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## Criteria Used by Illinois School Boards in the Selection of a New Superintendent during the 1987-88 School Year

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CRITERIA USED BY ILLINOIS SCHOOL BOARDS  
IN THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT DURING  
THE 1987-88 SCHOOL YEAR

by

Donald L. Kussmaul

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Education of Loyola University  
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## VITA

The author, Donald L. Kussmaul, is the son of Fred J. and Frieda M. Kussmaul. He was born July 9, 1946 in East St. Louis, Illinois.

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AN ANALYSIS OF CRITERIA USED BY ILLINOIS SCHOOL  
BOARDS IN THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT  
DURING THE 1987-88 SCHOOL YEAR

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the criteria utilized by school boards in selecting a new superintendent. All Illinois school boards involved in the selection of a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year were surveyed; to simplify the process, questions were directed to school board presidents only. The school board presidents surveyed were asked to participate in an interview with the researcher to probe the results of the survey.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year?
2. Is there one specific criterion that is considered more important than another

by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of a superintendent?

3. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high, or unit school boards in Illinois?
4. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male versus female superintendent?
5. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban, and urban school boards?
6. Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male- or female-dominated boards?

The data were gathered for this study utilizing the opinion/fact survey and the interview technique. Responses were obtained from 93 school board presidents or representatives from a possible 106 school boards. Forty-eight of the 93

respondents participated in the interviews. The research design for the study was based upon descriptive research methodology.

Conclusions generated include:

**Conclusion.** The overwhelming criterion recognized by all participating boards in the selection of a new superintendent was the manner in which a candidate responded in the interview process.

**Conclusion.** The boards involved in the study overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of a candidate being an excellent communicator over an excellent problem solver.

**Conclusion.** The boards involved in the study did not match their expectations and behavioral roles of the superintendency with the criteria utilized to select a superintendent.

**Conclusion.** The school boards that utilized the assistance of a consultant spent more time in the selection process than those who chose to complete the selection without assistance. The utilization of a consultant did cause the boards to spend more time in the



selection process, however, there was no evidence that the additional time was spent in planning for the selection process or preparing for the interviews.

**Conclusion.** While the interview process and procedures were most important in the selection of a new superintendent, nearly 50% of the interviewees felt that not all board members had reviewed all the candidate information and prepared questions for the interview.

**Conclusion.** A review of candidate follow-up activities revealed that nearly 50% could not verify that contacts to listed references had been made. Visits to the final candidates' former communities were limited to the candidate selected as a final check. Since all candidates had excellent recommendations in their credentials, boards tended to view such letters of less importance in the selection process.

**Conclusion.** According to the data, only 8 of 93 1987-88 boards of education involved in the study had a female-majority, the female

majority board existed primarily in the suburban and rural areas with the boards being only in elementary and small unit districts.

**Conclusion.** Of the 93 boards of education participating in the study, only three female superintendents were chosen. Two female superintendents were employed for elementary districts and one for a unit district. The districts were all rural and had student populations of less than 200. Two of the employing boards were male-majority boards.

CHAPTER I  
PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

School board members in Illinois are elected by the residents of the school district. One, if not the most important, of a board's major responsibilities is to select a school superintendent. According to the Illinois School Code, Chapter 122, Section 10-21.4, the board of education is "except in districts in which there is only one school with less than four teachers, to employ a superintendent who shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the board of education."<sup>1</sup>

While much has been written on different methods that school boards can use in selecting a superintendent, there is not a best method which can be used to meet the specific needs of individual school districts. With approximately

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<sup>1</sup>Illinois Association of School Boards, 1988 Illinois School Code. (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., [1988].), p. 80.

100 school boards in Illinois seeking a superintendent each year for the next five years; with the average age of superintendents in Illinois being 49.7 and almost half of the superintendents over the age of 50<sup>2</sup>; and according to members of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Field Service staff, a vacancy in the past which might have attracted between 50 and 75 candidates would now attract a mean average of 39 candidates,<sup>3</sup> it is extremely important for school boards to know as much as they can about making the best choice in selecting a superintendent.

With the diversity of Illinois school districts (elementary, high, and unit) and the different composition of the boards of education (male majority versus female majority), as well as different demographics (rural, suburban, and urban)

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas E. Glass, The Illinois School Superintendency. (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Association of School Administrators, [December 1986].), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois School Board Journal: "Where will you find your next superintendent?" (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Association of School Boards [September-October, 1986].), p. 22.

of the districts, it is difficult to determine the criteria that are important in selecting that one candidate for superintendent over other finalists for the position. Discovering the criteria considered important to school board members in the selection of a new superintendent can be important to other school boards as well as to future superintendent candidates.

#### Statement of the Problem

What are the criteria considered important to Illinois school board members in the selection of a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the criteria utilized by Illinois school boards in selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year.

#### Research Questions

One hundred and six school boards involved in the selection of a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year were sent surveys. After two mailings and telephone calls, ninety-three completed surveys had been returned. In an effort

to simplify the process, the surveys were sent to the school board presidents only. After compiling the data from the surveys, forty-eight direct interviews with school board presidents were conducted to substantiate or refute the findings of the survey.

The survey is a three part survey that was utilized by Dr. Robert E. Anderson, Professor of Educational Administration, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas. Dr. Anderson has utilized the survey in studies of Kansas School District Superintendents (1982); he and Jean S. Lavid conducted a similar survey for the Missouri School Board Association pertaining to the "Factors School Boards Use When Selecting a Superintendent."

Part I of the survey consists of demographic information that pertains to the nature of the specific school board, the school district, and the specific selected superintendent.

Part II of the survey consists of twenty-nine superficial criteria that have importance in the selection process. The primary categories of the twenty-nine factors are 1) personal information and

appearance, 2) educational background and accomplishments, and 3) communication skills. The board presidents have rated the criteria on a Likert Scale as to their importance to the selection of a superintendent.

Part III of the survey consists of seventeen superintendency behavioral roles which are fundamental to the position of superintendent. The board presidents were asked to rate the behavioral roles as very important, important, and not important in the selection of their superintendent.

The interview document that this writer has been utilizing was also developed by Dr. Robert E. Anderson; however, the original use of the document was as a third part to the survey. The questions have been reconstructed to require subjective answers rather than objective answers. The replies from the board presidents are very specific due to the nature of the questions and have been recorded by this writer to assist in the substantiation of the survey.

