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A DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN NORTH
CAROLINA

East Tennessee State University

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A DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF SCHOOL
BOARD MEMBERS IN NORTH CAROLINA

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty
of the Department of Supervision and Administration
East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Merrell Jenkins Riddle
May 1987

APPROVAL

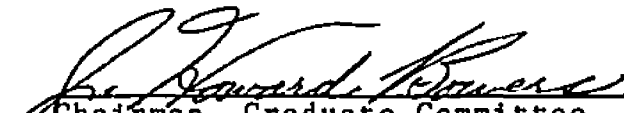
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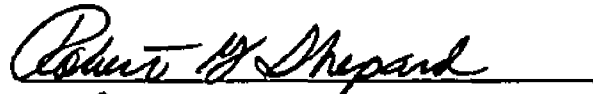
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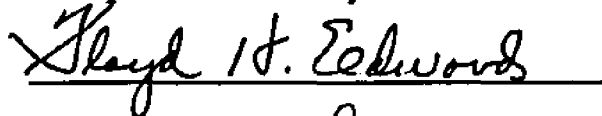
met on the


sixth day of November, 1986.


The committee read and examined her dissertation, supervised her defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that her study be submitted to the Graduate Council and the Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational Administration.


Chairman, Graduate Committee








Associate Vice-President for
Research and Dean of the
Graduate School

Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council

ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN NORTH CAROLINA

by

Merrell Jenkins Riddle

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of school board members in the public school systems of North Carolina in order to obtain a profile of the typical board member and compile the suggested qualifications as a basis for possible change in the legal requirements for membership on local boards of education.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was mailed to all school board members in North Carolina. Responses were received from 309 board members.

A descriptive profile of board of education members in the public school systems of North Carolina was developed; determination of legal requirements for board membership was made; and a list of desirable qualifications for board membership as identified by board members was compiled.

In testing for significant differences between county boards and city boards, it was concluded that the city board members have a higher level of education, higher income, and are more likely to be members of a minority group than county board members. County board members have lived longer in the community than city board members. There was no significant difference between the number of male and female board members with children in the school system.

Recommendations based on the findings suggested that additional study be conducted, utilizing a forced-type of questionnaire.

East Tennessee State University
Institutional Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: A Descriptive Profile of School Board Members in North Carolina.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Merrell J. Riddle

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the above titled project on (date) 2-3-86 with respect to the rights and safety of human subjects, including matters of informed consent and protection of subject confidentiality, and finds the project acceptable to the Board.

Armand R. Jones Chairman

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who provided understanding and support during this endeavor:

My husband, Winston, who gave encouragement and assistance--even as he worked on his own dissertation.

My children--Alan, Robert (and wife, Denise), Susan (and husband, Douglas), and Michael--whose support helped sustain me.

Jodi, my granddaughter, who provided enjoyment and hope.

Norman and Lynne Jenkins, my parents, who long ago encouraged me to continue my education. Then, they wondered if I would ever complete it.

My sister, Betty Ann Lindley, and her family who assumed many of my responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express gratitude to the personnel of East Tennessee State University who were always willing to provide assistance. Special thanks are extended to the members of her doctoral committee--Dr. J. Howard Bowers, Chairman; Dr. Edward J. Dwyer; Dr. Floyd H. Edwards; and Dr. Robert G. Shepard--who provided encouragement as well as support.

An acknowledgment is also made to the personnel of the McDowell County Schools who encouraged me in this endeavor.

Appreciation for technical assistance is expressed to the North Carolina School Boards Association and to the editor of The American School Board Journal.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

Belcastro stated that, "Education is a legal function of the state but much of the operational responsibility for schools is delegated by the state and is vested in the local school board of education and in professional school administrators appointed by the school board."¹

The public school boards are an important and integral part of our American school system. They control the keys to the quality of education which is provided.²

Inherent in the public schools is the desire for continuing improvement. During recent years the schools have received increased attention. As a result of these various studies, many needed changes have been identified.

The public school board has always been a vital component of local government. A board of education today is faced with a myriad of increasingly complex problems. The decisions made by the school board often have far-reaching

¹ Frank P. Belcastro, "Board of Business or Board of Education," Education 102, no. 4 (1982): 381-83.

² Jay L. Nelson and Lewis R. Crum, "The Power and Challenges of Local School Boards," American Education 19, no. 10 (1983): 10-16.

ramifications. As the public becomes more aware, the accountability of the board member increases.

In the last decade there has been reduced support for education by the Federal Government. This reduction in federal support necessitates securing revenues from other sources or making major changes in the local program.

In the past, given boards were often considered rubber stamps for long-term superintendents. Literature indicates that the tenure of superintendents is much shorter now.³ Thus members of the local boards of education must be more knowledgeable about the operation of the school system in order to maintain continuity.

Satisfactory answers to questions such as the following are critical to the well-being of a school system. What is the profile of a typical member of that board? How do board members in the educational regions of North Carolina differ? Is the profile of the typical North Carolina board member similar to the profile of the typical United States school board member? Most importantly, what qualifications do North Carolina board members perceive are needed to serve effectively?

³Larry Cuban, The Urban School Superintendency: A Century and a Half of Change (Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976), 7.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to develop a descriptive profile of board of education members in the public school systems of North Carolina.

The following sub-problems were necessary to complete the study:

1. Determine the legal requirements for eligibility to school board membership;
2. Determine what qualifications board of education members perceived as being desirable;
3. Determine if significant differences existed between county boards and city boards.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of school board members in the public school systems of North Carolina to obtain a profile of the typical board member and compile the suggested qualifications as a basis for possible change in the legal requirements for membership on local boards of education.

Significance of the Study

In many of the counties in North Carolina, the school system is the largest employer. Since the local board of education controls the operation of this organization which

consumes the largest percentage of the county tax revenues, it is essential that the board of education be comprised of well trained and knowledgeable members. Who could better determine what qualifications and training are needed for new or aspiring members than those who have served on the board?

Limitations

1. This study was limited to the 309 board of education members in the public schools of North Carolina who responded to the survey.
2. The data collection utilized a researcher-designed instrument.
3. The data were collected during the spring and summer of 1986.
4. The study of literature was limited to the Charles C. Sherrod Library at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee; on-line searching; D. Hiden Ramsey Library at University of North Carolina-Asheville in Asheville, North Carolina; Hunter Library at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina; North Carolina School Boards Association; Tennessee School Boards Association; and National School Boards Association.

Assumptions

1. The participants in the study responded honestly to the questionnaire.

2. The questionnaire was appropriate for the purpose of the study.

Research Questions Relative to Study

1. What is the length of term for a typical North Carolina school board member?
2. What is the size of a typical school board in North Carolina?
3. What is the age of a typical North Carolina school board member?
4. What is the marital status of a typical North Carolina school board member?
5. How many years does a typical North Carolina school board member serve?
6. What is the occupation of a typical North Carolina school board member?
7. Does a typical North Carolina school board member have children in the school system he/she serves?
8. What are the legal requirements for eligibility to become a member of a school board in North Carolina?
9. What qualifications do school board members in North Carolina feel are desirable for themselves?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses, stated in research form, were developed for sub-problem three to be tested at the .05 level of significance:

H₁ There is a significant difference between the percentage of female members on city school boards and the percentage of female members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₂ There is a significant difference between the percentage of minority members on city school boards and the percentage of minority members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₃ There is a significant difference between the age of members of city school boards and the age of members of county school boards.

H₄ There is a significant difference between the family income of members on city school boards and the family income of members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₅ There is a significant difference between the educational level of members on city school boards and the educational level of members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₆ There is a significant difference between the years lived in the community by members on city school boards and the years lived in the community by members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₇ There is a significant difference between the average years of service by members on city school boards

and the average years of service by members on county school boards in North Carolina.

H₈ There is a significant difference between the percentage of female board members with children in K-12 schools and the percentage of male board members with children in K-12 schools in North Carolina.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions of terms were utilized:

At large. This term refers to the situation in which the school board member is elected to serve the entire school district and not just a portion therefore.⁴

Educational Region. An educational region is one of the eight geographical areas into which the school systems of North Carolina are divided.

Qualification. This term refers to those qualities which are inherently or legally necessary for an individual to be eligible to hold a public office.⁵

School Board. A school board is a legal entity, organized under the laws of the state, which is charged

⁴ Henry C. Black. Black's Law Dictionary. 5th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing, 1979), 114.

⁵ Black, 1116.

with administering the affairs of the local school district.⁶

School Board Member. This term refers to any individual elected or appointed as a member of a school board according to state laws.

School District. A school district is an area designated by state law as a local subdivision of the state. It exists for the purpose of providing maintenance of all of the public schools in its area.⁷

Superintendent. This term refers to an individual employed by the board of education to act as its chief executive officer and who is granted the authority and responsibility to implement policies adopted by the board of education.

Procedures

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the following procedures were necessary:

The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire mailed to the 883 board of education members in North Carolina. The questionnaire was researcher designed, utilizing questions from a national survey of board members by The American School Board Journal.

⁶ Black, 1207.

⁷ Keith Goldhammer. The School Board (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1964), 1.

The data were computer analyzed, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences--Extended (SPSS-X).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, the assumptions, the definitions of terms, the procedures to be followed, the hypotheses, and this outline of the total organization of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of related literature.

Chapter 3 describes the procedures and methodology used in collecting and analyzing the data for the study.

Chapter 4 presents the data and an analysis of the findings.

Chapter 5 contains the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Over twenty-five years ago, John W. Gardner, former secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, stated:

One of the most familiar problems the local district faces with respect to its school board is to devise a system for selection of board members that will insure the recruitment of able citizens and keep patronage at a minimum.⁸

Today, more than at any other time, it is essential to have well-qualified school board members. At least once a month, most of the 95,000 school board members in the United States meet to set policies and determine the direction of approximately 16,000 school systems. The local school board member plays a very important role in the education of our children.⁹

A review of the literature revealed that The American School Board Journal had conducted a number of surveys of representative school board members across the nation. Data from these surveys were compiled on a national and regional basis--not by state--and published in The American School Board Journal.

⁸ John W. Gardner, "National Goals in Education," Goals for Americans (New York: Columbia Univ., 1960), 96.

⁹ Judy Ohmer, "Alaska School Board Members and Their Beliefs" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Oregon, 1983), p. 114.

This study was undertaken to develop a profile of a North Carolina school board member and compile a list of those qualifications which school board members perceive as being desirable for school board membership.

