choice commented, “The superintendent should meet with the curriculum director and work to change teaching methods for improved learning. Schedule district learning improvement days, assist buildings with setting learning goals and require them to state the assessment tools which will measure improvement. A report should be made to the board and to the community committee. This is the approach we use in our district. Schools must be accountable and adjust teaching methods to the needs of the students.”

A superintendent, also from a mid-size district, had similar thoughts. “There is inadequate information provided here. If this situation has been studied at length, there is probably ample reason to support the provision of additional classes -- therefore, I would recommend it if the budget allowed for its implementation. If it was an idea without merit, I would not endorse it. I would allow the committee to make a presentation to the board and leave it up to the board as whether or not they would like to take action on this. In all likelihood, we would schedule more than one public hearing on the topic to get "feedback" from other community members as well. However, if warranted, I would support the program and ask the board to do so too. However, there are additional processes and procedures that such a program would be subjected (according to board policy) before being introduced into the school program. I would hold the program to these procedures.”

Though there was only one matched pair that disagreed, there were 13 non-responses, again indicating dissatisfaction with the options as presented.

Table 14 describes any differences in action responses based the district characteristics of size or geographic location.

Table 14. Action Responses to School Programs Scenarios by District Characteristics

	Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
War Protest	100 %	93 %	81 %	100 %	91 %	100 %
Teacher Letter	53	56	86	62	82	77
Diversity	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sex Education	62	62	38	42	36	49
Culturally Different	40	46	24	26	40	18

	Region			
	East		West	
War Protest	87	100	91	96
Teacher Letter	69	70	77	58
Diversity	100	100	100	100
Sex Education	31	38	53	55
Culturally Different	36	17	32	42

Some variation was evidenced in most sub-groups in all scenarios, with the exception of the “Diversity” scenario. The variation was not one of kind, but of degree. In other words, in each sub-group board a majority chairs and superintendents made the same choice in terms of activist superintendent or refer to the board/other. However, the gap between the respondents within a sub-group could be problematic.

For example, the “War Protest” scenario shows a 19-point difference between the respondents in mid-size districts. This difference is a result of the four board chairs who chose option four; the only such respondents in the entire board chair group that did so. Responses were also received from two of the four superintendents in those districts and they differed in their approach, so there is the potential for role conflict in those cases.

It was the medium-size districts that had the greatest differences once again in the “Teacher Letter” scenario. The 16-point gap indicates that the board chairs were more

desirous that the superintendent talk to the teacher, while the superintendents felt that no action was necessary because the letter was free speech. Of the 22 board chairs in this category who responded to this scenario, 18 chose option two and four chose option three. Of the 27 superintendents, 17 chose option two and 10 chose option three. Again, there would seem to be a potential for role conflict in this situation.

It was the smaller districts in which the potential for role conflict seems greatest in the “Sex Education” scenario. The 13-point gap is explained by superintendents preferring to let students opt out of the program and board chairs preferring to meet with the parents; each side preferred to take the activist role.

The final scenario in this strand, “Culturally Different” was also most divisive for the smaller districts. The small number of respondents who made a choice rather than just comment explains some of this difference; a total of 10 board chairs and 12 superintendents indicated a preference. Of those who did respond, there were no superintendents who preferred to let the board take action on their own, while there were three board chairs who felt that was the proper course of action.

Table 15 describes respondents in terms of individual characteristics of tenure, experience and gender.

Table 15. Action Responses to School Programs Scenarios by Individual Characteristics

	Tenure in Current Position					
	Chair		Supt		Chair	
	<=2 Years		3-5 Years		>=6 Years	
War Protest	86 %	100 %	100 %	95 %	90 %	100 %
Teacher Letter	75	69	44	70	100	53
Diversity	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sex Education	41	31	44	55	60	59
Culturally Different	35	33	13	35	50	21
Cont.						

Chart 15 (Cont.)

	Experience in Position					
	<=5 Years		6-10 Years		>=11 Years	
War Protest	93	100	89	100	87	98
Teacher Letter	80	0	88	63	53	67
Diversity	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sex Education	40	50	39	63	60	47
Culturally Different	23	0	31	17	46	34

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
War Protest	88	98	91	100
Teacher Letter	88	59	57	82
Diversity	100	100	96	100
Sex Education	44	44	46	70
Culturally Different	32	23	37	56

There were several individual characteristics that correlate with different responses. When tenure is considered, the “War Protest” scenario indicates one of the smallest gaps. The 14% difference may at least in part be due to the fact that this is the largest group of board chairs (29 out of 48) and the smallest group of superintendents (16 out of 56), thus exaggerating the divergence.

The 47-point gap in the “Teacher Letter” scenario may also be considered similarly, since only 10 board chairs are in that group, yet 20 superintendents have that amount of tenure. However, in this case it is still worth noting that 100 percent of board chairs would like to see the superintendent take charge and roughly half of the superintendents feel the same way. The sizable gap that is seen in the 3-5 year range is in the other direction, i.e., superintendents want to take the lead more than the board chairs want them to. The greatest similarity is found when considering those with the least tenure.

Relatively small differences were observed within the responses to the “Sex Education” scenario, with the smallest gap between those with the greatest tenure. The gap is fairly consistent in the two previous tenure groups, though they do go opposite directions.

The “Culturally Different” scenario indicates that both the 3-5 and 6+ tenure groups have substantial gaps in expectations, once again going in opposite directions. Superintendents are more likely to take the lead midway through their tenure than they are in the latter part. Conversely, board chairs are less likely to want the superintendent to take the lead in the 3-5 year range than they are beyond six years.

Looking at total experience data, some very unusual results present themselves, but they must be interpreted carefully. For example, the “Teacher Letter” scenario shows what appears to be a dramatic difference between chair and superintendent expectations in the first experience level, but the sample size makes this assumption suspect. While there were 15 board chairs with fewer than six years total board chair experience, there were only two superintendents in that same category. The gap shrinks appreciably at the next experience level, and has swung the other direction for the superintendents and board chairs with eleven or more years of experience. Note also that board chairs have become considerably less insistent that the superintendent takes the lead by the time they are in the final experience category.

The “Sex Education” scenario indicates superintendents thinking they should take the lead in the first two experience levels, but the same caveat applies; 50% of superintendents mean one person. At the middle experience level we see the same general pattern as the first, but the relative positions reverse at the final experience level; fewer than half of the



superintendents would take the lead in this scenario, while 60% of the board chairs think that the superintendents would do so.

Analysis of the “Culturally Different” scenario shows pattern of both superintendents and board chairs increasingly expecting the superintendent to be more active. However, at no time does more than 50% of either group take this position, though the percentage of superintendents does double between the second and third experience level.

An analysis of gender differences reveals some interesting facts, though it is important to remember that there were only 11 female superintendent respondents when interpreting these results.