The last question on the survey asked eachboard president if he/she would participate in

the interview process. Fifty-three of the responding board members stated that they would be willing to participate in the interview process. The fifty-three respondents represented fifty percent of those responding to the survey. Only forty-eight or 90 percent of the respondents were contacted after three attempts had been made to reach each respondent.

Thus, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year?
2. Is there one specific criterion that is more important than another by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of a superintendent?
3. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high, or unit school boards in Illinois?



4. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male versus female superintendent?
5. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban, and urban school boards?
6. Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male- or female-dominated boards?

#### *Rationale,* Significance of the Study

Through the use of this study, boards of education will be able to expand their knowledge regarding the superintendent selection process. This study will identify the criteria used by boards of education in the selection of a superintendent; this information will be available to all boards of education.

The study will also provide superintendent candidates with the knowledge of criteria which are used by boards of education in the selection process.

Definition of Terms

1. Superintendent--refers to an individual having an All Grade Supervisory Certificate or a type 75 Administrator's Certificate with the Superintendent endorsement for the State of Illinois.
2. School Board President--refers to the chairperson of the local school board of education.
3. Criteria--refers to the standards used to judge or compare superintendent candidates.
4. Selection--refers to the process used to narrow the field of candidates, develop a priority listing of candidates, or identify the single preferred candidate. The selection process might include: screening of applications, interviewing, contacting present or prior employers, etc.
5. Elementary School District--refers to school districts in Illinois that contain only grades K-8.

6. High School District--refers to school districts in Illinois that contain only grades 9-12.
7. Unit School District--refers to school districts in Illinois that contain grades K-12.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

While much national literature on education has viewed the principal as the school instructional leader, little has addressed the role of the superintendent as the educational leader for the district or community. The caliber of educational leadership determines the quality of the educational system in any community. The degree of success of the superintendent is certainly related to the degree of success of the board and the reverse is also true. Therefore, the selection of the school superintendent is probably the most critical function performed by a board of education.

More than ever, superintendent selection is critical in today's educational climate, which seems to be shifting responsibility for funding public education from the national and state arena to the local level. The trend toward more taxation at the district level heightens accountability for

both board and superintendent. The board's total performance receives careful scrutiny as more tax dollars are collected and spent locally.

Taxpayers are insisting that school boards fulfill their legal duty of superintendent selection in a thoroughly efficient manner, in tune with the unique needs of the school district. Choosing an educational leader is not a routine chore. The final selection of the superintendent will set the stage for the quality of teaching and learning. In one way or another, that person influences the destiny of all students in the district.

Thus, the process of selecting a new superintendent becomes very important. While the initial search could be for a person within the district, it could also be a national search. Whether the board of education decides to do the search or to have consultants do the search, the board of education must select the final candidate to be the new superintendent of the school district. In the final selection process, what are the criteria that caused the board of education to

choose that specific candidate for their new superintendent? While much has been written on the process or processes of selecting a new superintendent, little has addressed the criteria used by the board of education in making that final decision.

### Role of the School Board

Public education historically has been seen as an essential ingredient in the development and growth of America. Jefferson emphasized the importance of education to the new nation when he wrote: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." <sup>1</sup>

More than a century later, Conant referred to the American public education system as the "engine of democracy."<sup>2</sup> In 1983 it was reported in A Nation at Risk that "people are steadfast in their belief that education is the major foundation for

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon C. Lee, ed., Crusade Against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup>Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools? (New York: John Riley and Sons, Inc., 1958), p. 4.

the future strength of this country."<sup>3</sup>

Public education always has been a cause of national concern although the responsibility for education is not specifically delegated to the federal government. The Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, however, has been interpreted by the courts as reserving to the states the authority for establishing or not establishing systems of public education. According to the Tenth Amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the establishment of public education systems traditionally has been a function of the states.

In reality, education in America began at the local level with family instruction, private tutors, and the establishment of church and private

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform, National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p.16.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Constitution, Amendment X.

schools. Some state laws eventually were enacted in post-revolutionary America requiring local governmental bodies to provide systems of public education. Many of these late eighteenth century state laws, according to Kaestle, were similar to a 1789 Massachusetts law that "required towns of fifty or more families to provide a grammar school."<sup>5</sup> Thus, public education, a state function, was conceived and nurtured at the local level.

Implementation of educational programs at the local level was originally the responsibility of local governmental bodies composed of elected community representatives. These representatives, known as selectmen, were charged with the responsibility for handling local governmental affairs as well as school business.<sup>6</sup> These responsibilities grew in complexity as the population increased and "the details of operating

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<sup>5</sup>Carl F. Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Archie R. Dykes, School Board and Superintendent: Their Effective Working Relationships (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 8.



the schools . . . became more burdensome."<sup>7</sup> To ease this strain, the selectmen appointed temporary committees solely to oversee educational matters. These committees, consisting of local lay people, gradually became permanent and evolved into local boards of education.<sup>8</sup>

Lay local board members initially handled "all the details of operating the schools."<sup>9</sup> These details included legislative, administrative, and supervisory functions such as making curriculum decisions, developing policies, overseeing maintenance and building operations, and hiring, supervising, and firing personnel.<sup>10</sup> As these functions grew in complexity, school boards relinquished minor functions to professional leaders.<sup>11</sup> The practice of hiring professional administrators or superintendents became common

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<sup>7</sup>Dykes, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Dykes, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Dykes, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>Dykes, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Dykes, p. 8.

after 1850.<sup>12</sup>

The transition from complete control by lay boards to shared responsibilities between superintendents and local boards of education was not a smooth one. Callahan claimed that a considerable number of school boards "were unwilling to give over any real authority" to superintendents.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, many superintendents saw themselves as educational experts. By the end of the nineteenth century, school superintendents had become increasingly militant and bold in their demands for more authority and responsibilities. Their hostility was reflected in administrator journal articles and in superintendent speeches at annual education meetings.<sup>14</sup>

As the struggle regarding the division of

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<sup>12</sup>David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), p.95.

<sup>13</sup>Raymond E. Callahan, "The American Board of Education, 1789-1960," in Understanding School Boards, ed. Peter J. Cistone (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1975), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>Callahan, pp.25-26.

responsibilities ensued, the tension between school boards and superintendents increased. School boards became threatened by the possible loss of legal power and took an aggressive stance in response to the militant mood of the superintendents. Ultimately, it was the exercise of power by school boards, the power of appointment and dismissal, that squelched the open conflict. As a result, by 1895, it was documented that "many superintendents had lost their jobs."<sup>15</sup> Although the struggle dissipated, the strained relations between school boards and superintendents remained.