This review of the literature is divided into the following sections: (1) Historical Development of the School Board in America, (2) Legal Qualifications of School Board Members, (3) Roles and Responsibilities of School Board Members, (4) Characteristics of Effective School Board Members, (5) Profile of A School Board Member, (6) Reasons for Becoming a School Board Member, and (7) Findings.

Historical Development of the School Board in America

Although the American school board had very simple beginnings, it holds the key for the continuation and improvement of public education.¹⁰

The local school board of today had its origin in colonial New England. Initially, when the settlers first came to America, the families were responsible for the education of their children. However, since many citizens felt that the children were not being properly instructed, legislation was enacted as a solution to the problem. The

¹⁰ Goldhammer, 8.

Massachusetts Law of 1642 provided officials with the authority to fine those parents who failed to teach their children. Five years later "The Old Deluder Law" was passed which required that the towns with 50 or more households hire a teacher for reading and writing. A second part of that law required that towns with 100 or more households set up Latin Grammar Schools. These laws provided the basis for modern compulsory education.¹¹

Initially, the decisions about the operations of the local schools were made in town meetings. However, as the school population increased, the responsibility for school management was delegated to a committee of the local government. Finally public officials were elected or appointed simply to oversee the operations of the schools. This school committee became today's school board.¹²

Zeigler, Tucker, and Wilson outlined four important phases of school control. Phase I (1835-1900) was identified as the period of "maximum feasible participation." The control of the schools, actual as well as legal, rested with the local boards of education. During this period there was ample opportunity for local citizens

¹¹ Ellwood P. Cubberly, Public Education in the United States (New York: Riverside Press, 1934), 17-18.

¹² Peter J. Cistone, ed., Understanding School Boards (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1975), 19.

to provide input for their board members. This accessibility was due to smaller school districts and the unusually large membership per school board. These Phase I boards achieved greater representation and were more responsive to the needs of the public. A majority of the board members felt that they were responsible for the administration of the schools.¹³

The Progressive Movement introduced reform into urban politics. Thus, Phase II (1900-1968) marked the beginning of the decline of lay control in the local schools. One aim of these changes was to replace political influence with scientific management. This period saw control of local schools assumed by local professionals and the advent of school centralization. The role of the superintendent was expanded while the role of the school board was contracted. Also, usage of experts gained wide acceptance.¹⁴

Near the end of this phase, different demands were placed on the school boards. In 1954 the Federal Government through Brown v. Board of Education demanded that the schools serve as agents of social change while the minority populations demanded that the schools be more responsive to

¹³ L. Harmon Zeigler, Harvey J. Tucker, and L. A. Wilson, "How School Control Was Wrested from the People," Phi Delta Kappan 58 (1977): 534-35.

¹⁴ Zeigler, Tucker, and Wilson, 534-37.

their needs. It was considerably less difficult for the schools to resist the minority groups than to resist the mandates of the federal government.

Phase III (1954-1975) was characterized by a decline of the legal authority of the local boards to various agencies of the Federal Government and Phase IV (1976 to the present) reflected the expansion of state and federal bureaucracies. Zeigler, Tucker, and Wilson felt that school control had been "wrested from the people" and this era may bring about a complete separation between the local school and its public.¹⁵

Shannon also expressed concerns about loss of local control. He identified five threats to the local control of education as follows: (1) expansion of state government, (2) education reforms, (3) choice proposals--i.e. voucher system, tuition tax credits, (4) the courts, and (5) decentralization.¹⁶

Another source of support for local control was the 1983 report by the Advisory Panel on Financing Elementary and Secondary Education, which was appointed by President Reagan. This commission suggested a number of alternatives

¹⁵ Zeigler, Tucker, and Wilson, 534-39.

¹⁶ Thomas A. Shannon, "Local Control Is Under Attack," American School Board Journal 173, no. 5 (1986): 55, 46.

to the categorical aid program.¹⁷ The implementation of the Block Grant has resulted in little increase in local control of education.

It is possible to have too much local control. Downey described some incidents of "local control" which resulted in extended school closings.¹⁸

However, Goldhammer viewed the local board as "necessary because of the decentralized educational system." While the state has the legal responsibility for the operation of the schools, most of this responsibility is referred to the local board. Thus the local school board exercises its legal authority as it acts on behalf of the children in the schools.¹⁹ Until the middle part of the nineteenth century, the school board served as a legislative and an executive body. As educational institutions became more complex, separation of these functions was necessary. Today, the board of education is viewed as the legislative, rather than the executive, agency.²⁰

¹⁷ "Toward More Local Control: Financial Reform for Public Education," American Education 19, no. 4 (1983): 3-4.

¹⁸ Gregg W. Downey, "How too Much 'Local Control' Nearly Destroyed a School System," American School Board Journal 164, no. 4 (1977): 31-35.

¹⁹ Goldhammer, v.

²⁰ Stephen J. Knezevich, Aministration of Public Education, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 232.

Since education is not mentioned in the United States Constitution, the responsibility for public schools is seen as a state function. The Tenth Amendment specifically states that all powers not delegated or enumerated as federal are state powers.

Reeder stated that there is no public position, at least of a local nature, that is more important than that of a board member. The citizens of the next generation are determined by the schools of today and the school boards largely determine what the schools are.²¹

Barnhart in his study suggested that the purpose and the function of education must change in response to social reorganization and technical development. Therefore, the role of the board of education must also change in response to these forces.²²

Legal Qualifications of School Board Members

There are few legal requirements for serving as a board of education member. The qualification that is most common is that the board member must be a qualified voter. Often this is the only qualification. Other qualifications

²¹ Ward G. Reeder, Schools Boards and Superintendents (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 1.

²² Michael Lynn Barnhart, "The Role Perception of Board of Education Personnel" (Ph.D. diss., Miami Univ., 1981), p. 15.

include a minimum age, minimum length of district and/or state residence, minimum level of education, and character.²³

In Tennessee the legal requirements for board membership include a "bonafide [sic] residence, a practical education and recognized integrity, intelligence and ability to administer the duties of the office."²⁴

The legal requirements in Georgia include a qualified voter of the district, twenty-one years of age, and able to read and write. In South Carolina one must be a qualified elector and taxpayer to meet the legal requirements for school board membership, while in Virginia one must simply be a qualified voter of the district.²⁵

The Public School Laws of North Carolina state that a prospective school board member must reside within the boundary lines of the district in which he/she is seeking election.²⁶

²³ Morrill M. Hall, Provisions Governing Membership on Local Boards of Education, Bulletin 1957, no. 13 (Washington: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1957), 17-18.

²⁴ School Board Member Handbook for School Board Leadership (N.p.: Tennessee School Boards Assoc., 1980), 1-3.

²⁵ Morrill M. Hall, 42, 60-61, 64.

²⁶ The Public School Laws of North Carolina (Charlottesville, Virginia: Michie Co., 1984), 35-36.

This manual (Public School Laws) also makes reference to North Carolina constitutional requirements which state that:

No person shall be eligible as a member of a county or city board of education who is not proven to be a man of intelligence, of good moral character, of good business qualifications,²⁷ and known to be in favor of public education.

In 1969 the North Carolina General Assembly revised the general law to require that school board members for county units be elected on a nonpartisan basis. However, there were exceptions. Excluded from these requirements were city units and county units with local acts that provide for a different selection procedure. The general law also provides that each board have five members elected at large for terms of four years. Again, there were several exceptions. Only sixty-nine of the 141 boards have five members each. The other seventy-two boards have six to eleven members. While most of the boards have four-year terms, several have six-year terms and some have two-year terms. Fourteen of the city boards have appointed board members.²⁸

However, the board members in many states must also meet other qualifications which include:

²⁷ N. C. Const. art. vi 6, p. 141.

²⁸ Robert E. Phay, Local Boards of Education (Chapel Hill: Institute of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill, 1985), 3-4.

1. Age--All states specify a minimum voting age. However, a higher minimum age is provided for school board members in some cases.
2. Length of residence in state--In some states a longer requirement for board membership is required than for qualifying to vote.
3. Length of residence in district--In some states a minimum length of residence in the district is also prescribed which is longer than that required of voters.
4. Education--References to the educational qualifications of board members are found in the statutes of eleven states.
5. Character--The statutes of four states have a provision for character qualifications.²⁹

Reutter stated that "from a practical point of view there are almost no restrictions as to which residents of a district may be elected to serve on the board of education."³⁰

The few legal requirements which must be met by the school board candidates were summarized by Elms as follows:

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Minimum Range</u>
1. Age	18--25
2. Qualified voter	-----
3. Citizen	1--3 years
4. Resident of district	10 days--3 years
5. Resident of state	30 days--2 years
6. Education	none--8th grade
7. Taxpayer	

²⁹ Morrill M. Hall, 17-18.

³⁰ E. Edmund Reutter, Jr., Schools and the Law (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1964), 26.

- 8. Literate
- 9. Property owner³¹

Reeves observed that there was "little rhyme or reason" for the legal requirements for board membership. There seemed to be no sound basis for the discrepancies from state-to-state or even district-to-district.³²

Roles and Responsibilities of School Board Members

The principal duties of a local school board fall into four general categories. These are (1) staffing the schools, (2) setting educational policy, (3) guarding the assets of the school system, and (4) assessing and presenting the needs of the school system to the general public and to the county commissioners or city council members (to ensure adequate funds for operation).³³

Goldhammer wrote in The School Board that a well-organized board of education had five major areas of responsibility. These five areas of responsibility are:

³¹ Terry M. Elms, "Constituent Perceptions of Qualifications for Effective School Board Membership" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois Univ., 1983), p. 39.

³² Charles E. Reeves, School Boards: Their Status, Functions, and Activities (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954), 102.

³³ Anne M. Dellinger, A Legal Guide for North Carolina School Board Members (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Institute of Government, 1978), 2-3.

1. Determination of major goals. The school board with advice from the professional staff and after careful study should determine the direction to be taken.

2. Formulation of operating policies. It is the responsibility of the school board to formulate broad policies for the school district to follow. The school board should make a distinction between what is public policy and what is a concern to be resolved by the professional staff.

3. Selection of key personnel. The board is legally responsible for the employment of all school personnel. The board's main responsibility is the election of a competent superintendent.

4. Acquisition and distribution of funds. The public is always concerned about the tax rate and how that revenue is utilized. It is the duty of the board member to inform the people how the money is being spent and the progress achieved.