There were important differences in the “Teacher Letter” scenario, both between male chairs and male superintendents, as well as between male and female chairs and male and female superintendents. Although all four groups had a majority who believed the superintendent should take an activist stance, male board chairs believed this considerably more often than female board chairs or male superintendents and somewhat more often than female superintendents.

A similar gap is seen between male and female superintendents in the “Sex Education” scenario, though male and female board chairs are very close in their choices. In fact, where a majority of male superintendents do not want to take the lead in this scenario, a large majority of females do.

Finally, there is a very similar gap seen in the “Culturally Different” scenario where once again female superintendents are much more apt to be active in resolving the issue. Given that the other groups are much less likely to do so, there would seem to be potential for role conflict.

### *Superintendent/School Board Relations*

The roles of superintendent and school board chair have intrinsic tension. School boards are charged with overseeing a school system staffed by professionals in an industry that most school board members have no professional experience with. As the local head of that industry, the superintendent must represent the interests of the students and staff, while at the same time answer to the board that represents the public. The board's job is to set policy indicating the community's expectations of the schools; the superintendent's job is to ensure that policy is executed. Due to the divided nature of this system, both sides must be especially careful to ensure clear communication and expectations so that the boundary of policy definition and policy execution remains clear. The following scenarios involve testing this boundary.

“Chain of Command” puts forth a situation in which a teacher consistently attempts to short circuit the proper way to handle school problems, despite being asked to follow the proper protocol. In this instance, the teacher has gone directly to a board member with a problem before expressing the concern to the superintendent.

In “Hiring a Teacher” the dilemma posed concerns three equally-qualified candidates for an open teaching position. The three candidates all have average recommendations. One candidate is the spouse of a board member, one is the spouse of a local businessman and the final candidate just graduated from college and has no experience.

The “Negotiations” scenario focuses on the traditional role of the superintendent in the described district to participate directly in bargaining sessions. However, a recent report from the state administrator organization recommends that superintendents not participate in such a way during negotiations.

Table 16. Responses to Superintendent/Board Relations Scenarios (Ranked from most active to least active, when appropriate; “Action” responses in italics)

	Would Do		Should Do	
	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair
<b>Chain of Command</b>				
<i>Recommend to the board that the teacher not be rehired since his conduct is in violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession.</i>	0%	5%	2%	7%
<i>Request the board formally to disapprove of the teacher's actions.</i>	23	12	21	12
<i>Request board members not to discuss school matters with the teacher</i>	60	69	60	61
Ignore the matter.	17	14	17	21
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	83	86	83	80
<b>Hiring a Teacher</b>				
<i>Seek new applicants, leaving the position vacant for a while.</i>	88	71	85	78
Recommend that the newly graduated teacher be hired.	8	17	11	10
Recommend that the businessman's wife be hired.	4	12	4	12
Recommend that the board member's wife be hired.	0	0	0	0
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	88	71	85	78
<b>Negotiations</b>				
<i>Take part in the bargaining as a full participant and spokesman for the board.</i>	50	28	47	25
<i>Take part in the bargaining sessions as an advisor to the board.</i>	33	40	36	40
<i>Take part in the bargaining sessions in an advisory capacity to both teachers and board.</i>	0	4	2	6
Take no part in the negotiations as the administrators' association recommends.	17	28	15	29
<i>Total “Action” responses</i>	83	72	85	71

*Chain of command.*

Several times in the past year a teacher has gone directly to board members with school problems. The superintendent has talked with the teacher about this and has insisted that in the future such matters be discussed with him first. Today the superintendent learned that the teacher has gone to a board member with another school problem without discussing it with the superintendent first.

The superintendent could recommend to the board that the teacher not be rehired since his conduct is in violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession. request the board formally to disapprove of the teacher's actions,

request board members not to discuss school matters with the teacher or ignore the matter. (Scenario 6)

This scenario goes to the heart of board/superintendent relations because it pits the right of a community member to be heard, with the need for the administration to work appropriately with its employees. Based on the number of comments from respondents, it is a common and important issue. A solid majority of both superintendents and board chairs chose to request the board not to discuss school matters with the teacher, but superintendents were more likely to request a formal disapproval from the board.

Typical of board chair responses was this comment from a large-district chair: “The discussion here should revolve around skipping the lines of authority and holding people accountable. The board in this instance is undermining the authority of the superintendent. If it is requested that board members not talk to the teacher, it should be until after the superintendent has had an opportunity to talk with the teacher first. The superintendent should not control what the board does but he or she has a right and a responsibility to run the district.” However, several responses went beyond this “boiler-plate” answer, particularly from the medium and smaller district chairs. “Board members still are able to discuss issues with constituents or with staff,” said one. Another said, “Teachers are within their rights to call board members. However, the board member must encourage and direct the teacher to the appropriate administrator to deal with the teacher's issues. If the board member does not direct the teacher, there is a high appearance of micro-managing by the board member.”

Some superintendents, predictably, were less sanguine about staff members going directly to board members without talking their supervisor first. “The teacher is insubordinate and should be handled according to district policy,” wrote one large-district superintendent. A small-district superintendent commented similarly. “The teacher needs to be told by the

board that the proper chain of command is to go through the principal and the superintendent before going to the board. If the teacher is unable to do so, then disciplinary proceedings need to begin for insubordination.”

The majority of superintendents, however, understood the need to balance their role with the roles of the board and teacher. One small-district superintendent saw this as a teaching opportunity. “[I would] remind the board of their responsibility to have the teacher use proper and adopted procedures. I would also remind the board of their responsibility to act as a whole and not make decisions individually.” A mid-size superintendent had a similar response. “Additional direction would include encouraging the Board members to strongly direct or coach the teacher to follow acceptable lines of communication.”

There were a total of nine non-responses from the matched pairs of respondents, as well as three non-agreeing responses. The non-agreeing responses indicated that board chairs were more likely to ignore the incident than were superintendents.

#### *Hiring a teacher.*

At the middle of the school term one of the married teachers on the staff left the district because her husband had been transferred to another state. The superintendent has three candidates for the vacant position: a board member's wife, with average recommendations; the wife of a community businessman, also with average recommendations; and a young man newly graduated from college with no teaching experience, with average grades and average recommendations from the school. During the past few days the superintendent has had unsolicited advice about whom to hire from: a business associate of one applicant's husband; a member of the school board on behalf of another applicant; and an old friend who heads the placement office of the college from which the district employs many of its teachers, on behalf of a third applicant.

The superintendent could seek new applicants, leaving the position vacant for a while, recommend that the newly graduated teacher be hired, recommend that the businessman's wife be hired or recommend that the board member's wife be hired. (Scenario 10)

The vast majority of the respondents chose to look for more applicants. The rationale for this was most often along the lines of “average is not good enough.” “Hire an average person only when necessary to fill a position,” said one large-district chair; this was a common refrain. A mid-sized district board chair commented, “If not urgent and no clear candidate, have patience and get a large applicant pool. Teachers are too critical to success.”