At the turn of the century, the school board-superintendent relationship continued to be a sensitive issue. According to Callahan, "almost every book published on school administration in the twentieth century has a section on the relationship between school boards and superintendents--what it is, and what it should be."<sup>16</sup> The proper time to establish a relationship "of mutual respect and confidence," Ashby noted, was during

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<sup>15</sup>Callahan, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>Callahan, pp. 34-35.

the superintendent selection process.<sup>17</sup> Ashby wrote:

If care on the part of both superintendent and board has been taken in making the initial contacts, further exploration, and finally a contract, then the respect and confidence growing out of the early investigations should provide a firm foundation on which to build.<sup>18</sup>

The superintendent selection process was believed to be crucial in establishing a cooperative school board-superintendent relationship. This process, whereby superintendents were appointed, generally was considered to be the responsibility of local school boards as authorized by state laws. However, the authority to appoint local school superintendents always was not specified. Dykes explained that "some states give the local board specific authority to employ a superintendent, but others give no authorization for the employment of such an officer."<sup>19</sup> However, the position of superintendent of schools generally

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<sup>17</sup>Lloyd W. Ashby, The Effective School Board Member (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1968), p. 47.

<sup>18</sup>Ashby, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup>Dykes, p. 71.

was an appointed one with local school boards responsible for the selection and appointment.

The magnitude of the responsibility of school boards for selecting and appointing superintendents was evident throughout the literature. In emphasizing the importance of the task, it was expressed that "the school board's selection of the superintendent will be a major factor in the success or failure of the board in governing the public schools."<sup>20</sup> Morphet, Johns, and Reller concurred that "no single act of the board of education is more important than its selection of a superintendent."<sup>21</sup> Authorities acknowledged that the selection and appointment of a superintendent was a critical undertaking for local boards of education. According to the most recent Illinois School Code, it is the responsibility of the School

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<sup>20</sup>American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and National School Boards Association (NSBA), Selecting a Superintendent, Superintendent Career Development Series No. 2 (Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1979), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller, Educational Organization and Administration, 4th rev. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), p. 251.

Board "to employ a superintendent who shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the board of education. . . ." <sup>22</sup>

The National School Board Association refers to the task as:

The one relationship most vital to the health of a school district is that between the superintendent and the board of education. And nothing tests the caliber of a board of education more severely than the responsibility of finding and appointing a new superintendent. If this delicate and difficult task is carried out skillfully, everyone--most of all the school district itself--will come out a winner. <sup>23</sup>

While many different superintendent search consulting firms and associations do exist and have excellent tried and true steps in the selection process that can help produce the best results, it is ultimately the board of education that must judge candidates in the light of the school dis-

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<sup>22</sup>Illinois Association of School Boards. 1988 Illinois School Code. (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., [1988].), p. 80.

<sup>23</sup>National School Board Association, Executive Search: Between Superintendents? Find the One You Need. (Arlington, Virginia: National School Board Association, [1980].), p. 1.

trict's special qualities, strengths, problems, and needs, and in the final analysis, only the board can make the choice. After a superintendent search has been completed, the consultant has screened the candidates based upon a needs questionnaire; a list of between 4 and 12 possible candidates may be presented to the board of education for final interviews; and a possible visit to the candidates' present communities is in order. With all candidates being similar and somewhat compatible with the school district, what criteria did the board use to select that best candidate? If the role of the board of education is to select a superintendent for the school district as its leader, then it seems extremely important to know the criteria that have influenced other school boards in choosing that one best superintendent for their district.

#### Selection Process

In 1986 a survey was conducted by the Illinois Association of School Administrators that showed that the average tenure in one superintendent was 5.5 years; that the mean average age of

superintendents in Illinois was 49.7; and that 55% of Illinois superintendents would take early retirement at age 55, provided that such option was available.<sup>24</sup> With this information available, school boards in Illinois can look forward to hiring a new superintendent within the next 5 to 6 years.

Research in 1980 by Richard Chisholm in the state of Washington dealt with the entire superintendent recruitment process, and from his research came this analysis of the selection of the final candidate:

School boards, working as a group, have consistently conducted the final screening and selection of the top candidate. These activities were occasionally open to include district employees but seldom to include people from outside of the system.

The interview was heavily relied on in making the final decision. Typically, four to five candidates were interviewed as finalists. Most districts developed an interview guide to assist with the process, reviewed application materials immediately prior to the interview and

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<sup>24</sup>Glass, Thomas E., The Illinois School Superintendency. (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Association of School Administrators, [December, 1986].), p. 11 and 31.



recorded information during or promptly after the interview. The typical interview took 1 to 2 hours. Interview emphasis was broad, with all of the alternatives posed on the study survey receiving at least a moderate degree of emphasis. Relatively assessed, boards were most concerned during the interview with trying to appraise the candidate's motivations, interests, and attitudes, to help the candidate understand the major priorities, goals, and problems of the district and assess the candidate's interpersonal skills. Assessing the candidate's intellectual ability, technical skills and knowledge, and his/her experience received less emphasis.<sup>25</sup>

Overall, the process used by the board to make the final decision appeared to be one that evolved as the board worked toward the decision--a process that usually involved group and/or individual ranking of candidates according to overall merit and utilized extensive discussion. The process typically was not structured or pre-planned. In about half the districts the job qualifications were used for the specific rating of candidates.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Richard B. Chisholm, "The Recruitment, Selection, and Employment of School Superintendents in the State of Washington." (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington State University, 1980.), pp. 270-271.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 271-272.

While the process may have worked well or may have had problems when the interview phase was reached, the actual criteria used in making the selection by 50% of the boards was unknown or not determinable. In the majority of interviews the boards were interested in making the candidates aware of the district's goals, priorities, and problems and in assessing the candidates' interpersonal skills.

A 1982 study conducted by Joseph L. Schmitz addressed the issue of superintendent competencies as perceived by board presidents in Iowa when selecting a superintendent. The following are the rank order as perceived by board presidents in Iowa:

1. The ability to communicate ideas to the board, staff and community.
2. The ability to work cooperatively with the board of education.
3. Experience in the knowledge of sound fiscal management procedures.
4. The ability to develop and direct an effective management team.
5. The ability to provide educational leadership.
6. The ability to develop both short and long range district goals.
7. A thorough knowledge of and successful experience in sound management practices.
8. The ability to delegate authority yet maintain accountability.