5. Evaluation. A constant evaluation is necessary in order that the school board can determine the extent to which the educational goals are being achieved.³⁴

These five areas of responsibilities of a school board are not well-understood by the public. In many communities

³⁴ Goldhammer, 101-103.

individuals and groups have unrealistic expectations and therefore make impractical requests of the board members.

The first Executive Director of the National School Boards Association, Edward M. Tuttle, declared that:

The future of America is directly dependent upon the quality of its citizenry which, in the long run, is determined by the quality of the education they [sic] receive in the public schools for whose operation the school boards are legally responsible.³⁵

Barnhart found that the school board has numerous responsibilities. Some are of major importance while others are trivial.³⁶

One writer felt that the responsibilities of the school board are as follows:

1. To formulate policies reflecting broad principles that will guide staff members in the education of the children in the district.
2. To determine the goals of public education in the school district.
3. To select the superintendent for the district and employ school personnel upon the recommendation of the superintendent.
4. To appraise the performance of executives to whom responsibilities have been delegated.
5. To inform the people of the district about the schools.

³⁵ Edward M. Tuttle, School Board Leadership in America (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1963), 15.

³⁶ Barnhart, 21.

6. Evaluate the activities of the school district regarding previously established goals.³⁷

Konnert and Furtwengler stated that the four primary duties of a school board were: (1) set clear policies, (2) establish long-range (five to ten years) goals and update annually, (3) establish short-range (one to two years) priorities, and (4) evaluate the superintendent. They felt that the board should refrain from personnel evaluation other than the superintendent. His evaluation should reflect how well he had administered the policies and achieved the objectives.³⁸

The school board, in its leadership role, is expected to be responsive to its constituencies, sensitive to all needs of the students, and serve as an aggressive public relations ambassador explaining the educational programs to the public.

The responsibilities of the school board are summarized as follows:

1. To delegate to the superintendent responsibility for all administrative functions,

³⁷ Evaluating Superintendents and School Boards (Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service, 1976), 9.

³⁸ William Konnert and Willis Furtwengler, "Take this Quick Quiz: Are You a Good Board Member?" American School Board Journal 167, no. 2 (1980): 34, 40.

except those specifically reserved through board policy for the board chairperson.

2. To support the superintendent fully in all decisions that conform to professional standards and board policy.
3. To hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school through regular constructive written and oral evaluations of the superintendent's work.
4. To provide the superintendent with a comprehensive employment contract.
5. To give the superintendent the benefit of the board's counsel in matters related to individual board members' expertise, familiarity with the local school system, and community interests.
6. To hold all board meetings with the superintendent or a designee present.
7. To consult with the superintendent on all matters, as they arise, that concern the school system and on which the board may take action.
8. To develop a plan for board-superintendent communications.
9. To channel communications with school employees that require action through the superintendent, and to refer all applications, complaints, and other communications, oral or written, first to the superintendent in order to assure that the district processes such communications in an effective, coordinated fashion and is responsive to students and patrons.
10. To take action on matters only after hearing the recommendation of the superintendent.
11. To establish a policy on the effective management of complaints.

12. To provide the superintendent with sufficient administrative help, especially in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.³⁹

The effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of a school board is determined by the manner in which the members assume their responsibilities and perform their duties. Some members find it difficult to fulfill their responsibilities and duties because of the many limitations placed on them by community expectations, teacher demands, and state and federal mandates, rules, and regulations. The role of a school board member has become increasingly complex.

Gross indicated that while the school board should be the spokesman on education, many superintendents felt that school boards impeded process. The reasons mentioned most often were as follows:

1. Board members used the position as a political patronage post.
2. Lack of concern for educational problems.
3. Functioning as individuals instead of as a unit.
4. By-passing the superintendent in dealing with school system employees.
5. School board members tend to vote as representatives of blocs.
6. Timidity of board members.

³⁹ Roles and Relationships (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1980), 1-4.

7. Unwillingness to accept the superintendent as an educational expert.
8. Differences of economic or educational levels of members of the board.⁴⁰

Yet, some writers refer to "superboards" which have enormous control over education. Among them are the Congress and its laws; the federal government with its guidelines, rules, regulations, and huge budget to control programs; and the judicial system with its decisions from the United States Supreme Court down through the lower courts, to state and district courts.⁴¹

This superboard concept is in direct opposition to the statement of Terrel H. Bell, former Secretary of Education, who emphasized, "There is no governing body in all of our American society that is of more critical importance to the future of this nation than the local school board."⁴²

A presidentially-appointed panel recommended that there should be more local control. The consensus of the panel was that the authority and control necessary to operate the school system should be returned to the

⁴⁰ Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools? (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958), 12-16.

⁴¹ Ben Brodinsky, How a School Board Operates (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1977), 12.

⁴² Nelson and Crum, 10.

parents, teachers, and administrators of the local community.⁴³

Another advocate of returning control to the local schools was Eagleton. He felt that centralization of authority and responsibility had led to ineffectiveness in education and that the voters should be challenged to return control of the public schools back to ordinary citizens.⁴⁴ This issue will continue to dominate how the roles and responsibilities of school board members are perceived for many years.

Characteristics of Effective School Board Members

One of the first steps toward becoming a more effective school board member is for the local board to identify goals for the school system. A board must set goals and constantly assess the progress made toward achieving those goals. Also, local school boards must anticipate future needs of the schools and readjust those goals as necessary.⁴⁵

⁴³ "Toward More Local Control," 3, 8.

⁴⁴ Cliff Eagleton, "Returning Public Schools to Local Control," Education Digest 50 (March 1985): 14-17.

⁴⁵ Theodore J. Kowalski, "Why Your Board Needs Self-Evaluation," American School Board Journal 168, no. 7, (1981): 21-22

Reeder believed that board members should possess the following qualifications:

1. Success in vocation,
2. Sufficient time to spend on school board business,
3. Good judgment,
4. Willingness to cooperate with the other school board members and with the superintendent,
5. Good acquaintance with the local school system,
6. Deep interest in child welfare and in education,
7. Honesty and the other characteristics of good citizenship.⁴⁷

Tuttle identified the leadership qualities which he believed that school board members should possess as follows:

1. Integrity--that quality which attracts the confidence of others;
2. Perseverance--that quality which persists, which never acknowledges defeat;
3. Faith--a continual belief that something better lies ahead;
4. Ability to plan--knowledge of the facts and skill in organizing to accomplish a purpose;
5. Vision--breadth of view;

⁴⁶ Reeder, 3.

6. Initiative--a self starter; and
7. Courage--inner strength to face whatever lies ahead.⁴⁷

Reeves stated that the citizens should select board members with those qualities which will constitute a good person and a good citizen. Some of the important qualities identified were the following:

1. Be interested in the development of children and have a strong belief in the importance of their education in the public schools;
2. Be foresighted and farsighted in helping to plan public education for the future;
3. Be successful in his profession;
4. Be accustomed to making decisions promptly and with dispatch;
5. Be willing and able to devote time and energy to the work of the school board;
6. Have a strong loyalty to democratic processes and subordinate personal opinions and desires to the work of the school board;
7. Be open to conviction and subject to change when proven⁴⁸ wrong, even after a stand has been taken.

Edens concluded that a good board member should:

1. Have an interest in the community and students;
2. Not use the position as a political springboard, or for any personal gain;

⁴⁷ Tuttle, 26.

⁴⁸ Reeves, 102-104.

3. Believe in the democratic process;
4. Listen to and work with groups and individuals, but not succumb to pressure groups;
5. Cooperate with the superintendent as the chief administrative officer of the school system;
6. Cooperate with fellow board members;
7. Be aware of the responsibilities of the office;
8. Be willing to spend considerable time carrying out the duties of the office;
9. Be able to recognize the problems and needs of the school system;
10. Be successful in his vocation;
11. Be of unquestioned integrity, high moral character, honest, sincere, open-minded, fair-minded, practical,⁴⁹ intelligent, and oblivious to criticism.

The School Board Member Handbook for School Board Leadership, provided for Tennessee board members, stated that board members must have an honest and sincere desire to provide quality education. In order to do so, a good school board member should possess:

1. An understanding of his role;
2. A belief that the opportunity for the best and most appropriate public education is the right of all children;

⁴⁹ Marion A. Edens, "An Analysis of Educational Qualifications and Methods of Selection of School Board Members in the First Congressional District of Tennessee" (M.A. thesis, East Tennessee State Univ., 1970), pp. 38-39.

3. The initiative to attend meetings--local, regional and state--to keep himself informed of desirable innovations in education;
4. An open mind;
5. A respect for the opinion of others and the ability to accept the will of the majority;
6. The ability to let the superintendent or the chairman speak publicly for the board to all news media to keep the community truthfully informed about needs and accomplishments;
7. The integrity to share with no one confidential information;
8. A deep sense of loyalty to the superintendent and other board members and always an open, two-way communication system between them;
9. The good manners to courteously listen and the good judgment to tactfully promise, to friend or foe, "I'm certain the board will be glad to consider your problem carefully."
10. Personal traits and characteristics that are commensurate to the honor and trust of the office: honesty, integrity, loyalty, sincerity, unselfishness (time and abilities), impartiality, friendliness, frankness with tact and a sense of humor.⁵⁰

Mullins, a former school board member and educational writer, listed the following qualities of school board members which superintendents identified as necessary for an "ideal" member as follows: (1) has a clear understanding of policy-making and administration, (2) does his/her homework, (3) is knowledgeable, (4) remains calm,

⁵⁰ School Board Member Handbook, 1-3.

(5) works for a consensus, (6) makes decisions based on facts, and (7) is really concerned about children. These superintendents believed that professionals (excluding educators) make the best board members, ranking doctors at the top of their list.⁵¹

Buvinger, a former president of The National School Boards Association, selected the following as essential school board member characteristics:

1. An open mind and willingness to learn,
2. A love for, and a belief in, people,
3. A willingness to devote sufficient time and attention to the particular concerns of a local system,
4. An understanding of the fundamentals of budgeting and accounting, the principles of labor-management relations, and the techniques of long-range planning, and
5. A belief⁵² in lay-direction of public education.

Thomas, another former superintendent, identified seven characteristics of his "perfect" school board member. This exemplary board member has the following qualities:

1. Is results oriented;

⁵¹ Carolyn Mullins, "If Superintendents Could Pick Their Own School Board Members, Here's the Kind They Say They'd Choose," American School Board Journal 161, no. 9 (1974): 25-27.

⁵² Margaret S. Buvinger, "Board Members: Are You Qualified?" American School Board Journal 166, no.4 (1979): 66.