Superintendents felt the same way. “I would never accept just “average” unless I had no way of getting any other candidates,” stated one large-district superintendent. Another said, “The key here is “average” recommendations. We don’t hire those folks and won’t fill the slot without broadening the search.” A small-school superintendent, often a difficult place to attract a large pool of good candidates, had this to say: “Teachers are hired for life. Average recommendations don’t cut it anymore. A board member’s wife is not eligible as per statute. With an opening mid year, the job would have been posted “open until filled”, giving us options on when it could be filled. With such a small pool, I would stretch things out, perhaps with a long-term sub, then re-open the position in the summer to draw a larger pool of applicants.”

A common theme throughout the comments was the role of collaborative hiring, perhaps indicating a substantive shift in hiring practices over the last 30 years. “Form an interview committee to interview each candidate and let the committee choose,” said one small-district chair. A large-district superintendent agreed. “The first mistake here is having the superintendent solely responsible for the hiring decision. It would be far better to have a committee consisting of the principal, several staff members and parents evaluate the candidates based on a set criteria and then make the hiring recommendation to the superintendent.”

The 28 matched pairs indicated eight non-responses and seven disagreements between board chairs and their superintendents. Of these disagreements, the majority of board chairs favored hiring the businessman's wife, while a majority of superintendents believed that re-opening the position was the proper course.

*Negotiations.*

A recent report of the state school administrators' organization has recommended that the superintendent of schools not participate in direct, face-to-face negotiations with the teachers' associations over contract matters. But you know that the local teachers' association expects the superintendent to participate as a spokesman for the board in upcoming bargaining sessions.

The superintendent could take part in the bargaining as a full participant and spokesman for the board, take part in the bargaining sessions as an advisor to the board, take part in the bargaining sessions in an advisory capacity to both teachers and board or take no part in the negotiations as the administrators' association recommends. (Scenario 11)

Superintendents and board chairs were quite divided about the proper role of the superintendent in the bargaining process. This ranged from "In our district the superintendent never engages in face-to-face negotiations with the union," (a large-district chair) to the small-district superintendent who wrote "My School Board has directed this role."

Board chairs recognized that bargaining practices are largely a result of district culture; one large-district chair noted, "It sounds like this is the past and current practice. I would not change it without some process, certainly not just because of a study report." A mid-sized district chair echoed that sentiment saying, "This is only a recommendation; each superintendent has a choice--he/she needs to do what is best for the district." One small-district board chair was so offended by the recommendation that he/she said the superintendent should fully participate in negotiations and also "cancel membership in the administrator's organization."

Of the 28 matched pairs, there were 2 non-responses and seven disagreements. The disagreements were all within medium or large districts. The most popular choice for board chairs was that the superintendent should not take part in negotiations, while the superintendents' most popular choice was split between not taking part in the negotiations and taking part as a full participant. Obviously, the potential for role conflict is high in these situations.

Table 17 describes any differences in action responses based the district characteristics of size or geographic location.

Table 17. Action Responses to Sup't/Board Relations Scenarios by District Characteristics

	Size					
	Large		Medium		Small	
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt
Chain of Command	86 %	77 %	83 %	81 %	90 %	92 %
Hiring a Teacher	74	77	77	95	56	85
Negotiations	47	73	81	80	91	100
	Region					
	East		West			
	Chair	Supt	Chair	Supt		
Chain of Command	71	89	93	77		
Hiring a Teacher	43	81	85	92		
Negotiations	81	91	68	76		

There are two areas in which district size seems to play a role in the responses. There is a noteworthy gap in expectations of small-district board chairs and superintendents in the “Hiring a Teacher” scenario, with more superintendents intending to take an active stance than the chairs thought they would. Unfortunately, there were no comments from these board chairs that shed any light on their decisions. Comments from these superintendents referenced the need to hire above-average candidates. “The best candidate should be hired. I place great merit in loyalty. If the local business person's wife had been working as a



successful substitute, she would be offered the position.” There were also comments which highlighted the difference in the law relative to hiring board members’ spouses. Class I districts (districts with more than 2,000 students) are not allowed to hire spouses of board members, while Class II districts are allowed to do so.

The “Negotiations” scenario evidenced an expectation gap between large-district chairs and superintendents, with fewer than half of these board chairs expecting their superintendents to take an active role in negotiations, while large-district superintendents intended to take an active role, at a rate similar to superintendents as a whole. One board chair commented that, “The superintendent does not need to be in on all sessions. In fact it may be smart to be in reserve but informed about the direction of the talks. We work on a collaborative bargaining model and there are fewer surprises.” Another said, “There may be times when the Superintendent needs to “step in” and validate the process; however, the superintendent should appoint the district's negotiations team to represent the board and its parameters.”

Superintendents in this group were largely silent, though one whose choice did indicate a role as an advisor said, “Regardless of what the teachers' association expects, it is foolhardy for the superintendent to participate in the bargaining sessions. It is, however, the superintendent's role to advise the Board behind the scenes as bargaining parameters are set.”

Regional differences were minimal; all groups believed the superintendent should be active in these scenarios with the single exception of east-side board chairs in the “Hiring a Teacher” scenario. These board chairs made such comments as “The superintendent should recommend the best person for the job; however, with only average recommendations, he/she reopen the position. Hire a substitute until the position can be filled with a strong candidate”

and “Form an interview committee to interview each candidate and let the committee choose.” These comments indicate the desire for the process to result in a qualified candidate rather than worrying about who conducts the process.

Superintendents tended to be more concerned that the process was set up correctly, with the belief that a good process would result in the best candidate being hired. “Hiring is the principal's role in most districts of size. Hire for excellence,” said one. Another made the point that “Hiring in our district is done at the site level, under the leadership of the principal. I would refer the situation to the principal.”

Table 18 describes respondents in terms of individual characteristics of tenure, experience and gender.

Table 18. Action Responses to Sup’t/Board Relations Scenarios by Individual Characteristics

	Tenure in Current Position					
	Chair		Supt		Chair	
	<=2 Years	3-5 Years	>=6 Years			
Chain of Command	88 %	71 %	87 %	89 %	78 %	85 %
Hiring a Teacher	91	93	44	82	44	88
Negotiations	75	81	44	89	90	78
	Experience in Position					
	<=5 Years		6-10 Years		>=11 Years	
Chain of Command	75	50	94	88	83	83
Hiring a Teacher	91	50	71	100	54	87
Negotiations	79	100	72	100	68	80
	Gender					
	Male			Female		
Chain of Command	87	81	83	89		
Hiring a Teacher	67	87	74	89		
Negotiations	79	84	64	80		

Tenure does seem to impact board/superintendent relationships. Both the “Hiring a Teacher” and “Negotiations” scenarios indicate growing expectation gaps for those who have

three or more years of tenure in a position. This may help explain the short tenure of the modern superintendency. This same tendency is seen when looking at total years of experience as well, though perhaps this is less serious as the numbers indicate at least 50% of the respondents in each category expect the superintendent to be an activist in these scenarios.