9. The ability to select, assign, and evaluate staff.
10. Successful experience in selection and implementation of education priorities.
11. Knowledge of negotiations and the collective bargaining process.
12. Progressive yet realistic educational philosophy.
13. The ability to work in the area of human relations.
14. The ability to interpret, review, and revise school policy.
15. A strong academic background with successful experience in curriculum and its development.
16. Familiarity with school law.
17. Skilled leadership in the development of in-service training for administrators and teaching staff.
18. Knowledge of the legislative process.
19. An interest in the continuation of professional growth.
20. Successful experience as a classroom teacher.
21. Expecting the superintendent to live in the district.
22. The ability to secure and maintain desired student behavioral patterns.
23. A community-oriented person who has high interest in a broad range of community groups and organizations.
24. Successful administrative experience in a comparable district.
25. The superintendent selected must have the Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree.<sup>27</sup>

The characteristics that could be considered as criteria when seeking a superintendent tend to

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<sup>27</sup>Joseph L. Schmitz, "Job Competencies and Characteristics Desired of Superintendents by Iowa Public School Board Presidents." (Ed.D. dissertation, Drake University, 1982), pp. 37-38.

show that criteria near the top pertain to board and managerial procedures. Experience, professional growth, community activities and student behavior all rank near the bottom of the list.

Similar to the Chisholm findings the candidates' ability to communicate and work cooperatively with the board are of utmost importance.

The National Association of School Boards has been involved in helping school boards across the nation find a new superintendent. Their "Search Project" has a number of phases that are covered in making the final selection. The phases are as follows:

Preliminary board responsibilities.

In advance of visiting the district, NSBA will supply your board with several documents designed to elicit from board members their best thinking about your school district's goals and the characteristics most needed in a superintendent if the district is to achieve these goals.

Phase One: Fact-finding. To help the board organize and interpret the data gathered through the board's preliminary work, and to reach a consensus about the most important characteristics the new superintendent should demonstrate. To review and agree upon procedures and

strategies for carrying out the search. To gather additional information necessary to prepare an appropriate announcement of the vacancy. To review public relations guidelines appropriate to search projects. To learn if the board wants staff or community involved in the selection process.

Phase Two: Search Announcement. NSBA will then prepare an approved brochure, prepare text for publications, a job description, criteria for screening applicants and distribution of the vacancy.

Phase Three: Application Screening. NSBA will handle applications, will screen all applicants according to criteria approved by the board and confirm availability of top 10 to 15% of applicants.

Phase Four: Presentation of the Candidates. NSBA will meet with the board to present the names and credentials of the top candidates. The board will then choose from 3 to 5 finalists to interview.

The Final Decision. The board, after carefully weighing the alternatives, must ultimately settle on its number-one choice for the job. Since the board alone is accountable for this decision, the board alone can make it--and with the proper advance work, it can be a thoughtful and responsible one. NSBA, of course, will not be involved in this final selection stage.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>National School Board Association, Executive Search: Between Superintendents? Find the One You Need. (Arlington, Virginia: National School Board Association, [1980].), p. 1-3.

With the use of a consultant to assist with the search for a superintendent, Carroll F. Johnson suggested boards consider the following factors:

1. Do board members have the personal time necessary to conduct a proper nationwide search themselves?
2. Do board members have the expertise to conduct such a search?
3. Would the reputation and contacts of the consultants increase the quantity and quality of applications for the position?

The fundamental question when considering consultants is: Would consultants help the board make a wiser choice and reduce the chance of error? If the answer is yes then a consultant should be used. However, the final decision will still rest with the board of education after the final interview.<sup>29</sup>

In 1985 Erphania Giglio studied the recruitment and selection process of superintendents in Virginia. She concluded much the same as others, that the selection of a superintendent was not only a critical and complex task but also the most important decision made by a board. Nevertheless, it appeared from the findings

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<sup>29</sup>Carroll F. Johnson, "Losing Your Superintendent? Don't Panic: Here's Advice on Finding the Right Replacement and Building a Foundation for His Success." American School Board Journal (December 1982): pp. 40-41.

of the study that this selection was accomplished by board members whose occupational background and years of board service generally offered no opportunities for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of personnel. It also was indicated by board members that professional assistance was of little importance in the superintendent selection process. Given the complexity and importance of the process and the inexperience of board members, it appeared that additional information and assistance were necessary. It is believed that this assistance was sought through informal information networks.<sup>30</sup> She also concluded that the superintendent selection process, like all decision-making processes, was more complicated than acknowledged by the literature.

Also in 1985, Robert E. Anderson and Jean S. Lavid of Wichita State University, conducted a survey in Missouri to determine the factors that

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<sup>30</sup>Erphania A. Giglio, "The Perceptions of School Board Members Concerning the Importance of Recommended Procedures in the Recruitment and Selection of School Superintendents." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1985.), pp. 220-221.

school board members in that state used to select superintendents. The questionnaire asked board members to rate 29 factors that might have been considered during the selection process. The most important item was the manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions. This and other questions rated important were placed in a category called communication skills. Three other factors were considered to be very important in the criteria for selecting a superintendent. Background checking of candidates in former positions received the second highest rating. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district was third in the rating. Self-confidence exhibited by candidates during the interview ranked fourth and concluded the criteria that boards felt were very important in the selection of the superintendent.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Robert E. Anderson and Jean S. Lavid, "Factors School Boards Use When Selecting a Superintendent." Spectrum Vol III, No. 3 (Summer 1985): pp. 21-24.



The most unimportant criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent are as follows:

1. Candidate's past background in speech-making appearances.
2. Salary candidate made in last position.
3. Age of candidate.
4. Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences.
5. Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others.
6. Number and types of publications that candidate had written.
7. Marital status of candidate.
8. Number of candidate's children and ages.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-24.

### Summary

For those boards of education who will be faced with the selection of a superintendent in the very near future, the literature provides the necessary steps for the board to do the search by themselves. If a board feels that they do not have the time, expertise, and contacts to attract the best candidates, then consultants are available to aid and assist boards of education with the process.

The literature also indicates that the final selection of a candidate to be superintendent rests with the board of education. The board of education must accomplish this important task when their occupational background and years of service generally offer no opportunities for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of personnel.

There are many similarities in the literature regarding methods to approach the search for a superintendent but few criteria that are used by boards to choose that final candidate. Several criteria that have been identified in the selection

process are:

1. Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions.
2. Background checking of candidate in former position.
3. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district.
4. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during the interview.