2. Knows how to conduct meetings;
3. Appreciates school system employees, and plays fair with them;
4. Communicates forcefully, clearly, and directly with the superintendent and staff members;
5. Expects high-quality work from administrators;
6. Understands the meaning of "public trust," and conducts board business in public view; and
7. Is a public servant in the truest sense.⁵³

A long-time board member, Winfield Smith, listed several questions which must be answered "yes," if one has a good school board. These four important questions are:

1. Does my board assume a prominent role in understanding and determining what is taught and how it is taught?
2. Does my board involve representatives of the faculty and students directly and significantly in all aspects of educational governance?
3. Does my board understand clearly the interdependence of school and community, and is it taking the initiative in developing an appropriate and full interrelationship?
4. Have the members of my school board agreed,⁵⁴ at least implicitly, to disagree agreeably?

⁵³ Donald M. Thomas, "A Preeminent School Chief Reflects on What Makes a Board Member Exemplary," American School Board Journal 172, no.4 (1985): 31, 44.

⁵⁴ R. Winfield Smith, "How to Tell if You Have a Good School Board," American School Board Journal 164, no. 9 (1977): 17-19, 38.

Smith further stated that board members must function in an environment which:

1. Restricts consideration of differences to an intellectual level and focuses exclusively on the merits of the issues at hand, not permitting discussion to degenerate to an emotional involvement of personalities;
2. Believes that when the board is confronted with a problem--assuming all pertinent facts are fully and openly and honestly presented--the group will make the wisest decision possible;
3. Agrees to support every decision by the majority--provided that the decision is openly arrived at, fully understood, and freely discussed and debated in advance of the vote;
4. Assumes that every other board member and every staff member has ideas, hunches, and reactions to specific problems that are worthy of exploration, and is primarily motivated by a desire to achieve the highest possible quality of education for all the district's children; and
5. Accepts the premise that from a diversity of viewpoints comes a vitality of thought that can be achieved in no other way.⁵⁵

When board chairmen and superintendents in Oregon were asked about needed characteristics, the following responses were noted:

1. Open-mindedness,
2. Willing and able to give time,
3. Intelligence,

4. Good listener,
5. Good judgment,
6. Dedication to education, and
7. Personality.⁵⁶

Dean C. Thomas stated that, generally, boards should have a good balance of backgrounds and talents and not be dominated by any particular profession or viewpoint.⁵⁷

Reeves concluded that school board members are generally given credit for superior qualities of character, education, and intelligence. Even though the public should re-elect good board members because they are experienced, it is important that those board members who fail to act in the best interests of the children should not be re-elected.⁵⁸

Profile of a School Board Member

The first major study of the social composition of school boards was completed by Counts in 1927. This comprehensive study revealed that 42 percent of the school

⁵⁶ "What Board Members Need for Success," American School Board Journal 166, no.4 (1979): 21-22.

⁵⁷ C. Thomas Dean, Teachers-Faculty as Trustees: Confrontation or Cooperation? (ERIC, ED 211 144, 1981), 2.

⁵⁸ Reeves, 104.

board members were in the 40-49 age with 48 as the median age at that time.⁵⁹

In some states, or school districts, board members must be at least 30 years old. Those regulations indicate that the public, at least in those districts, prefers board members who are middle-aged. Certainly, any minimum age restriction effectively prohibits many younger adults from serving on the school board.⁶⁰

In a 1974 study of Canadian school trustees and their American counterparts, Awender found that the largest percentage of Canadian school trustees fell into the 30-50 age group. He interpreted the data from his study to support the conclusion that the control of education tends to be in the hands of older and probably more conservative members of society.⁶¹ Data from his study also included the following:

1. The percentage of white board members--96 percent--was the same for both American and Canadian boards.

2. Almost 72 percent of American board members had education beyond high school compared with 59 percent for Canadian school board members.

⁵⁹ George S. Counts, The Social Composition of Boards of Education (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1927), 38.

⁶⁰ Morrill M. Hall, 17.

⁶¹ M. A. Awender, "The Canadian School Board Member," Education 103, no. 3 (1983): 282.

3. Eighty percent of the American school board members and 66 percent of the Canadian school board members had lived over fifteen years in the community.

4. Comparison of income also showed substantial differences--36 percent of American board members had income of \$20,000 and over, while Canadian board members with income of \$20,000 or more was 51.6 percent.⁶²

A 1964 study by White spotlighted the small percentage of female board members.⁶³ This was also reflected by a 1972 survey conducted by the National School Boards Association of its members. The respondents indicated that only 11.9 percent of the board members were female. However, in 1978 The American School Board Journal began its annual co-sponsorship of a nation-wide survey of the school board members to secure updated information regarding boards of education. This study revealed that the percentage of female board members had increased significantly from 1972 to 1978. The number of female board members had risen to 26 percent. This study also identified the 40-49 age group as the largest--41.6 percent.⁶⁴

⁶² Awender, 283.

⁶³ Alpheus L. White, Local School Boards: Organization and Practices (Washington: US Printing Office, 1962), 22.

⁶⁴ Kenneth E. Underwood, Lawrence McCluskey, and George R. Umberger, "A Profile of the School Board Member," American School Board Journal 165, no. 10 (1978): 23-24.

The second annual survey reported by The American School Board Journal in February 1980 revealed that female board members continued to increase. Also, there was a dramatic increase in the number of board members who had earned at least one college degree--up to 72 percent from 56 percent in the previous year.⁶⁵

The American School Board Journal reported its third annual survey of school board members in the January 1981 issue. This study revealed that there were increasing numbers of school board members who were middle-aged.⁶⁶

The fourth annual survey conducted in 1981 made comparisons with the 1980 survey. The number of male board members decreased from 72.5 percent to 67.2 percent. The number of female board members increased from 27.5 percent to 32.8 percent.⁶⁷

The survey for 1982 compared the percent of male and female board members with those for 1981 (1982 males--71.7 percent, females 28.3 percent; 1981 males--67.2 percent, females 32.8 percent). School board members tend to be

⁶⁵ Kenneth E. Underwood et. al., "Portrait of the American School Board Member," American School Board Journal 167, no. 1 (1980): 25.

⁶⁶ Kenneth E. Underwood, Wayne P. Thomas, and Mark Pace, "Your Portrait: Who You Are, Region by Region," American School Board Journal 168, no. 1 (1981): 21.

⁶⁷ Kenneth E. Underwood, James C. Fortune, and Harold W. Dodge, "Your Portrait: School Boards Have a Brand-New Look," American School Board Journal 169, no. 1 (1982): 18.

middle-aged. The largest category was the 41-to-50 year-olds which made up 38.7 percent. Members also continue to be better educated with 63.3 percent having completed four or more years of college.⁶⁸

The 1983 survey showed 62.9 percent of the board members were male and 37.1 percent were female. This represented a 8.8 percent gain for females from the previous year. The survey also revealed that the white ethnic group gained 0.9 percent and the black ethnic group showed a 0.6 percent gain from 1982 to 1983.⁶⁹

The seventh annual survey indicated that board members showed significant gains financially and professionally. More than half of the members held professional or managerial positions--59.3 percent. A majority of the members had family incomes in excess of \$40,000.⁷⁰

In 1985 a survey was conducted by Donald T. Alvey, Kenneth E. Underwood, and Jimmy C. Fortune. This

⁶⁸ Kenneth E. Underwood, Jim C. Fortune, and James A. Meyer, "Fifth Annual Survey of School Board Members," American School Board Journal 170, no. 1 (1983): 23-24.

⁶⁹ Kenneth E. Underwood, Jim C. Fortune, and Nancy A. Poole, "Sixth Annual Survey of School Board Members," American School Board Journal 171, no. 1 (1984): 25-26.

⁷⁰ Kenneth E. Underwood, Jim C. Fortune, and Frank J. Cleary, "Seventh Annual Survey of Board Members," American School Board Journal 172, no. 1 (1985): 29.

study, sponsored by The American School Board Journal and Virginia Tech, surveyed 1,468 school board members. The results reported in The American School Board Journal in January 1986 included the following:

1. The number of female members decreased from 31.4 percent to 28 percent.

2. The majority of board members are white (93.5 percent).

3. The largest age group represented those members 41-50 years of age. Over 65 percent are in the 41-60 age group.

4. Only 22.1 percent of the members have a family income of under \$20,000.

5. Over 60 percent have children enrolled in the schools they serve.

6. The five top issues of concern were: lack of financial support, declining enrollment, collective bargaining, parents' lack of interest, and management/leadership.⁷¹

It was also noted by Cistone that the school board members "tend to be white, middle-aged, male professionals, married, with children in the schools, and active in the

⁷¹ Donald T. Alvey, Kenneth E. Underwood, and Jimmy C. Fortune, "Our Annual Look at Who You Are and What's Got You Worried," American School Board Journal 173, no. 1 (1986): 23, 26-27.

organizational and associational life of the community." It seems that the present selection process channels individuals with particular backgrounds and abilities onto the school board.⁷²

Surveys consistently reveal that board members are from the middle and upper-middle class. This may change significantly with the more recently enacted financial disclosure regulations. Ficklen believes that these disclosure laws may discourage good people from serving on school boards.⁷³

Hansen observed that all boards of education reflect the values of their communities and concerns.⁷⁴

Reasons for Becoming a School Board Member

School board membership, like other civic responsibility, is usually considered an opportunity to serve the community. Most individuals seek or accept membership on a local school board because they find personal satisfaction in serving the public. However, there are other motives

⁷² Peter J. Cistone, "School Boards," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Harold E. Mitzel, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 1640.

⁷³ Ellen Ficklen, "Personal Financial Disclosure: Is It Your Civic Duty Or Indecent Exposure?" American School Board Journal 172, no. 2 (1985): 23.

⁷⁴ Barbara J. Hansen, "Marketing Educational Change to School Boards," Educational Horizons (Winter 1985): 84.

which may cause a person to seek membership on a school board. These unworthy motives include the use of the office to secure personal publicity, use of the office as a vehicle to exercise spite against an employee of the school system, or to secure some particular change.⁷⁵

Cawelti, executive director of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, listed four board "types" which superintendents felt presented difficulty:

1. Single-issue board members,
2. Politically ambitious board members,
3. Board members who are overly responsive to the needs of their own geographic area of the school district, and
4. Board members who are overly responsive to teacher viewpoints.⁷⁶

Kipp, a practicing superintendent, listed a number of characteristics of board members "which drive superintendents crazy." Included on his list are the following seven undesirable characteristics:

1. Know-it-all,
2. Ax grinder,
3. Jellyfish,

⁷⁵ Reeves, 107-8.