There are some gaps when reviewing responses in terms of gender, though no pattern is discernible. There is both inter-gender and inter-position variation. In general, these gaps are no different than for the general population of respondents.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

The goal of this study was to understand the similarities and differences in superintendent and board chair perceptions regarding the major decisions that face school districts. Specifically, these three questions were addressed:

1. What, if any, are the differences in role expectations and perceptions between superintendents and board chairs
2. Do these differences vary by district according to demographic make-up?
3. Can organizational, leadership and decision-making theory be used to explain these differences?

Board chairs and superintendents were found to be very tightly aligned in their views of what *should* be done in a given scenario (role expectation) and what *would* in fact be done (role perception), when viewed through the lens of whose role it was to take the lead in achieving a solution. While there were differences in opinion on what specific solution should be applied, there were only three scenarios in which the respondents varied by more than five percentage points in choosing who should take the activist role, and these differences were divided among four leadership strands (Table 19). Overall, demographic differences were most likely to affect decisions made about finance, while personnel was the least likely to be so affected.

The size of the district, the tenure of the respondent and the gender of the respondent were associated with who would take the lead in solving a given problem, i.e., who was action oriented. Large districts superintendents and board chairs were more likely to disagree

about school program issues than their medium- and small-district counterparts. As tenure and experience grow, so does the divergence on who should be the activist party. Finally, female superintendents and female board chairs were the least likely to agree on who should play the activist role in any given leadership strand, with the exception of personnel.

### *Interpretation of the Results*

#### *Role Expectation Differences*

Superintendent expectations and board chair expectations were largely the same. Table 19 indicates the differences in the percentage of action responses to each scenario. Positive numbers indicate that superintendents viewed their role as more active than the board chairs did, while negative numbers indicate that board chairs viewed the superintendent's role to be more active than the superintendent did. For example, 57% of superintendents indicated they would take an active response to the "Coaches' Raise" scenario, while only 39% of board chairs did so. This 18% difference is reflected in Table 19. This same difference is shown for the action the two respondent groups said *should* be taken.

Table 19. Differences in Superintendent and Board Action Responses

	Would	Should
<b>Finance</b>		
Coaches' Raise	18%	18%
Extra Cash	23	25
Hire Aides	-5	-14
<b>Personnel</b>		
Alternative Association	18	16
Employee Refusal	-2	-2
Mental Illness	-2	0
Missing Teacher	18	16
Music Teacher	3	-2
Staff Freedom	-10	-10
Teacher Offer	-14	-12
<b>Public Relations</b>		
Chamber	1	-2
Citizen Council	-1	-4
Labor Federation	3	5
SDS	4	-2
<b>School Programs</b>		
Culturally Different	-3	6
Diversity	2	2
Sex Education	3	5
Teacher Letter	-11	-5
War Protest	8	6
<b>Superintendent/Board Relations</b>		
Chain of Command	-3	3
Hiring a Teacher	17	7
Negotiations	11	14

The first thing immediately apparent is that variance between what “would” be done and what “should” be done is small. While there were six scenarios in which this gap was greater than five percentage points, three of these differences were a matter of degree, not direction. Of the three remaining scenarios, two indicated that chairs thought that superintendents should take a more action-oriented stance than the superintendents thought they should, while one indicated the opposite.

The public relations leadership strand evidenced disparity above five percentage points only in the SDS scenario. Responses to the remaining scenarios were quite closely

aligned. When opinions were split as to proper action, the split was consistent for both board chairs and superintendents. As indicated in Table 10, both were split concerning how active the superintendent should be in the “SDS” and “Citizen Council” scenarios, while they were virtually unanimous in their support of superintendent action in the “Chamber” and “Labor Federation” scenarios.

The remaining four leadership strands all had disparities between superintendent and board chair responses greater than five percentage points. Of the three finance scenarios, “Coaches’ Raise” and “Extra Cash” indicate that superintendents would take action more often than board chairs thought they would or should. Interestingly, the final scenario (“Hire Aides”) indicates that board chairs thought that superintendents should be more active than they in fact would be. There was only one possible action response in this scenario, and it involved informing the teachers’ association that such a decision was none of their affair. The greater support of board chairs for this response may indicate the fact that they do not have to work on a daily basis with the teachers’ association.

There were seven scenarios in the personnel leadership strand. Of these, four revealed differences between superintendent and chair responses of more than five points. Two of these (“Alternative Association” and “Missing Teacher”) denote that superintendents would be more active in their responses than the board chairs believed they would be. Conversely, board chairs wanted superintendents to be more actively involved in “Staff Freedom” and “Teacher Offer.”

Of the five school program scenarios, “Teacher Letter” was the only one in which there is a gap that indicates the board chairs looked to the superintendent to be more active than the superintendents would be, while “War Protest” was the only scenario in which the

superintendents believed action was more necessary than the board did. Finally, the Superintendent/Board Relations leadership strand was comprised of three scenarios; two of them indicated a gap between what the superintendent would do and what the board chair expected of the superintendent. Both “Hiring a Teacher” and “Negotiations” indicate that superintendents would take a more active role than the board chairs thought they would or should.

### *Demographic Differences*

One way to analyze demographic differences in responses is in terms of directionality of the tendency to believe the superintendents will take action in a given scenario; does the tendency of the superintendent to take action in a given scenario vary by size of district, location of district, tenure, experience or gender? Tables 20 and 21 indicates those scenarios and variables in which the tendency of the whole was different than the tendency of the subgroup by at least five percentage points. For example, while the tendency of all superintendents was to be more action-oriented than board chairs in the “Coaches’ Raise” scenario, this was not the case in every group. The trend in those with more than two years’ tenure or between female board chairs and female superintendents was reversed.