A conclusion of the research on the criteria used by school boards in the selection of the final candidate to be superintendent would be to identify more of the criteria that are used by boards in the selection process; then through the utilization of the criteria, boards will be able to make better decisions concerning superintendent selection.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures utilized in the study. The study is to ascertain the criteria utilized by school boards in selecting a new superintendent. All Illinois school boards involved in the selection of a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year were surveyed; to simplify the process, questions were directed to school board presidents only. The school board presidents surveyed were asked to participate in an interview with the researcher to probe the results of the survey.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year?

2. Is there one specific criterion that is considered more important than another by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of a superintendent?
3. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high, or unit school boards in Illinois?
4. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male versus female superintendent?
5. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban, and urban school boards?
6. Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male- or female- dominated boards?

#### Research Procedures

The research design for the study was based upon descriptive research methodology. "Descriptive research studies," according to Ary, Jacobs,

and Razavieh, "are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena."<sup>1</sup> William Asher defined descriptive research as "a method of determining interrelationships among variables."<sup>2</sup> Descriptive research methodology was described by John Best as follows:

Descriptive research describes what is. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of conditions that exist. It involves some type of comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing nonmanipulated variables.<sup>3</sup>

The data was gathered for this study utilizing the opinion/fact survey and the interview technique. According to Charles Hopkins the opinion/fact survey provides the facts needed for many research studies concerned with constructs about which the personal information is difficult to

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Ary, Lucy Cheser Jacobs, and Asghar Razavieh, Introduction to Research in Education, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>J. Williams Asher, Education Research and Evaluation Methods (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1976), p. 277.

<sup>3</sup>John W. Best, Research in Education, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), p. 25.

obtain. A survey that collects the opinions of persons about themselves or about their relationship to someone or something else may provide the data the researcher needs to study. The scope of the opinion/fact survey may be narrow or wide. The depth of the survey will also vary and will be directed largely by the nature of the question. In all cases, the data will be used to make generalizations about groups or conditions beyond subjects studied.<sup>4</sup>

Hopkins also defines the interview as a face to face meeting between a questioner and a responder, or an oral presentation of an opinionnaire or attitude scale. In most cases, the interview is organized around a structure much like a mailed questionnaire. However, the interviewer has a number of advantages over a mailed questionnaire that stem from the personal contact. The interview permits an interaction not readily available within the usual structure of the questionnaire, allowing the respondent to clarify the question asked and

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Hopkins, Understanding Educational Research, (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1980), p. 277.

the questioner to probe for the specific meanings of answers.<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the research design was based on descriptive research methodology. The design employed the opinion/fact survey technique utilizing a questionnaire and an interview structured in conjunction with the questionnaire to gather the data.

#### Selection of Subjects

The Illinois Association of School Boards and Illinois Association of School Administrators were used as sources for providing the necessary information concerning the number of Illinois School Boards seeking superintendents for the 1987-1988 school year. There were 106 superintendency vacancies in Illinois between January 1, 1987, and September 1, 1987. All 106 school district board presidents were sent a survey and 93 of the presidents participated in the survey process. The school board presidents were asked to indicate on the survey if they would participate in the interview process. Fifty-three of the respondents

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 301-302.



indicated that they would participate. As many as three attempts were made to contact the respondents for interviews with 48 respondents or 90% participating in the process.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The purpose of Part I was to gather data concerning the personal and demographic characteristics of the school district, school board, and superintendent selected. Part II of the questionnaire included a listing of 29 recommended criteria for the selection of a superintendent for board presidents to respond to in terms of importance. Part III of the questionnaire consisted of 17 superintendency behavioral roles as to their importance in the selection of a superintendent. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

Part I of the questionnaire was based upon the specific demographic needs of the research questions and can be identified in the following categories:

1. position of board member completing form,

2. composition of the board (male vs. female),
3. location of the school district (rural, suburban, or urban),
4. district type (elementary, high, or unit),
5. student population,
6. gender of superintendent,
7. contract length,
8. salary range of superintendent,
9. selection process used (with or without consultant), and
10. an approximation of time spent by board on the selection process.

Part II of the questionnaire included 29 selection criteria that have importance in the selection of a superintendent. The 29 selected criteria were derived from a survey developed by Robert E. Anderson, Professor, Educational Administration and Supervision, at Wichita State Universi-

ty.<sup>6</sup> The categories of the 29 factors are 1) personal information and appearance, 2) educational background and accomplishments, and 3) communication skills. The questionnaire has been used by Kansas School Boards in 1982 and Missouri School Boards in 1983 and 1984.

Part III of the questionnaire consists of 17 superintendent behavioral roles which are fundamental to the position of superintendent. The seventeen behavioral roles were also identified by Dr. Robert Anderson of Wichita State University and utilized by him in his studies of the Kansas School Boards in 1982 and the Missouri School Boards in 1984. The Illinois board presidents were asked to rate the behavioral roles as very important, important, and not important in the selection of the superintendent.

The interview segment of the research was based upon an additional questionnaire that had been developed by Dr. Robert Anderson. It was the

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<sup>6</sup>Robert E. Anderson, "How Board Members Rate Superintendent Applicants," The Missouri School Board, (The Missouri School Board Association, 1984, vol. 28), pp. 6-8.

opinion of this researcher that an interview probe based around the sixteen questions of the Anderson study would provide an interaction not readily available within the usual structure of the questionnaire, allowing the respondent to clarify the questions asked and the researcher to probe for specific meanings of responses.

In an effort to further validate the survey instruments beyond that of Dr. Anderson, a draft copy was presented to the researcher's committee to critique and make suggestions for improvement and clarity. Each member of the committee is considered an authority in the field of Educational Administration.

Further validation has been provided by having the questionnaire distributed to six Iowa superintendents and their board presidents. The conclusions from summarizing the data accumulated was that there was little doubt that the respondents had any difficulty with the contents or style of the questionnaire. A copy of the correspondence with Dr. George Mauer, Superintendent of Allison-

Bristow School District, Allison, Iowa, is included in Appendix B.

The instrument was sent to the president of each of the one-hundred and six school boards that were involved in selecting a superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year. A cover letter explaining the purpose of this questionnaire and a return envelope were included in the package. A copy of the cover letter is included in Appendix C.

The questionnaire asked each respondent if he/she would participate in an interview about the selection process. Fifty-three presidents responded in the affirmative and attempts were made to contact all presidents responding in the affirmative. Ninety percent or forty-eight of the presidents responding were able to be contacted and participated in the interview process.