⁷⁶ Gordon Cawelti, "Guess What? Big City Superintendents Say Their School Boards Are Splendid," American School Board Journal 169, no. 4 (1979): 21-22.

4. Joiner,
5. Ward heeler,
6. Personnel director, and
7. Motor mouth.⁷⁷

Gross, from a comprehensive study conducted in 1952-1953, concluded that "although good motivation cannot be considered the only prerequisite for 'good' board membership, we feel it is a necessary prerequisite." Thus, the greater the political activity of the board members, the more likely they were to have had the "wrong" reasons for running for the school board.⁷⁸

However, the longer school board members have served on the board, the more likely that they had "good" motivation. Those people who only want political experience or to represent some special group will probably leave after they have achieved that goal. There is always a need for well-motivated school board members to provide quality public education.⁷⁹

Two primary reasons for seeking school board membership were identified by Goldhammer. First, an individual becomes a board member because he/she wants to render an

⁷⁷ David F. Kipp, "But the Board Members Drive Superintendents Crazy," American School Board Journal 169, no. 3 (1982): 35.

⁷⁸ Gross, 72-82.

⁷⁹ Gross, 82.

important service. Second, a member is motivated as the result of being dissatisfied with some policy and/or person. Also, a combination of motives probably helps each candidate to make the decision to seek office.⁸⁰

Five categories of reasons were listed by Marlowe as to why individuals run for the office of school board member:

1. People who seek financial gains;
2. People who seek political gains;
3. People who are pushed to serve for personal, social or political causes;
4. People who seek ego gains; and
5. People who serve for the good of their schools and community.

However, Marlowe believed that most of the individuals fit in the last category. Most board candidates run for office because of the belief that they are performing an important civic function.⁸¹

Cistone believed that few board members run for office on a whim; most have been involved in activities that lead into school board membership.⁸²

⁸⁰ Goldhammer, 88.

⁸¹ John Marlowe, "One Man's Opinion: Why You Run for School Board Office," American School Board Journal 166, no. 7, 17-19.

⁸² Peter J. Cistone, "School Board Members Learn Their Skills Before They Become Board Members," American School Board Journal 165, no. 1 (1978): 32.

Most school board members hold their office because they sincerely want to render an important public service. Regardless of the motive, most school board members believe strongly in the importance of public education.⁸³

Findings

Knezevich stated, "There is little to suggest that the local board of education is any less controversial today than it was 100 years ago."⁸⁴

There are still many citizens who feel that there are few community activities more dignified and more worthy of public esteem than service as a school board member. At the same time many of our citizens are demanding "quality education" and looking to the local board of education for the answers. While the life of the board member may be a trying one, it can also be an extremely rewarding one.⁸⁵

Gross advocated that there are a number of steps that should be taken to deal with educational problems. He strongly recommended that everyone be involved. Individual citizens should vote in school elections and determine who will be the school board members. School board members should formulate school policies and hire school personnel

⁸³ Reeves, 108.

⁸⁴ Knezevich, 213.

⁸⁵ Elms, 36.

in a responsible manner. Superintendents should conscientiously advise the school board members and carry out their policies. Universities and colleges should assume responsibility for the training of educators. A final, and very important, responsibility would be to elect state and national legislators who are sensitive to the needs of education. Gross concluded that it is the children who receive the benefits of efforts in their behalf or pay the penalties if there are inadequate provisions made for education.⁸⁶

It was reported by Jacklin that the growth of the national and state governments has created some unique challenges to the local decision-making bodies. The legal system as related to public education has expanded, creating a maze with which lay board members struggle. Growing restrictions upon local boards of education severely limit their abilities to operate the schools.⁸⁷

Lieberman stated, "It's an appealing notion and an enduring staple of educational rhetoric that school boards

⁸⁶ Gross, 151.

⁸⁷ Harold Jacklin, "School Board Members' Assumed Authority Compared to Their Legal Authority," DAI 43 (1983): 2517-A.

are supposed to make policy, administrators are supposed to implement it, and no fair crossing lines."⁸⁸ There is difficulty in the implementation of this idea because too many superintendents and boards believe that it is necessary to cross those lines.

"School boards--not superintendents--should make essential policy decisions for their schools" was the majority opinion of the school board members who responded to the 1982 The American School Board Journal survey. They felt that policy decisions and allocating financial resources to support those policies are board responsibilities. Superintendents should then administer those policies in the schools, seeing that the schools run efficiently and effectively.⁸⁹

A similar viewpoint was held by Salmon, former executive director of the American Association of School Administrators. He also believed that the school boards "should govern the schools" by developing policies. These policies should become a statement of the intent of the board about all aspects of the schools. Boards also must

⁸⁸ Myron Lieberman, "Where Boards Control Schools, Where They Don't--and Why," American School Board Journal 164, no. 4 (1977): 36-37.

⁸⁹ Underwood, Fortune, and Meyer, 26.

develop a plan for evaluating whether policies are properly carried out. Boards and superintendents should work together to improve the public schools for everyone.⁹⁰

Many citizens accuse the school boards of incompetence. Several writers have suggested methods of corrections. Hall felt that state qualifications should be strengthened.⁹¹ Edens felt that having board members appointed by the governing bodies of the county or the municipality would result in more qualified members and less politics.⁹²

Another way of improving competence may be through adequate in-service. Kerrins spoke to this area when she asserted that many of the new school board members have "little or no knowledge or preparation with regard to their role, duties, or responsibilities."⁹³

⁹⁰ Paul Salmon, "Who Runs Our Schools? A Definite Answer Is Impossible," American School Board Journal 169, no. 11 (1982): 30.

⁹¹ John L. Hall, "Qualifications and Duties of School Board Members in the State of Florida," Thesis, East Tennessee State University, 1969, p.36.

⁹² Edens, 44.

⁹³ Judith A. Kerrins, "In-service Training Needs of School Board Members As Perceived by School Board Members and School Superintendents in the State of Colorado" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Colorado, 1984), p. 2.

In-service, required and voluntary, would assist the board members by increasing their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. It would also make them aware of their liabilities.

The local school board in each community makes the final decision about curriculum, teacher salaries, what school facilities are required, what values will be emphasized, and even how much time is spent teaching the children and how much on other activities. The decisions of these board members have a direct effect on what is done in the schools and if it is done well.⁹⁴ It is imperative that the best qualified board members oversee our system of education.

⁹⁴ Gross, 150.

CHAPTER 3

Procedures and Methodology

This chapter describes the procedures and methodology for this study and is divided into the following sections: (1) Method of Research, (2) Research Population, (3) Instrument Development, (4) Data Collection, and (5) Data Analysis.

Method of Research

This study was conducted in order to analyze the characteristics of school board members in the public school systems of North Carolina and to obtain a profile of the typical board member. The study also sought to determine if, according to those surveyed, additional qualifications for school board membership were needed for present-day conditions. If the study were to be used as a basis for change, it sought to determine the necessary changes. To accomplish this purpose, descriptive research was employed.

The design for this study included a review of related literature and research on the (1) Historical Development of the School Board in America, (2) Legal Qualifications of School Board Members, (3) Roles and Responsibilities of School Board Members, (4) Characteristics of Effective

School Board Members, (5) Profile of a School Board Member, and (6) Reasons for Becoming a School Board Member.

The review of literature was conducted, utilizing the Charles C. Sherrod Library at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee; on-line searching; D. Hiden Ramsey Library at University of North Carolina-Asheville in Asheville, North Carolina; Hunter Library at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina; North Carolina School Boards Association; Tennessee School Boards Association; and National School Boards Association.

Questions pertinent to the study were drawn from this review. The questions were grouped into three parts and a questionnaire was the result of this process.

Research Population

The population for this study consisted of North Carolina school board members. The large population was chosen because of the enormous importance of their input into whether or not additional legal requirements were needed for school board membership.

All 883 North Carolina school board members were surveyed to solicit responses.

Of the 141 packets of materials sent to the board chairperson of each school district, responses were

received from 65 systems for a 46 percent return. Of the 883 questionnaires sent for each board member, 309 were completed and returned for a total return of 35 percent.

Instrument Development

After a review of related literature, Gene Causby, executive director of the North Carolina School Boards Association was called on July 22, 1985, requesting information. He arranged for an appointment and the office of the North Carolina State School Boards Association in Raleigh was visited on August 2, 1985. Henry Johnson, research/policy consultant, supplied information and called the office of the National School Boards Association in Washington, DC, regarding use of its questionnaire.

Sally Banks Zakariya, senior editor of The American School Board Journal, responded to the request made by the research/policy consultant of the North Carolina School Boards Association and supplied a copy of its questionnaire. Selected questions from this survey of The American School Board Journal were utilized in the construction of a researcher-designed questionnaire. The double-fold questionnaire yielded four pages. Page one was a cover letter from J. Howard Bowers, committee chairman, and the questions comprised three pages.

A copy of the researcher-designed questionnaire was provided to The American School Board Journal for approval. A letter granting permission to use those selected items was received from the senior editor on January 13, 1986.

The approved questionnaire was tested for validity by administering it to graduate level classes in educational administration at East Tennessee State University. Upon validation, the project was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University and approval was granted to use it.

Data Collection

The data were collected by sending a packet of materials to the home address of each of the 141 board chairpersons. Each packet included a cover letter from the North Carolina School Boards Association, a questionnaire for each board member in that system, and a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope. Most of the completed questionnaires were returned in the stamped, self-addressed envelopes provided by the researcher. Others were returned under separate cover. The returns were received during the period of April 8 through June 30, 1986.

Data Analysis

The returned questionnaires were organized by unit and region and were examined for completeness. Six questionnaires were unusable. One questionnaire from each school system was designated to serve as data source for Part I for all questionnaires from that given unit.

Data from Parts I and II, as well as some from Part III, of the questionnaire were manually coded for computer processing. The data were computer analyzed, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-Extended (SPSS-X) at East Tennessee State University.

Tables were designed to present the tabulation of data from the questionnaires and to answer the problem of the study as stated in Chapter 1. In order to test the data, the hypotheses, which were stated in the research form in Chapter 1, were converted to the null form. The t test of independent means was utilized to determine whether or not the null hypotheses 1-7 were statistically significant at the .05 level. The testing of null hypothesis eight utilized the chi-square procedure.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Data

The central problem of this study was to develop a descriptive profile of board of education members in the public school systems of North Carolina. The study also sought to determine the legal requirements for eligibility to school board membership; determine what qualifications board of education members perceived as being desirable; and determine if significant differences existed between county boards and city boards.