Table 20. District Characteristic Variances In Superintendent Action Greater than 5%

Scenario	Large District	Medium District	Small District	East-side	West-side
<u>Finance</u>					
Coaches' Raise					
Extra cash					
Hire Aides	X				
<u>Personnel</u>					
Mental Illness					
Staff Freedom					
Music Teacher					
Employee Refusal					
Missing Teacher					
Alternative Association					
Teacher Offer		X			
<u>Public Relations</u>					
SDS			X	X	
Labor Federation					
Chamber					
Citizen Council		X			
<u>School Programs</u>					
War Protest	X				
Teacher Letter	X				
Diversity					
Sex Education					
Culturally Different	X				X
<u>Sup't/Board Relations</u>					
Chain of Command				X	
Hiring a Teacher					
Negotiations					
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 21. Individual Characteristic Variances In Superintendent Action Greater than 5%

Scenario	<=2 Years Tenure	3-5 Years Tenure	>=6 Years Tenure	<=5 Years Exp.	6-10 Years Exp.	>=11 Years Exp.	Male	Female
<u>Finance</u>								
Coaches' Raise		X	X					X
Extra cash								X
Hire Aides	X	X		X		X		
<u>Personnel</u>								
Mental Illness				X				
Staff Freedom		X			X			
Music Teacher					X			
Employee Refusal								
Missing Teacher								
Alternative Association								
Teacher Offer								
<u>Public Relations</u>								
SDS				X	X			
Labor Federation								
Chamber					X			X
Citizen Council			X			X		X
<u>School Programs</u>								
War Protest								
Teacher Letter		X				X		X
Diversity								
Sex Education	X					X		
Culturally Different		X						X
<u>Sup't/Board Relations</u>								
Chain of Command			X					X
Hiring a Teacher				X				
Negotiations			X					
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

Viewed in this fashion, some interesting trends emerge. Large districts had considerable divergence within the school programs strand, indicating a potential for role conflict between those superintendents and board chairs. It also appears that increasing tenure leads to increasing potential for role conflict. Perhaps most surprising is the tendency for female superintendents and female board chairs to have conflicting views in all strands but personnel.

Another way to look at this data is to view the number of such reversals as a ratio to the number of scenarios in a given strand. Using the same criteria to define “differences” as discussed previously, Table 22 details these results:

Table 22. Demographic Differences As A Function of Leadership Strands

Leadership Strand	# of Scenarios	# of Differences	Ratio
Finance	3	9	3.0
Personnel	7	5	0.7
Public Relations	4	10	2.5
Programs	5	11	2.2
Superintendent/Board Relations	3	5	1.7

Among the 28 matched pairs of superintendents and board chairs, a similar pattern can be seen. Finance scenarios evoked the most disagreement, and personnel the least. Table 23 shows that within each leadership strand there was some ambivalence, with each leadership stand having a large percentage of non-responses.

Table 23. Matched Pair Agreement

Leadership Strand	Agreement	Disagreement	Non-response
Finance	31%	46%	23%
Personnel	71	11	18
Public Relations	55	27	18
Programs	69	17	14
Superintendent/Board Relations	57	20	23

As can be seen, finance is the most contentious strand, while personnel is the least. How might these differences be explained using some of the models discussed earlier?

*Organizational, Leadership And Decision-Making Theory*

School districts are complex systems, and like all systems they have constantly interacting and interrelated parts, as well as sub-systems. The superintendent and school board is one such sub-system. While serving in their roles of policy makers and executors, they are certainly pattern-maintenance organizations (Parsons, 1960), yet it seems that the very organization of this sub-system ensures some level of conflict. The demands and nature

of both the organizational and idiographic dimensions are evident in virtually every response to the survey. Numerous responses indicated this, using such phrases as “our superintendent would never do this” or “such an event could not happen in our district.” Given those same scenarios other districts responded by saying, in effect, “That happened to us and this is how we handled it.” Sometimes given scenarios were perceived of as illegal, when in fact they were not. Obviously, one of the major roles of the superintendent and board is to understand the organizational expectations and norms and act within them. Indeed, it might be argued that the primary leadership role of the superintendent is to work within the norms of the learning community to help them reach their highest educational potential.

The responses to the scenarios made clear that superintendents utilize at least the first three of the four frames of the Bolman-Deal leadership model: structure, politics, human resources and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 1992). By designing and refining policy recommendations, superintendents work with boards to keep the organization on the path to meeting its goals. This super-structure gives the district its goals and defines the means to reach them.

The scenarios were designed to delineate the political subtext inherent in the job description of school boards and superintendents. Allocation of resources, special interest groups, various belief systems, negotiations and scarce resources are the daily grist for their mill. It is in this frame that we see the greatest evidence of conflict and the greatest demographic variability. The scenarios revealed that this complex mix often leads to a disparity in resolving the issues that is often based on the human dimension.

Superintendents often act as a buffer between the staff’s actions and the community’s expectations. Several scenarios emphasized this juxtaposition; the community’s expectation

might be that a teacher should do one thing, yet there was no policy or law that so dictated. This type of scenario was presented several times in the form of personnel issues; it is interesting to note that this leadership strand had the lowest amount of role conflict.

Given the wide variety of responses to the various scenarios, it seems clear that districts often use the Garbage Can model when making decisions, otherwise described as “organized anarchy” (Daft, 1983). This means that school districts sometimes have ambiguous goals and solutions, that the cause and effect relationships are poorly understood and that there is a high turnover of those who solve problems to limited time and energy. When looking at the respondents as a whole, there was wide agreement in most scenarios about who should take the lead; however, the manner that lead should be taken often varied both within the entire group and within the various variable-defined groups.

#### *Comparison to Boone’s Study*

In 1971, Boone found that role perception (what action *would* be taken) was affected by the location of the school district, district size and experience level of the respondents. The current study confirmed these effects, with the exception of school district location. Of the 22 scenarios that could be analyzed in this way, only three showed variation of greater than five percentage points between the responses of east- and west-side participants.

Boone also found that role expectation (what action *should* be taken) was affected by these same variables. The current study found that there was very little difference between perceptions and expectations. Most respondents in most scenarios believed what should happen and what would happen were the same.

Boone’s analysis focused on using the means of the responses for comparison. For this study’s purposes, it seemed more appropriate to focus on who was taking action, i.e., the

superintendent or the board chair. This change was made in order to accommodate those scenarios with choices that were not strictly ordinal and could not be analyzed in that way.

### *Implications of the Findings*

Seen as a group, most superintendents and most board chairs agree on who should be the primary actor in a given scenario. The fact that demographic factors such as district size, tenure/experience and gender may affect this perception should be taken into account as these public servants attempt to work together. There is no shortage of opportunity for superintendents and board chairs to confront divisive situations. It is not remarkable that there are differences in approach; what *is* remarkable is that the differences of approach are as rare as they are. Even though conflict is inherent in the design of the superintendent/board relationship, the ability of both parties to work together and accomplish their mission may be enhanced by being aware of those demographic issues the data show to be problematic (district size, tenure and gender) and working to minimize those conflicts.

### *Questions for Future Research*

This study revealed that the same variables that affected the perception of the superintendent's role in 1971 are active today, with the exception of a geographical divide. While it is important to note this study's limitations in sample size, there are several questions that were raised which could be addressed in future research. These include the following issues:

1. What role, if any, have professionalization opportunities such as superintendent certification courses and WSSDA board classes played in reducing the east/west differences?
2. What effect, if any, has improved technology had in reducing the effect of this variable?

3. What role, if any, has House Bill 1209 and the resultant education reform played in bringing eastern and western Washington school systems together in expectations and understanding?

4. Does increased mobility (the flow of superintendents between the east and west side) have an effect on superintendent and board expectations?