#### Data Collecting and Recording

During the third week of August, 1988, each president of a school board who was involved in the selection of a superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year received a questionnaire. The cover letter accompanying the questionnaire requested

that each response be returned by September 9, 1988. Fifty-eight responses were received from the first mailing.

A follow-up letter and copies of the information in the first mailing were sent to the remaining 48 nonrespondents. An additional 21 questionnaires were received.

A final follow-up letter or a telephone call was made to the remaining 27 nonrespondents. An additional 14 questionnaires were received. Eighty-seven percent or 93 of the original 106 were returned.

Based on the 93 questionnaires returned, 53 respondents stated that they would be willing to participate in the interview segment of the research. As many as three attempts were made to reach the interviewees. Ninety percent or 48 of the interviewees were contacted and did participate in the process.

#### Data Analysis

The data generated by the research questions one and two has been analyzed based upon the frequency of the responses to the questionnaire and

interview probe. The responses per criterion question are ranked from very important to very unimportant.

The data generated by research questions three through six has been analyzed based upon frequencies, central tendencies, and/or variability found in the differences/similarities of each of the responses.

#### Limitations

1. The respondents for this study consisted of presidents of school boards.
2. The criteria utilized by school boards in the selection of a superintendent for the school year 1987-1988 were gathered through the use of a mailed questionnaire.
3. The tabulation of data was limited to the number of responses to the questionnaire.
4. The population used in this study was the presidents of school boards that were involved in the selection of a superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year and any inferences derived from this study should be cognizant of this population.

### Summary

One hundred and six presidents of school boards in Illinois that were involved in the selection of a superintendent for the 1987-1988 school year received a questionnaire pertaining to the criteria used in the board's selection.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: 1) demographic information, 2) twenty-nine criteria that have importance in the selection process, and 3) seventeen superintendency behavioral roles which are fundamental to the position of superintendent.

The questionnaire has been validated by the researcher's committee and by a field test group of Iowa superintendents and school board presidents.

An interview probe was utilized to further evaluate and substantiate the results of the questionnaire.

The data was analyzed by the appropriate statistical evaluation used in a descriptive study.

The limitations were based upon the size and responses of the designated population to the questionnaire.



## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapter IV is to report and analyze the data that were collected for the study. The findings were analyzed to determine the criteria used by Illinois School Boards in the selection of a new superintendent during the 1987-88 school year. The following research questions are addressed based upon the analysis of the three part survey sent to school board presidents and interviews that were conducted.

1. What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year?
2. Is there one specific criterion that is considered more important than another by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of a superintendent?
3. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high or unit school boards in Illinois?

4. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male versus female superintendent?
5. What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban and urban school boards?
6. Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male or female-dominated boards?

The survey was sent to the school board presidents of 106 school districts who were seeking a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year.

After the initial survey was sent, two additional attempts were made to have the survey completed. Ninety-three of the surveys were returned representing an 87% return. Fifty-three of the interviewees indicated that they would participate in the interview process. Forty-eight of the respondents or 90% were able to be contacted and did participate in the interview process.

The structure to be utilized for the presentation of the data and analysis for the six research questions is as follows unless otherwise stated at the beginning of each research question:

- Presentation of demographic data
- Analysis of demographic data
- Presentation of data from Part I of the survey instrument "Criteria Used By Board Members To Select A Superintendent of Schools"
- Presentation of data from Part II of the Survey Instrument "Superintendency Behavioral Roles"
- Presentation of data from Interview Instrument
- Analysis of data from Part I, Part II and Interview Instrument as it pertains to the research questions.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Of the 106 surveys sent to respondents, 93 were returned. The following tables represent the composite of the data from the respondents to the survey.

TABLE I  
Person Completing the Survey

Person	No.	Percent
Board President	84	90.3
Designee	9	9.7
Total	93	100.0

Table I identifies the respondent and denotes that in 90.3% of the surveys the school board president did complete the survey.

TABLE II  
Composition of the Board

Majority	No.	Percent
Male	85	91.3
Female	8	8.7
Total	93	100.0

Table II identifies that 91.3% of the boards seeking a new superintendent in 1987-88 had at least four members who were male.

TABLE III  
District Demographic

Type	No.	Percent
Urban	4	4.3
Suburban	18	19.4
Rural	71	76.3
Total	93	100.0

Table III illustrates that 76.3% of the districts seeking a new superintendent for 1987-88 were rural, 19.4% suburban and 4.3% urban. Of the 986 school districts in Illinois, 75% of the districts are categorized as rural, 20% as suburban and 5% are urban. The percentages do represent a turnover of superintendents consistent with the percentage of each type of district throughout the state.

TABLE IV  
District Type

Type	No.	Percent
Elementary	24	25.9
High	14	15.0
Unit	55	59.1

Table IV illustrates that 59.1% of the school boards selecting a superintendent for the 1987-88 school year were unit school districts, 25.9% elementary districts, and 15% high school districts. Of the 986 school districts throughout the state of Illinois, 55% were unit school districts, 30% were elementary school districts, and 15% were high school districts. Again, the districts in 1987-88 seeking superintendents followed closely to the percentage of each type of district existing in Illinois.

TABLE V  
Student Population

Population	No.	Percent
Less than 200	16	17.2
201-500	26	27.9
501-1000	24	25.8
1000-1500	12	12.9
1501-2000	7	7.5
Over 2001	8	8.7
Total	93	100%

Table V illustrates that of all the categories, 27.9% of the districts seeking a superintendent had a student population between 201 and 500. However, 53.7% of the districts seeking superintendents were represented by student populations between 201 and 1000, while 29.1% of the districts seeking a superintendent had a student population of 1000 or more.



TABLE VI  
Gender of Superintendent Selected

Gender	No.	Percent
Male	90	96.8
Female	3	3.2
Total	93	100.0%

Table VI illustrates that 96.8% of the new superintendents selected for the 1987-88 school year were male. Referring back to Table II as to the composition of the Boards of Education, only 91.3% were male-dominated; thus it can be deduced that female-dominated Boards of Education did choose a male superintendent to fill the vacancy in several districts. However, there is not data to show that the female-dominated boards even had a female superintendent candidate apply for the position. It can be deduced, however, that the boards selected the individual that they perceived as the best candidate available based upon the boards' own criteria not the sex of the candidate.

TABLE VII  
Contract Length

Contract	No.	Percent
1 year	32	34.4
Multi Year	61	65.6
Total	93	100.0%

Table VII illustrates that 65.6% or approximately 2 of 3 of the contracts established with the new superintendents selected were multi-year contracts.