From the review of related literature, various information was gathered pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of school board members; legal requirements for school board membership; characteristics of effective school board members; reasons for becoming a school board member; and a profile of a school board member.

This chapter presents the data relative to this study and is divided into the following sections: (1) Findings Related to Research Questions 1-7, (2) Legal Requirements, (3) Desirable Qualifications, (4) Findings Related to Hypotheses, and (5) Summary.

Findings Related to Research Questions 1-7

Question One

What is the length of term for a typical North Carolina school board member?

Table 1
Length of Terms of North Carolina Board Members

Number of Years	Frequency	Percent
2	2	3.1
3	1	1.5
4	49	75.4
6	13	20.0
Total	65	100.0

The first research question sought to determine the length of term for the North Carolina school board members. A review of literature revealed that most of the North Carolina school boards had four-year terms as had been stipulated by the 1969 North Carolina General Assembly. However, this statute also made provisions for exceptions.

As was shown in Table 1, 20 percent of the responding boards had six-year terms while 4.6 percent had two-year or three-year terms.

Question Two

What is the size of a typical school board in North Carolina?

Table 2
Size of North Carolina School Boards

Number of Members	Frequency	Percent
5	32	49.2
6	4	6.2
7	18	27.7
8	1	1.5
9	8	12.3
11	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

This research question studied the size of school boards in North Carolina. The North Carolina General Assembly of 1969 designated that school boards have five members but made provisions for exceptions.

Table 2 has shown that the boards ranged from five members to eleven members in size. The most frequent size was five members. The next most frequent size was seven

members. Only one city and one county system each had eleven members. The system with the smallest school population had five members and the largest school system had eight members. While the majority of North Carolina boards have five members, this is two fewer than the national average of seven members.

In this chapter, all references to national percentages or averages refer to a study performed in February 1985 by the The American School Board Journal.⁹⁵

Question Three

What is the age of a typical North Carolina school board member?

As Table 3 shows, only 6.8 percent of the population was thirty-five years or younger. This compares with a national population of 7.7 percent in this age range. The age range of 41-45 had the greatest frequency with 20.1 percent. Almost 14 percent of the members were over sixty years of age. In the national sample only 7.6 percent were over sixty years of age. Over 63 percent of the North Carolina members were in the age group of 41-60. This age distribution was similar to the national survey.

⁹⁵ Alvey, Underwood and Fortune, 23-27.

Table 3
Age of North Carolina Board Members

Age of Members	Frequency	Percent
Under 26	1	0.3
26-30	3	1.0
31-35	16	5.3
36-40	49	16.2
41-45	61	20.1
46-50	50	16.5
51-55	46	15.2
56-60	35	11.6
Over 60	42	13.9
Total	303	100.0

Question Four

What is the marital status of a typical North Carolina school board member?

As Table 4 shows, 92.3 percent of the board members were married. This is comparable to the national average of 93.1 percent. The category of widows and widowers comprised 3.7 percent. Only 2.7 percent of the members were single and the smallest category was the divorced members with 1.3 percent.

Table 4
Marital Status of North Carolina Board Members

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	8	2.7
Married	276	92.3
Widow	9	3.0
Widower	2	0.7
Divorced	4	1.3
Total	299	100.0

Question Five

How many years does a typical North Carolina school board member serve?

This research question sought to determine how many years North Carolina school board members serve. Table 5 shows that the length of service ranged from one to thirty-two years, with two years of service being the most frequent. Less than 18 percent had served ten years or more on the school board and only 2 percent had served twenty years or more. The average length of service for North Carolina board members was 6.4 years, which is very similar to the national average of six years.

Table 5
Years Served by North Carolina Board Members

Years Served	Frequency	Percent
1	30	10.0
2	47	15.7
3	23	7.7
4	31	10.4
5	23	7.7
6	31	10.4
7	17	5.7
8	25	8.4
9	4	1.3
10	17	5.7
11	4	1.3
12	13	4.3
13	7	2.3
14	5	1.7
15	3	1.0
16	5	1.7
17	3	1.0
18	2	0.7
19	2	0.7

Table 5 (continued)

Years Served	Frequency	Percent
20	1	0.3
22	1	0.3
23	2	0.7
24	2	0.7
32	1	0.3
Total	299	100.0

Question Six

What is the occupation of a typical North Carolina school board member?

Table 6 identifies professionals as the majority occupation. Over 54 percent of North Carolina board members were in this category as compared to 62.3 percent on the national level. Homemakers comprised 8.8 percent of North Carolina board members, compared with 14.8 percent nationally. After the category of professionals, the largest category was clerical and sales with 14.6 percent, followed by the retired group with 12.2 percent.

Table 6
Occupations of North Carolina Board Members

Occupations	Frequency	Percent
Doctors, dentists	20	6.8
Educators	16	5.4
Attorneys	8	2.7
Other professionals	117	39.7
Farmers	18	6.1
Clerical, sales	43	14.6
Homemakers	26	8.8
Retired	36	12.2
Skilled workers	11	3.7
Total	295	100.0

Question Seven

Does a typical North Carolina school board member have children in the school system he/she serves?

Table 7 indicates that 59.1 percent of North Carolina school board members had children in the public schools. This may be compared to the national figure of 63.7 percent.

Table 7

North Carolina Board Members with Children in Public Schools

Children in School	Frequency	Percent
Yes	179	59.1
No	124	40.9
Total	303	100.0

Legal Requirements

Question Eight

What are the legal requirements for eligibility to become a member of a school board in North Carolina?

The Public School Laws of North Carolina provide that (a) the board of education consist of five members elected by the voters at large for terms of four years unless modified by local legislation and (b) no person residing in a local school administrative unit shall be eligible for election to the board of education of that local school administrative unit unless such person resides within the boundary lines of that local school administrative unit. (G. S. 115C-35 [a], [b])

Table 8

Legal Requirements for North Carolina Boardmanship

Qualified voter

Minimum age--voting age

Registered voter

Non-partisan--(exception on city boards)

Terms--4 years (2, 3, and 6-year terms modifications)

Members--5 (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11-members modifications)

Elected--(11 city boards appointed, some elected/appointed)

Resident of the school district

Desirable QualificationsQuestion Nine

What qualifications do school board members in North Carolina feel are desirable for themselves?

The respondents identified education as the most important qualification for school board members. Some respondents did not specify the amount of education, but made general statements--some education level cut, various educational qualifications, the competency test should be taken before the election process, sound educational background, and good education. Of the respondents who identified education as the most important qualification, over half stipulated that a high school diploma should be necessary. Many of the respondents qualified this designation by stating, "at least a high school graduate or minimum high school education." A high school graduate was the most frequent response, followed by a four-year degree, education beyond high school, and education beyond the undergraduate degree.

The qualification mentioned next as desirable for school board members was to have children in the school system. Several respondents modified this qualification--"at least when elected, children or grandchildren, no children in private school." One respondent stated,

"Children involved (immediate past, present, immediate future)." Another stated, "At least some members should have offspring in the district's system." Over 39 percent of the respondents considered this qualification to be important, while 15 percent identified it as priority one.

Interest was considered very important. It was stated in a variety of ways--"interest in children, interest in education, genuine interest in education, concerned about children, sincere interest, sincere concern about children and their education." Almost 23 percent of the respondents listed interest as a desirable qualification.

Over 14 percent of the respondents identified knowledge as important. It was the first priority of over 6 percent of those respondents.

While the qualification of time was only listed in order of priority as first for two times, it was listed by over 13 percent as important.

Commitment was also listed as a desirable qualification. Over 12 percent of the respondents included this category.

Over 10 percent of the respondents listed residency as a needed qualification. Residency requirements of four or five years were suggested by most of the respondents in this category.

Almost 10 percent listed U. S. citizenship as important. It was the priority number one of most of this group. This is already a requirement.

Age also was listed. However, only 2 percent identified this suggested qualification as their first priority. The most frequent age mentioned was age twenty-one.

Over 8 percent listed character. Community and/or school involvement was believed desirable by over 7 percent. Another 7 percent identified in-service training as desirable. Most members in this category listed in-service training as the first priority. They believed there should be mandatory attendance at new member training seminars.

Almost 5 percent felt that school board members should be taxpayers and/or property owners. This qualification received a high priority by this group.

Other qualifications which were listed as priority one included: common sense, open mindedness, and mental stability. Also listed was that all boards should be elected--not appointed and state/national qualifications for office holders.

Among the qualifications perceived as being desirable were: non-partisan, forget politics, three-term limit, financial remuneration not a priority, and board members should be lay people--not professional educators.

Findings Related to Hypotheses

The following analyses of data tested the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. Hypotheses 1-7 were tested using the t test of independent means while hypothesis 8 was tested using chi-square.

Null Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the percentage of female members on city school boards and the percentage of female members on county school boards in North Carolina.

The average female membership on city boards was 32.7 percent of the total board, while for county boards the average was 25.9 percent. This corresponds to the national average of 36.1 percent female.

Although many North Carolina school boards had no female members, a number of boards--city as well as county--reported several female members. Two city boards had four female members on a nine-member board. Other city boards had female representation of three out of seven members, three out of five members, and five out of seven members.

Two county boards reported three out of seven members female. Other county boards had female representation of three out of five members, four out of eight members, and four out of seven.

Of the board members responding to the survey, 28.9 percent were female.

Table 9 shows that the difference in percentages of female members on city and county boards is significant only at the 0.10 level. Based on these results, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Table 9
Female Members on County and City Boards in
North Carolina

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Pooled Variance Estimate		
					T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	41	0.259	0.159	0.025	-1.67	63	0.100
City	24	0.327	0.153	0.031			

N = number of responding boards

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the percentage of minority members on city school boards and the percentage of minority members on county school boards in North Carolina.

While many North Carolina school boards have no minority members, minorities are well-represented on some boards. The board with the largest number of minority members was a county board. This board had nine minority members on an eleven member board. Several other county boards had membership of two minority members on a five member board. One city board had four minority members on

a five-member board. Other city boards included two out of five, three out of seven, and three out of six.

The average minority membership on county boards was 12.2 percent, while on city boards it was 24.5 percent.

The results of testing this hypothesis indicated a significant difference at the .05 level and beyond. Table 10 presents the results of the testing. Based on these results, null hypothesis two was rejected.