5. Why does there appear to be greater possibility for role conflict between female superintendents and female board chairs than for their male counterparts?

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**APPENDIX A: SCHOOL DISTRICTS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Student FTE</b>
Aberdeen	W	3,750
Anacortes	W	3,075
Auburn	W	12,607
Bainbridge Island	W	3,848
Battle Ground	W	11,237
Bellevue	W	14,950
Bellingham	W	10,173
Bethel	W	15,752
Bremerton	W	6,536
Bridgeport	E	623
Burlington-Edison	W	3,550
Camas	W	3,828
Cape Flattery	W	558
Cascade*	E	1,475
Central Kitsap	E	13,227
Central Valley, Spokane	E	10,800
Centralia	W	3,327
Chehalis	W	2,733
Cheney	E	3,426
Clarkston	E	2,812
Clover Park	W	12,920
Dixie	E	35
East Valley, Yakima*	E	2,240
Eastmont	E	5,111
Edmonds	W	21,296
Ellensburg	E	2,921
Enumclaw	W	5,161
Everett	W	18,355
Evergreen, Clark	W	22,000
Evergreen, Stevens*	E	16
Federal Way	W	22,381
Franklin Pierce	W	7,620
Garfield	E	181
Grand Coulee Dam	E	927
Highline	W	18,717
Hoquiam	W	2,150
Issaquah	W	13,821
Kelso	W	5,117
Kennewick	E	13,801
Kent	W	25,923
Kittitas	E	516
Klickitat	E	172

Lake Washington	W	22,797
Longview	W	7,291
Marysville	W	11,210
Mead	E	7,982
Mercer Island	W	4,257
Methow Valley*	E	663
Moses Lake	E	6,078
Mount Vernon	W	54,597
Mukilteo	W	13,967
Newport	E	1,235
North Franklin	E	1,830
North Kitsap	W	6,759
North River	W	55
North Thurston	W	12,639
Northshore	W	19,025
Oak Harbor	W	6,240
Olympia	W	9,128
Orcas Island	W	517
Othello	E	2,799
Pasco	E	8,680
Pe Ell	W	310
Peninsula	W	9,547
Port Angeles	W	4,961
Pullman	E	2,227
Puyallup	W	18,392
Renton	W	12,550
Richland	E	9,313
Riverside	E	2,000
Riverview*	W	2,980
Seattle	W	46,772
Sedro-Wooley	W	4,220
Shoreline	W	9,700
Skykomish	W	101
Snohomish	W	8,392
Spokane	E	31,903
Sumner	W	7,715
Sunnyside	E	5,147
Tacoma	W	31,768
Toppenish	E	3,428
Tukwila*	W	2,550
University Place	W	5,028
Vancouver	E	20,908
Walla Walla	E	5,595
Wapato	E	3,265
Wenatchee	E	6,979
West Valley, Spokane	E	3,379

West Valley, Yakima	E	4,552
Woodland	W	1,874
Yakima	E	14,211

\* Indicates districts that have been renamed, consolidated or added since the 1971 study by Boone.

## **APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER**

Dear Board Chairperson/Superintendent:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Situational Expectation Record. The Record forms the basis for a doctoral dissertation to be written under the direction of Dr. Donald Reed and sponsored by the Department of Education, Washington State University. The study is designed to explore role expectations and perceptions held for a superintendent of schools in Washington. Respondent groups include school board chairmen and superintendents from across the state.

In conducting the research we do not propose to make value judgments about school administration. It is not our intention to approve or disapprove of any school board or superintendent or of any type of administrative practice or decision. Rather, we hope the study will aid in defining the role a Washington school superintendent fills. Rest assured that all replies will be held in strictest confidence.

We hope that you will see fit to aid us in our research. If so, will you please fill out the record as directed as well as the biographical data included and return them to us in the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Thank you very much,

Stephen Holland  
Graduate Student  
Department of Education  
Washington State University

## APPENDIX C: SURVEY AS GIVEN TO RESPONDENTS

### BOARD CHAIRPERSON/SUPERINTENDENT

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SITUATIONAL EXPECTATION RECORD

Below are a number of situations that could take place in your school district. As you read each situation assume for the moment that it has occurred in your district and as a school board member/superintendent you are concerned with its solution. After reading each situation please read the list of possible solutions and indicate:

- a. The number of the solution which YOU THINK should be chosen, and
- b. The number of the solution which you think THE PRESENT SUPERINTENDENT would choose.

Your responses will be held in strictest confidence so please indicate your FRANK and HONEST opinions. If you have any comments to make about your choices, please make them in the space provided.

#### EXAMPLE:

After school today your superintendent received a call from a parent whose boy rides the school bus. She complained that the bus driver made her boy and two others leave the bus about one-half mile from their stop because they had been fighting.

Upon checking, the superintendent found that the mother's report was correct. The superintendent could:

1. Recommend that the bus driver be fired.
2. Call in the bus driver and explain that if this happened again he would be fired.
3. Point out to the mother that her boy had been fighting on the bus and that the bus driver was right in making him walk.
4. Report the matter to the board and let them decide what to do.

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

Please mark the appropriate demographic information.

1. Age

1.  30-34 3.  41-45 5.  51-55 7.  Over 60  
2.  35-40 4.  46-50 6.  55-60

2. Sex

1.  Male  
2.  Female

3. Highest level of education completed

1.  elementary school 4. some college  
2.  some high school 5. college graduate  
3.  high school graduate 6. graduate or professional schooling

4. Income class

1.  below \$20,000 4.  \$40,000-\$49,999  
2.  \$20,000-\$29,999 5.  \$50,000-\$59,999  
3.  \$30,000-\$39,999 6.  Over \$60,000

5. Location of district

1.  East of the Cascade Mountains  
2.  West of the Cascade Mountains

6. District size (FTE enrollment)

1.  11,000 and over  
2.  10,999 to 2,500  
3.  2,499 and under



7. Years in present position as either board chair or superintendent

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years or less | 4. <input type="checkbox"/> 9-11 years       |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years       | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years'     |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> 6-8 years       | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> 15 years or more |

9. Total years of experience as board member or school administrator

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years or less | 4. <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 years      |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years      | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 years      |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years     | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> 26 years or more |

### Situation One

Upon the advice of the superintendent the board relieved a teacher of his classroom duties because of behavior over a period of years that was diagnosed as mental illness. After a period of treatment the teacher applied for a position in another school.

Today the superintendent received a request from the superintendent of a neighboring district for a confidential recommendation for this teacher.

The superintendent could:

1. Ignore the request for a reference.
2. Recommend that the teacher not be hired because of his previous record of mental illness.
3. Omit any mention of the teacher's classroom difficulties or doubts as to his effectiveness.
4. Inform the inquiring district that the teacher had been relieved of his duties because of mental illness but had been treated.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Two

A group of adults and students from your district hold a meeting at which they determine to publicize their opposition to the war in Vietnam and their support of an immediate truce.