TABLE VIII  
Salary Range of Superintendent

Range	No.	Percent
Under \$40,000	22	23.7
40,000-49,999	44	47.3
50,000-59,999	14	15.0
60,000-69,999	7	7.5
70,000 and over	6	6.5

Table VIII illustrates that 47.3% of the superintendents selected received a salary between \$40,000 and \$49,999 for the 1987-88 school year. However, the table also illustrates that 71% of the superintendents selected received a salary of less than \$49,999 for the 1987-88 school year. No data were collected to determine if the salary figure was a true salary figure or a salary package which would include benefits.

TABLE IX  
The Selection Process

Process	No.	Percent
Board without assistance	30	32.3
Board with Present Supt. assistance	13	13.9
Board with IASB assistance	29	31.2
Board with Regional Supt. assistance	14	15.1
Board with outside consultant assistance	7	7.5
Total	93	100.0

Table IX illustrates that 32.3% or approximately 1 of 3 of the boards conducted the selection process without any assistance. While 67.7% of the school boards did seek assistance in the process, only 31.2% or approximately 1 of 3 boards utilized the services of the Illinois School Board Association. An additional one-third received assistance from other sources in selecting a superintendent.

TABLE X

## Board Time Spent on Selection Process

Time	No.	Percent
less than 5 hours	7	7.5
6-15 hours	13	13.9
11-25 hours	28	30.1
26-35 hours	17	18.3
36-50 hours	11	11.9
over 50 hours	17	18.3
Total	93	100.0%

Table X illustrates that the largest number of boards, 30.1%, spent 11-25 hours in selecting a new superintendent. By combining categories the table illustrates that 51.5% of the school boards spent less than 26 hours in selecting the new superintendent. Only 18.3% of school boards or less than 1 of 5 spent more than 50 hours in the process to select a new superintendent. There were no data collected to illustrate the hours spent by consultants in assisting in the selection process or the impact of the consultants' work on the selection process.

## ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The group of Boards of Education participating in the study were both reliable and dependable as 93 of the 106 chose to participate although some requests were sent a second time and several needed prodding a third time. The group again demonstrated reliability when 48 of 53 were willing to be interviewed and did participate in the process. Ninety percent of the board presidents demonstrated responsibility to the study by completing the survey instruments.

The boards of education selecting a new superintendent for 1987-88 were male-dominated with 85 of the boards having at least four males. The boards seeking a new superintendent for 1987-88 were representative proportionately of the demographic division of districts throughout the State of Illinois with approximately 75% rural, 20% suburban, and 5% urban. The school boards were also representative of the types of districts represented throughout the State of Illinois with approximately 55% unit districts, 30% elementary districts and 15% high school districts. The

boards of education included in the survey represented 16 school districts with less than 200 students to 8 school districts with over 2000 students. However, the majority of the boards, 50 boards of education, represented school districts between 201 and 1000 students. All areas, types and sizes of districts were represented in the 93 boards of education participating in the survey process.

Of the 93 boards of education, 90 male superintendents were selected and 3 female superintendents were selected. According to Table II, page 4, there were 85 male-dominated boards and 8 female-dominated boards; therefore, several of the female-dominated boards, if not all, did choose a male superintendent. The actual specifics will be addressed in research question 6. If the gender of the selected superintendents was in question, it is apparent that the position of superintendent is a male-dominated position. The position has been male-dominated since its creation, and the data from this study support tradition. However, there are no data from the study to verify that the

boards of education had a female candidate to participate in the selection process. According to the data, 2 of 3 boards of education offered the new superintendent a multi-year contract; this decision to offer a multi-year contract represents board solidarity for the new superintendent. The multi-year contract can represent stability in the district by the board of education, a sign to the teacher organizations that this superintendent and board are committed to the next two or three years. The decision may also represent a board position: ideally not to go through the selection process for at least another two or three years. The boards of education offered salaries of under \$40,000 to over \$70,000 with 71% of the salaries being less than \$49,999. There were 22 salaries below \$40,000 and 44 between \$40,000 and \$49,999. The actual specifics will be addressed by each research question. The average national salary for the position of school district superintendent for the school year 1987-88 was over \$50,000. The boards of education represented in the survey were very conservative with the district resources in setting



the superintendent salary as compared to the national average.

The selection process utilized by the boards of education was approximately one-third of school boards completing the process without assistance, one-third completing the process with the assistance of the Illinois School Board Association Consultants, and one-third of school boards completing the process with assistance from other sources. It was evident that the boards were trying to find a selection process that would work best for them; there was very little indication that cost of a consultant or assistance was a deterring factor. While two-thirds of the school boards used consultants or other assistance to aid in the selection process, only 18.3% of the boards spent more than 50 hours in the selection process. By combining the categories from Table X, page 12, there were 51.5% of the school boards who spent less than 25 hours in the selection process. There were no data collected to illustrate the hours spent by consultants in assisting in the selection process or the impact on time of the consultants'

choice of candidates to bring before the school board. When a board is selecting the chief school officer, they are often selecting the CEO of the largest business in the community. This is a process that should not be taken lightly but should require many, many hours of preparation above and beyond the hours spent by a consultant.

Research Question One

What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year?

And

Research Question Two

Is there one specific criterion that is considered more important than another by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of a superintendent?

Research Questions One and Two are addressed simultaneously through the data collected from Part I of the survey instrument, Criteria Used by Boards to Select a New Superintendent of Schools for 1987-88, and Part II of the survey instrument, Superintendency Behavior Roles. The interview data collected pertaining to research questions I and II will follow Part I and II of the survey instrument.

An analysis of the data as they pertain to research questions 1 and 2 will conclude the presentation.

## Part I

Criteria Used by Boards to Select a New  
Superintendent of Schools for 1987-88

Part I consists of 29 selection criteria that have importance in the selection of a superintendent. The board presidents were asked to rate the selection criteria as very important (VI), important (I), unimportant (U), very unimportant (VU) and No Data (ND).

While there was not just one criterion that was the strongest, there were five criteria statements that were recognized as being very important. From the criteria statements it was obvious that a candidate's communication skills were his/her key to being selected for the superintendency. The following statements are reviewed based upon their importance in the selection process as stated by the respondents.

Upon the completion of the presentation of the data pertaining to Research Questions I and II from Part I and Part II of the survey instrument and the interviews conducted pertaining to the specific research questions, an analysis of the data relevant to the research questions will be presented.