Table 10
Minority Members on County and City Boards
in North Carolina

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Pooled Variance Estimate		
					T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	41	0.122	0.169	0.026	-2.71	62	0.009
City	23	0.245	0.183	0.038			

N = number of responding boards

Null Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the age of members of city school boards and the age of members of county school boards.

Only one respondent was under twenty-six years of age. He represented a nine-member city board. Three respondents

were in the 26-30 age range. One male was a member on a city board and the other two respondents (one male, one female) served on county boards. Forty-two members were over sixty years of age. Ten members of this over sixty group were on city boards, while the other thirty-two were members of county boards. The greatest frequency of response was the 41-45 age range. Testing of this hypothesis indicated no significant difference at the .05 level. Based on the results as presented in Table 11, the researcher failed to reject null hypothesis three.

Table 11
Age of County and City Board Members in
North Carolina

		Pooled Variance Estimate					
	N	Mean*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	193	6.166	1.888	0.136	-1.33	301	0.186
City	110	5.873	1.782	0.170			

N = number of responding members

* Each age range was assigned a value. The mean shown in the table was the mean of these assigned values:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. Under 26 | 6. 46-50 |
| 2. 26-30 | 7. 51-55 |
| 3. 31-35 | 8. 56-60 |
| 4. 36-40 | 9. Over 60 |
| 5. 41-45 | |

Null Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference between the family income of members on city school boards and the family income of members on county school boards in North Carolina.

Since the question regarding family income was marked as optional, only 74.3 percent responded to this item. However, fourteen respondents listed income in excess of \$100,000. Seven were members on city boards and seven were members on county boards. One of the seven county board members in this income category was female, compared with three female members on city boards.

Table 12

Family Income of County and City Board Members in
North Carolina

					Pooled Variance Estimate		
	N	Mean*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	149	4.154	2.158	0.177	-2.72	224	0.007
City	77	5.013	2.414	0.275			

* Each income category was assigned a value. The mean shown in the table was the mean of these assigned values:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Less than \$20,000 | 6. \$60,000--\$69,999 |
| 2. \$20,000--\$29,999 | 7. \$70,000--\$79,000 |
| 3. \$30,000--\$39,999 | 8. \$80,000--\$89,999 |
| 4. \$40,000--\$49,999 | 9. \$90,000--\$99,999 |
| 5. \$50,000--\$59,999 | 10. \$100,000 or above |

Results from the testing of this hypothesis are presented in Table 12. These results indicated a significant difference beyond the .05 level. Using these results, null hypothesis four was rejected and the research hypothesis accepted.

Null Hypotheses Five

There is no significant difference between the educational level of members on city school boards and the educational level of members on county school boards in North Carolina.

Only one respondent reported less than a high school education. High school graduates comprised 15.1 percent of the members, while 19.7 percent had completed some college work. College graduates, 31.6 percent, were surpassed only by those with an advanced college degree. Results from testing this hypothesis, presented in Table 13, indicated a very significant difference in the data. Therefore, null hypothesis five was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted.

Table 13

Educational Level of County and City Board Members
in North Carolina

					Pooled Variance Estimate		
	N	Mean*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	191	3.618	1.093	0.079	-4.18	298	0.000
City	109	4.138	0.928	0.089			

* Each educational level was assigned a value. The mean shown in the table was the mean of these assigned values:

1. Less than high school graduate
2. High school graduate
3. Post high school training
4. College graduate (BA/BS)
5. Advanced college degree

Null Hypothesis Six

There is no significant difference between the years lived in the community by members on city school boards and the years lived in the community by members on county school boards in North Carolina.

Of 301 respondents only three, 1.0 percent, had lived in the community for fewer than six years. Twenty-two members, 7.2 percent, had resided in the community for six to ten years. One group of twenty-five members had lived in the community for eleven to fifteen years, while another group of twenty-five had been there for sixteen to twenty years. Most of the board members, 74.3 percent, had lived

in the community for over twenty years. Testing of this hypothesis resulted in the data presented in Table 14. These results indicated a significant difference even beyond the .05 level. The null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis accepted.

Table 14

Years Lived in the Community by County and City
Board Members in North Carolina

		Separate Variance Estimate					
	N	Mean*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	192	4.629	0.848	0.061	2.77	173.50	0.006
City	109	4.266	1.168	0.112			

* Each span of years lived in the community was assigned a value. The mean shown in the table was the mean of these assigned values:

1. Less than 6
2. 6--10
3. 11--15
4. 16--20
5. Over 20

Null Hypothesis Seven

There is no significant difference between the average years of service by members on city school boards and the average years of service by members on county school boards in North Carolina.

The length of service ranged from one to thirty-two years. The average length of service for all North Carolina board members was 6.4 years. City board members served an average of 5.9 years, while county board members served an average of 6.7 years. Table 15 presents the results of testing this hypothesis. The results indicated no significant difference in the data related to the hypothesis, therefore the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 15

Years of Service by County and City Board Members
in North Carolina

					Pooled Variance Estimate		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	T Value	Deg. of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
County	192	6.724	4.901	0.354	3.36	297	0.174
City	107	5.897	5.238	0.506			

Null Hypothesis Eight

There is no significant difference between the percentage of female board members with children in K-12 schools and the percentage of male board members with children in K-12 schools in North Carolina.

This testing of this hypothesis was conducted by using the chi-square procedure. The results of this testing are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Male and Female Board Members With Children in Public Schools in North Carolina

		Sex		Row Total	
		Male	Female		
C h i l d r e n	Yes	Obs. Freq.	126	53	179
		Exp. Freq.	127	52	
	No	Obs. Freq.	89	35	124
		Exp. Freq.	88	36	
Totals:		215	88	303	

Chi-Square = 0.0662

Critical value for .05 level = 3.841

Of the 303 male and female respondents, 59.1 percent had children in the public schools. Slightly more of the female board members, 60.2 percent, had children in school than did the male board members, 58.6 percent. Since this distribution produced a chi-square value 0.0662 and a value of 3.841 was needed, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of school board members in North Carolina to obtain a profile of the typical board member. Such a profile showed that the typical North Carolina board member was a professional male, white, married, 41-45 years of age, the holder of an advanced college degree, a member of the board 6.4 years, a resident of the community twenty or more years, had children in the public schools, and had an annual family income of \$40,000-49,000. Also, this typical board member felt a need for additional qualifications for school board members.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to analyze the characteristics of school board members in the public school systems of North Carolina in order to obtain a profile of the typical board member and compile the suggested qualifications as a basis for possible change in the legal requirements for membership on local boards of education.

This chapter contains a summary of the study, findings and conclusions based on the analysis of the data, and recommendations based on the findings of the study. It is divided into the following sections: (1) Summary, (2) Findings, (3) Conclusions, and (4) Recommendations.

Summary

The local school board has always been an important component of the American school system. Today, the school board is faced with extremely complex problems, and the best qualified individuals are urgently needed to meet these challenges.

Research questions relative to the study were developed. Hypotheses were developed for sub-problem three to be tested at the .05 level of significance.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was utilized to collect information. The data were computer analyzed, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences=Extended (SPSS-X).

Findings

The following profile of a typical North Carolina school board member was developed:

1. Male,
2. A professional,
3. White,
4. Married,
5. 41-45 years of age,
6. Annual family income of \$40,000-49,000,
7. The holder of an advanced college degree,
8. The parent of children in public schools,
9. A member of the board 6.4 years,
10. A resident of the community twenty or more years, and
11. A believer in the need for additional qualifications.

The following legal requirements for North Carolina board members were found:

1. Qualified voter,
2. Minimum age--voting age,
3. Registered voter,
4. Non-partisan election--(exception on city boards),

5. Terms--four years (two, three, and six-year term modifications),
6. Members--five (six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven-member modifications),
7. Elected (eleven city boards appointed, some elected/appointed), and
8. Resident of the school district.

The following were identified by the respondents as being desirable qualities for school board members:

1. Education--at least a high school graduate,
2. Children in the public school system,
3. Interest in children and education,
4. Knowledge,
5. Time to serve,
6. Commitment,
7. Minimum residency in district--four years,
8. Minimum age--twenty-one years,
9. Character,
10. School/community involvement,
11. Mandatory in-service training,
12. Taxpayer and/or property owner,
13. Common sense, and
14. Open-mindedness.

Conclusions

Based on analyses of data collected, after utilizing the t test and the chi-square procedures, the following specific conclusions were made:

1. City boards had significantly higher numbers of racial minority members,
2. There was no significant difference in number of female members,
3. City board members had significantly higher levels of education,
4. County board members had lived significantly longer in the community,
5. There was no significant difference in number of years of service by members,
6. City board members had a significantly higher family income, and
7. There was no significant difference in the age of members.
8. There was no significant difference between the number of male and female board members with children in the school systems.

In addition, the following were general conclusions drawn from the study:

The typical North Carolina board member was a professional male, white, married, 41-45 years of age, the holder of an advanced college degree, a member of the board 6.4 years, a resident of the community twenty or more years, had children in the public schools, and had an annual family income of \$40,000-49,000.

He generally had participated in school/community activities for a number of years prior to seeking board membership. Long-time residency is important to board membership because it is equated with knowledge about the

schools and commitment to the community. The public usually selects a person to be board member who is well-educated and respected in his community.

There are few legal requirements for board members in North Carolina. These requirements are among the most liberal in the United States.

The city school board members have a higher level of education, higher family income, and are more likely to be of a minority group than county board members. County board members have lived longer in the community than city board members.

There is a perceived need for a minimum level of education of all board members. If this question had been addressed directly in this survey, a minimum level of education of in excess of two years of college would probably have been identified as needed.

The board members need to have children in the public schools so that they can have a clearer understanding of what is taking place. Knowledge, interest in children and education, time to serve, and commitment to education are essential to good boardmanship.

A majority (59.1%) of school board members have children in the public schools. Many of the board members who presently do not have children in the schools did have

children in the schools when they first became board members. They stayed on the board for additional years after their children completed school.

A minimum age of twenty-one was noted as a desirable qualification in both county and city units. However, the need for a residency requirement was noted more often in the county units where residents are less mobile.

Of the qualifications noted as desirable, only those of education, children in the school system, minimum residency, and minimum age are possible legal eligibility requirements.