Today, small groups of students appear at the schools wearing black arm bands which, they say, are symbols of mourning for soldiers killed in the war.

In reacting to this situation, the superintendent could:

1. Suspend the students immediately.

2. Telephone the parents of the students involved and inform them that their children will be suspended if disturbances occur.
3. Take no action since the students were exercising their right of free speech.
4. Inform the board of what has occurred and let them take appropriate action.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Three

A school board election is to be held in your district next month. At the same time the community will vote on a bond issue to build a new school. One of the two candidates for a seat on the school board favors the construction while the other opposes it.

Today the opposing candidate complained to the superintendent that certain teachers were calling on friends and acquaintances and urging them to vote for the construction levy and the candidate who favors it.

The superintendent could:

1. Consider the teachers' actions in accord with their rights as citizens and do and say nothing about it.
2. Inform the teachers that they may continue working for the bond issue but must remain neutral as to board candidates.
3. Order the teachers to desist from all political activity in connection with the election.
4. Request that the board issue a policy statement covering teacher behavior in this type of a situation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation Four

A patron of your school district has informed you that the music director is giving private music lessons for payment to many of the members of his school band as well as to other students in his music classes. The patron maintains that since the music director is paid a salary to teach music, it is not right for him to charge parents for this.

In this instance, the superintendent could:

1. Inform the patron that since the lessons were given after school hours, the district had no control over them.
2. Inform the patron that it was not in the interest of the children or of the school to stop those who wished from obtaining private music instruction.
3. Inform the teacher that his conduct was unethical according to the NEA Code of Ethics and that he must stop accepting money for private music lessons for students in his classes.
4. Bring the matter before the board and let them take some action.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation Five

A custodian in your district has been in the same school for a number of years. Upon several occasions the principal has remarked that the custodian's work was not what it should be and that he refused to take any suggestions from the principal.

This morning when school opened, the building was very cold and it was obvious that none of the rooms or halls had been cleaned. When the principal asked the custodian for an explanation, he refused to discuss the matter.

The superintendent could:

1. Ignore the situation.
2. Fire the custodian immediately.
3. Suspend the custodian from his job until a satisfactory explanation had been received.
4. Request that the custodian appear before the board for a hearing.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Six

Several times in the past year a teacher has gone directly to board members with school problems. The superintendent has talked with the teacher about this and has insisted that in the future such matters be discussed with him first.

Today the superintendent learned that the teacher has gone to a board member with another school problem without discussing it with the superintendent first.

The superintendent could:

1. Request the board formally to disapprove of the teacher's actions.
2. Request board members not to discuss school matters with the teacher

3. Recommend to the board that the teacher not be rehired since his conduct is in violation of the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession.

4. Ignore the matter.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

a.  Should be done?

b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Seven

On the day after Christmas vacation one of the teachers in your district did not return to work. After a time it was evident that the teacher did not intend returning to the district. Today the superintendent learned that the teacher was working in another district across the state.

The superintendent could:

1. Contact the teacher by registered mail asking for an explanation.
2. Instruct the district's legal counsel to bring suit for breach of contract.
3. Inform the state Superintendent of public instruction, requesting that the teacher's certificate be revoked.
4. Request the teachers' association to investigate the matter and make recommendations.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

a.  Should be done?

b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Eight

The teachers on your staff have always belonged 100 percent to the state professional association. Three years ago, the association was recognized as the bargaining agent for the staff. Its authorization, however, ends this year and a new election is to be held.

Last fall a teacher, new to the district, received a charter for a local of the AFT and has organized a union including about 5 percent of the district staff. He intends to contest the election with the professional association.

Since the time has come for the superintendent to recommend contract renewals for staff members, he could:

1. Recommend dismissal for the union leader because of "poor professional attitude."
2. Recommend that the union leader be rehired only if he joins the professional association.
3. Recommend that the union leader be rehired.
4. Present the situation to the board without recommendation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation Nine

Last November the voters in your district defeated a school levy. The local teachers' association supported the levy and campaigned vigorously for its passage.

Today, a letter-to-the-editor, written by a member of the teachers' association appeared in the local newspaper. The letter attacked the manner in which the superintendent and the school board had handled the election and denounced as unfair the proportion of funds subsequently allocated to the school's education and athletic programs.

In dealing with this situation, the superintendent could:

1. Take no action since the teacher is exercising his right of free speech.
2. Invite the teacher in for a talk.
3. Recommend that the teacher be fired.
4. Refer the matter to the board for action.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 10

At the middle of the school term one of the married teachers on the staff left the district because her husband had been transferred to another state. The superintendent has three candidates for the vacant position: a board member's wife, with average recommendations; the wife of a community businessman, also with average recommendations; and a young man newly graduated from college with no teaching experience, with average grades and average recommendations from the school.

During the past few days the superintendent has had unsolicited advice about whom to hire from: a business associate of one applicant's husband; a member of the school board on behalf of another applicant; and an old friend who heads the placement office of the college from which the district employs many of its teachers, on behalf of a third applicant.

The superintendent could:

1. Seek new applicants, leaving the position vacant for a while.
2. Recommend that the newly graduated teacher be hired.
3. Recommend that the businessman's wife be hired.
4. Recommend that the board member's wife be hired.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:



a.  Should be done?

b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 11

A recent report of the state school administrators' organization has recommended that the superintendent of schools not | participate in direct, face-to-face negotiations with the teachers' associations over contract matters.

But you know that the local teachers' association expects the superintendent to participate as a spokesman for the board in upcoming bargaining sessions. The superintendent could:

1. Take part in the bargaining sessions in an advisory capacity to both teachers and board.
2. Take part in the bargaining sessions as an advisor to the board.
3. Take part in the bargaining as a full participant and spokesman for the board.
4. Take no part in the negotiations as the administrators' association recommends.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

a.  Should be done?

b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 12

Two new teachers are being considered for a position in your school. Both have equal experience and both appear to be equally fine teachers. One of the applicants is from your community while the other is from out of state.

Today a prominent citizen of the community approached the superintendent and urged him to hire the hometown applicant. The superintendent could:

1. Hire entirely on the qualifications of the applicants.
2. Refuse to consider either applicant and seek new ones.
3. Refuse to consider the hometown applicant further because of the incident.
4. Hire the hometown applicant to please the citizen.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 13

Due to the requests of several parents, the board has created a new bus route. The route is a small one with only six students to transport. Since none of the regular buses travel in this direction, the board has asked for bids on contract bus service. Two bids have been received. The low bidder is the parent of one of the students who would ride the new bus. He is also the son of one of the school board members. The high bidder lives in the area of the proposed route and also has a child in school. Both bidders would give equally good service.

The superintendent could:

1. Recommend that under the circumstances the board refuse both bids and finance a bus of their own.
2. Recommend that the route not be established until new bids are advertised.
3. Recommend that since the low bidder is related to a board member, the high bidder be awarded the contract.
4. Recommend that the low bidder be awarded the contract regardless of relationship.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

#### Situation 14

Due to increased operating costs, the superintendent finds that in order to give the teaching staff the raise called for in the salary schedule, it will be necessary to ask the people of the district to vote a substantial increase in property taxes.

The superintendent could:

1. Insist that the teachers be granted the salary increase and that the election be held as soon as possible.
2. Recommend to the board that raises not be granted this year.
3. Ask the teachers to remain at the same salary level without a raise
4. Let the board decide what action to take.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

#### Situation 15

Over the past few months several incidents involving white and black students have occurred in your district. Today, a delegation of black students called upon the superintendent and presented him with a list of demands, among which are demands for more black teachers and counselors, a black principal for one of the high schools in the district, and a black studies curriculum. In the face of these demands, the superintendent could:

1. Dismiss the students' demands out of hand.
2. Agree to discuss the demands with the board.
3. Agree to recommend the demands to the board.
4. Accede to the students' demands.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 16

A teacher in your district with an outstanding record of teaching ability has been offered a position in another district at a salary above what your district is paying him. He has told the superintendent about the offer and is seriously thinking of accepting it. The superintendent could:

1. Ignore the matter and do nothing about it.
2. Try to persuade the teacher to stay in the district at his present salary, but with reduced teaching load and extra-curricular activity responsibilities.
3. Take the matter to the board and request an additional raise over the salary schedule to keep this teacher.
4. Take the matter to the board without recommendation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 17

The state college located in a nearby community has an active chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society. Today, it is learned that the group has rented a house near your town's high school from which they intend to conduct a campaign to organize a high school SDS chapter. In this instance, the superintendent could:

1. Ignore the matter as outside the jurisdiction of the school.
2. Allow the campaign to take place but insure that the student body has an opportunity to hear other groups opposed to SDS principles. -
3. Try to stop the campaign with legal action.
4. Let the board decide what action to take.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 18

It is evident that at the end of the present school year the district will have about \$45,000 cash left on hand. If this amount is not spent by the end of the school year, it must be reported as cash balance and thus will serve to reduce taxes in the district next year. The superintendent could:

1. Use the money to purchase equipment needed but not included in this year's budget.
2. Use the money for an advance purchase of school supplies for next year.
3. Consult with the executive committee of the teachers' association as to how to use the money.
4. Inform the board of the existence of the money and let them decide what is to be done.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 19

Last year's budget allocated funds to hire several experienced teachers. But nearly all of the new staff who were hired were recent college graduates with no teaching experience. Thus some un-obligated funds for the employment of personnel are available. -

Today the superintendent received a letter from the president of the teachers' association demanding that the unexpended funds be used to hire additional teachers' aides.

In response to the letter, the superintendent could:

1. Inform the president that the hiring of personnel is an exclusive administrative matter.
2. Agree to discuss the matter with the president.
3. Agree to bring the matter to the attention of the board.
4. Agree to recommend the hiring of additional aides.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?

- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation 20

Last year your district decided, after much debate, to inaugurate a sex-education program. The program will be compulsory for all students grades 6 through 12.

Today the superintendent learns that a group of parents are planning to withdraw their children from the public school as a protest over the sex-education program and to enroll them in a specially organized private school.

The superintendent could:

1. Refuse to eliminate the program.
2. Maintain the program on a voluntary basis.
3. Recommend that the parents and the board meet to discuss their differences.
4. Eliminate the program as the parents demand.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation 21

For the past few years the superintendent and the board have worked closely with a community citizens committee on problems related to the improvement of the school.

Recently this committee elected new officers who obviously feel that the school is not doing enough for the "culturally different" student in the school.

Today the officers of the committee met with the superintendent and presented a petition demanding the establishment of special classes for those students who are "culturally different."

A previous survey of the school indicated about 100 to 125 students who would qualify for these special classes.

The superintendent could:

1. Suggest to the committee that it was not the job of the school to care for those who could not learn in regular classes.
2. Inform the committee that such a program would be too expensive to operate considering the number of students involved.
3. Inform the committee that he will bring the matter before the board without recommendation.
4. Inform the committee that he will recommend to the board that their program be adopted.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 22

In order to balance next year's budget it will be necessary to cut at least one element from the school program. Those elements that have been suggested are: the hot lunch program, the interscholastic athletic program, the music program, and the testing and guidance program. The board has requested that the superintendent investigate and make a recommendation as to which program to cut.

The superintendent could:



1. Recommend that the athletic program be cut.
2. Recommend that the music program be cut.
3. Recommend that the hot lunch program be cut.
4. Recommend that the testing and guidance program be cut.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

### Situation 23

The president of the local federation of labor appeared at a recent board meeting. He expressed general satisfaction with the schools but was disturbed that one of the social studies teachers was showing a number of films put out by the National Association of Manufacturers. He and his organization feel that this is presenting only one point of view to the students. The board has placed the matter in the hands of the superintendent to handle as he sees fit. The superintendent could:

1. Ignore the matter entirely.
2. Request the labor federation president to submit a list of films to you for approval which he thinks will represent labor's viewpoint adequately.
3. Instruct the social studies teacher to give equal attention to labor oriented films.
4. Refuse to order any more films from the National Association of Manufacturers.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation 24

Each year a social hour is held to welcome new faculty to the district. The affair is sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce. In years past the format 'has been set: the superintendent introduces new faculty members, the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee welcomes them to the community and then all adjourn for refreshments.

Without informing the superintendent, the Education Committee chairman altered the program. Instead of the usual welcoming remarks, the new teachers were treated to a long speech by the president of the local John Birch Society on "Creeping Communism in the Schools."

In reacting to this situation, the superintendent could:

1. Express his personal displeasure over the matter to the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee.
2. Express his displeasure over the matter to both the chairman of the Chamber Education Committee and to the teachers.
3. Express his displeasure over the matter to the school board and recommend that the board exercise a closer supervision over future such affairs.
4. Inform the board of what had happened but make no recommendation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):

Situation 25

Considerable criticism of the school and the administration has been circulating in the community recently. The superintendent feels that this is caused by a lack of information in the community as to what the schools are trying to do. To bring school and the community closer together, the superintendent has invited several parents to form a lay Citizens Council for Education.

At the first meeting of the Council officers are nominated and one of the nominees for president is known to be a strong critic of the school and the administration.

The superintendent could:

1. Campaign for the other nominee.
2. Try to influence the unfriendly nominee to take a friendlier view of the schools.
3. Withdraw from the Council.
4. Ignore the situation and try to live with the nominee should he win.

WHAT DO YOU THINK:

- a.  Should be done?
- b.  The superintendent will do.

COMMENTS (IF ANY):