Recommendations

This researcher feels that additional investigation into the desirable qualifications identified by school board members is warranted. While this study indicated that additional eligibility qualifications for school board members were desirable, the lack of consensus in this study limits the usability of those reported here. Further investigations utilizing a forced-choice type of questionnaire would probably yield a more usable list to serve as a basis for possible change in the legal requirements for membership on local boards of education.

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APPENDIX A

**East Tennessee State University**

Department of Supervision and Administration • Box 19000A • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0002 • (615) 929-4415, 4430

December 30, 1985

Ms. Sally Banks Zakariya
Senior Editor
The American School Board Journal
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Zakariya:

Thank you for the copy of the March, 1984, American School Board Journal questionnaire. As Mr. Henry Johnson of the North Carolina School Board Association explained to you, I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, and my dissertation concerns school board members in North Carolina.

I am enclosing a copy of my proposed survey, utilizing some of the items from your questionnaire, which I wish to send to all school board members in North Carolina. Please review this survey and indicate your approval for the usage of your questions in this format. I will give credit in my dissertation for its use.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Merrell J. Riddle

Merrell J. Riddle
Route 2, Box 276-A
Old Fort, NC 28762

MJR/dmr

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD
JOURNAL

95

1680 DUKE STREET, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314 / (703) 838-6722

January 13, 1986

Merrell J. Riddle
Route 2, Box 276-A
Old Fort, NC 28762

Dear Merrell Riddle:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the questionnaire you plan to send to board members in North Carolina. By all means, feel free to use the questions from The American School Board Journal's 1984 survey of board members. We would appreciate your giving credit for the questions, as you mention.

Good luck with your research project. We'd be interested in hearing about the results.

Sincerely,



Sally Banks Zakariya
Senior Editor

APPENDIX C



East Tennessee State University
College of Education

Department of Supervision and Administration • Box 19000A • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-0002 • (615) 929-4415, 4430

March 21, 1986

Dear School Board Member:

One of our doctoral students, Merrell J. Riddle, is attempting to develop a profile of school board members in North Carolina. This is to be compared with a national school board profile.

In order that an accurate portrait may be compiled, this survey is being sent to all 906 North Carolina school board members. Please take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete the three parts of this survey. As you will note, your name is not requested. All replies will be kept confidential and all information received will be reported in summary form only.

A stamped envelope addressed to the student is enclosed for your convenience in returning the survey.

Thank you for your assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Howard Bowers".

J. Howard Bowers
Chairman, Doctoral Committee

JHB/dmr

SURVEY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

This survey is intended to determine how school board members view certain aspects of their position. There are three parts to this survey. Part I is concerned with demographic information; part II, with personal information; and part III, with views as to desirable qualifications for board members.

PART I--DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

PLEASE SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR BOARD:

1. Educational region
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

2. Name of school system _____ Code _____

3. School system type
 County
 City

4. Length of term
 2 years
 4 years
 6 years
 Other (specify) _____

5. Student population
 Less than 1,000
 1,000--4,999
 5,000--9,999
 10,000--24,999
 25,000 or above

6. Make-up of Board
 Total members

 Number of female members
 Number of male members

 Number of Black members
 Number of Indian members
 Number of White members
 Number of other members
(specify) _____

7. Method of selection
 Appointed
 Elected
 Nonpartisan
 Partisan

PART II--PERSONAL INFORMATION

PLEASE SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF:

8. Sex

Male
 Female

9. Race

Black
 Indian
 White
 Other (specify) _____

10. Age

Under 26
 26--30
 31--35
 36--40
 41--45
 46--50
 51--55
 56--60
 Over 60

11. Family income (optional)

Less than \$20,000
 \$20,000--\$29,999
 \$30,000--\$39,999
 \$40,000--\$49,999
 \$50,000--\$59,000
 \$60,000--\$69,999
 \$70,000--\$79,999
 \$80,000--\$89,999
 \$90,000--\$99,999
 \$100,000 or above

12. Educational level

Less than high school graduate
 High school graduate
 Post high school training
 College graduate (BA/BS)
 Advanced college degree

13. Marital status

Single
 Married
 Other (specify) _____

14. Years lived in community

Less than 6
 6--10
 11--15
 16--20
 Over 20

15. How many years have you served on the school board? _____

16. What is your occupation? _____

17. Do you have children enrolled in the public schools (K-12) at this time?

Yes No

PART III--DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

The Public School Laws of North Carolina provide that (a) the board of education consist of five members elected by the voters at large for terms of four years unless modified by local legislation and (b) no person residing in a local school administrative unit shall be eligible for election to the board of education of that local school administrative unit unless such person resides within the boundary lines of that local school administrative unit. (G. S. 115C-35 [a], [b])

If your unit has local modifications to these General Statutes other than length of term and/or number of members, please list:

As a board member, do you feel there should be basic qualifications for eligibility to the board of education?

Yes No

If yes, please list those qualifications in order of priority:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

APPENDIX D

**OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**
Terrell Duncan
Burlington**1st VICE-PRESIDENT**
Pennie Battle
Gates**2nd VICE-PRESIDENT**
Shelby Shore
Yadkin**TREASURER**
Bob Cabanis
Cleveland**IMMEDIATE
PAST PRESIDENT**
Oliver Smith
Lenoir**DIRECTORS**
Hardy Caldwell
Henderson
Linda S. Chandler
DurhamHoward Dorsett
Montgomery
Grover Edwards
Northampton
Walter Faribault
Orange
Molly Gambill
Ashe
Tom Hewitt
Carteret
Bobby Rex Komegay
WayneMary Ellen Maxwell
Currituck
James Mebane
Guilford
Dr. Virginia Morgan
UnionKristi Neal
McDowell
Dr. Ted Parrish
Chapel Hill-CarrboroJames R. Raper
Beaufort
John Sledge
MooreNehemiah Smith
Rocky MountSarah Stevenson
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Robert Wright
HokeDr. James Ellerbe, Liaison
N.C. Assoc. for School
AdministratorsTheda Moore, Liaison
State Board of Education
Dr. Carl Unsicker, Vice-Ch.
Southern Region School BoardsJanet Wilson, Liaison
N.C. Alliance for Public
Education**LEGAL COUNSEL**
George Rogister
Raleigh**"PUBLIC EDUCATION: NORTH CAROLINA'S BEST INVESTMENT"**

March 21, 1986

H. L. Johnson
Research/Policy ConsultantMs. Merrell J. Riddle
Route 2, Box 276-A
Old Fort, NC 28762

Dear Ms. Riddle:

Pursuant to your request for support of research on school board members in North Carolina, I have written a letter in support of your efforts, to be sent under separate cover. As we discussed by phone the one area of concern that I have is the item dealing with income of board members. Therefore, the letter of support is predicated on the following:

1. Removal of item 11 (family income) or on the condition that it be listed as "optional" information.
2. Providing the North Carolina School Boards Association a copy of the results of your findings.

A list of school board chairmen is enclosed, as you requested.

Best wishes in your study.

Sincerely,


H. L. JohnsonHLJ:afs
Enclosure

APPENDIX E

**OFFICERS**

PRESIDENT
Terrell Duncan
Burlington

1st VICE-PRESIDENT
Fennie Battle
Gates

2nd VICE-PRESIDENT
Shelby Shore
Yadkin

TREASURER
Bob Cabaniss
Cleveland

**IMMEDIATE
PAST PRESIDENT**
Oliver Smith
Lenoir

DIRECTORS

Hardy Caldwell
Henderson

Linda S. Chandler
Durham

Howard Dorsett
Montgomery

Grover Edwards
Northampton

Walter Faribault
Orange

Molly Gambill
Ashe

Tom Hewitt
Carteret

Bobby Rex Komegay
Wayne

Mary Ellen Maxwell
Currituck

James Mebane
Gulfport

Dr. Virginia Morgan
Union

Kristi Neal
McDowell

Dr. Ted Parrish
Chapel Hill-Carrboro

James R. Raper
Beaufort

John Sledge
Moore

Nehemiah Smith
Rocky Mount

Sarah Stevenson
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Robert Wright
Hoke

Dr. James Elerbe, Liaison
N.C. Assoc. for School
Administrators

Theda Moore, Liaison
State Board of Education

Dr. Carl Unsicker, Vice-Ch.
Southern Region School Boards

Janet Wilson, Liaison
N.C. Alliance for Public
Education

LEGAL COUNSEL
George Rogister
Raleigh

"PUBLIC EDUCATION: NORTH CAROLINA'S BEST INVESTMENT"

March 25, 1986

H. L. Johnson
Research/Policy Consultant

Dear School Board Member:

The North Carolina School Boards Association has been asked to support the research efforts of Merrell J. Riddle, who is compiling a profile of school board members in North Carolina. This profile is to be compared with national data.

I encourage you to take a few minutes of your valuable time to complete the survey instrument. The data collected can be valuable in obtaining an accurate profile of school board members in our nation.

Thank you for your assistance in this study.

Sincerely,

H. L. Johnson

HLJ:afs

VITA

VITA

MERRELL JENKINS RIDDLE

Personal Data: Date of Birth: November 5, 1933
 Place of Birth: Bryson City, North Carolina
 Marital Status: Married

Education: Swain County Public Schools, North Carolina.
 Old Fort School, Old Fort, North Carolina.
 Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; business
 education, B.S., 1955.
 Western Carolina University, Cullowhee,
 North Carolina; middle grades education,
 M.A., 1973.
 Western Carolina University, Cullowhee,
 North Carolina; supervision, Ed.S., 1976.
 East Tennessee State University, Johnson
 City, Tennessee; educational adminis-
 tration, Ed.D., 1987.

Professional Experience: Teacher, Johnsville High School; Shauck,
 Ohio, 1957-1958.
 Teacher, Lexington Elementary School;
 Lexington, South Carolina, 1967-1969.
 Teacher, Greenwood School; Lemon
 Springs, North Carolina, 1969-1970.
 Teacher, Upchurch Junior High School;
 Raeford, North Carolina, 1970-1972.
 Teacher, Nebo Elementary School; Nebo,
 North Carolina, 1972-1976.
 Reading Specialist, McDowell County
 Schools; Marion, North Carolina,
 1976-1978.
 Elementary Supervisor, McDowell County
 Schools; Marion, North Carolina,
 1978-1985.
 Doctoral Fellow, College of Education, East
 Tennessee State University; Johnson City,
 Tennessee, 1985.
 Director, Elementary Education, McDowell
 County Schools; Marion, North Carolina,
 1985-1987.

Honors and Awards: Phi Delta Kappa.
 Competent Toastmaster; Toastmasters,
 International, 1986.