TABLE XI

## Statement 10

Manner in which the candidate responded to interview question

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
71	VI	76.3%
20	I	21.5%
2	U	2.2%
0	VU	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Of the 29 criteria, 76.3% of the respondents felt that the "manner in which the candidate responded to the interview questions" was very important as a criterion. With 21.5% of those responding that the criterion was important, there was a total of 97.8% of the respondents stating that it is either important or very important. Statement 10 was the number one and most important criterion of the 29 utilized in the survey as stated by the 93 boards represented.

TABLE XII

## Statement 13

Self-confidence exhibited by the candidate during the interview

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
60	VI	64.5%
33	I	35.5%
0	U	
0	VU	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

The second top ranking criterion was based upon the "self-confidence exhibited by the candidate during the interview." Of the respondents 64.5% felt the statement was very important and 35.5% felt it was important in the selection of a superintendent. Statement 13 and the number one ranked statement 10 both deal with the ability of the candidate to communicate in an interview setting.



TABLE XIII

## Statement 20

Concern expressed for student academic achievement  
in the district

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
59	VI	63.4%
33	I	35.5%
1	U	1.1%
0	VU	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Of those responding 63.4% felt that statement 20 was very important. When combined with the responses making it an important statement, 98.9% felt it was at least important if not very important in the selection of a superintendent. Again, the statement is based upon the candidate's ability to express him/herself in an interview.

TABLE XIV

## Statement 17

Background checking of candidate in former position(s)

Responses	Ratings	Percentage
51	VI	54.8%
40	I	42.0%
2	U	3.2%
0	UV	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

While 54.8% of the respondents felt that the statement was very important, 96.8% felt that the statement was either important or very important. The background check is the first statement of importance given to "educational background and accomplishments." This check is the investigation of the candidate that goes beyond the interview.

While a candidate must be able to communicate, she/he must also have a strong educational background of accomplishments in the areas needed by the district and stressed by the board of education. The candidate's background must be able to substantiate one's ability to get the job accomplished.

TABLE XV

## Statement 14

Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
45	VI	48.4%
47	I	50.5%
1	U	1.1%
0	VU	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

A total of 98.9% of the respondents felt the statement was at least an important criterion in the selection process with 48.4% of the responses being at the very important level. Again, a candidate's ability to communicate with the board is stressed as one of the top five criteria.

The second set of five criteria have importance although the respondents did not rate them as often in the "Very Important" category.

TABLE XVI

## Statement 18

General physical and mental health appearance

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
27	VI	29.0%
64	I	68.8%
2	U	2.0%
0	VU	
0	ND	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

While 29% of the respondents rated the statement very important, 97.8% of the respondents rated the statement as important or very important. This is the first criterion from the personal information appearance group of criteria, TABLE XXI, p. 80.

TABLE XVII

## Statement 1

Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
27	VI	— 29.0%
63	I	————— 67.75%
2	U	— 2.0%
0	VU	
1	ND	— 1.0%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Again, the personal information and appearance group of criteria received responses of 29% as very important and 67.7% as important; a total 96.7% felt that the statement was either important or very important.

TABLE XVIII

## Statement 19

Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
37	VI	39.8%
49	I	52.7%
5	U	5.0%
0	VU	
1	ND	1.0%
92		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 19 responses illustrate 39.8% felt the statement was very important, and 52.7% felt it was important. A total of 92.5% of the respondents felt this criterion was important or very important. The statement is a communication skill demonstrated during the interview process.

TABLE XIX

## Statement 15

The eye contact candidate had with respondents

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
32	VI	————— 34.4%
55	I	————— 59.1%
5	U	— 5.4%
1	VU	— 1.1%
0	ND	
94		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 15 responses illustrate 34.4% felt the statement was very important and 59.1% felt it was important; a total of 93.5% of the respondents felt the statement was important or very important.



TABLE XX

## Statement 16

Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
26	VI	28.0%
57	I	61.3%
9	U	9.0%
0	VU	
1	ND	1.0%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 16 responses illustrate 28% felt the statement was very important and 61.3% felt it was important. A total of 89.3% of the respondents felt the statement was important or very important.

TABLE XXI

## Top 10 Criteria Statements Categorized

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Statement Number	10	13	20	17	14	18	1	19	15	16
*Statement Category	C	C	C	E	C	P	P	C	C	C
Percent Very Important Responses	76.3	64.5	63.4	54.8	48.4	29.0	29.0	39.8	32	28.0
Percent Important Responses	21.5	35.5	35.5	42.0	50.0	68.8	67.7	52.7	55	61.3
Total	97.8	100	98.9	76.8	98.9	97.8	96.7	92.5	87	89.3

Of the top five criteria statements four of the criteria deal with how well the candidate did utilize his/her communication skills. Seven of the top ten were dealing with the candidate's ability to utilize communication (C) skills as previewed by the Board of Education. Two of the top ten criteria were directed at the personal (P) information and appearances of the candidate, and only one of the top ten criteria in the selection process dealt with the educational (E) background and accomplishments of the candidates.

TABLE XXII  
Least Important Criteria

Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Statement Number	6	25	5	26	28
Statement Category	P	E	P	E	E
Percentage Responses Very Unimportant	18.2	12.9	11.7	8.8	7.5
Percentage Responses Unimportant	75.3	76.3	62.4	71.0	53.8
Total	93.5	89.2	74.1	79.7	61.3

Of the bottom five criteria (least used in selection process), there were three in the area of educational background and accomplishments (E), two in personal information and appearance (P), and none in the area of communication skills. A review of the five least important criteria utilized by boards in the selection of superintendent follows.

TABLE XXIII

## Statement 6

Number of candidate's children and their ages

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
0	VI	
6	I	6.5%
70	U	75.3%
17	VU	18.2%
0	ND	
87		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 6 responses were 18.2% very unimportant and 75.3% as unimportant. Overall 93.5% of the respondents felt the criterion was unimportant.

TABLE XXIV

## Statement 25

Number and type of publications the candidate had written

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
1	VI	— 1.1%
7	I	— 7.5%
71	U	————— 76.3%
12	VU	— 12.9%
2	ND	— 2.2%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 25 responses were 12.9% very unimportant and 76.3% as unimportant. Overall 89.2% of the respondents felt the criterion was unimportant.

TABLE XXV  
Statement 5  
Marital status of candidate

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
3	VI	— 3.3%
20	I	—— 21.5%
58	U	————— 62.4%
11	VU	— 11.7%
1	ND	— 1.1%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 5 responses were 11.7% as very unimportant and 62.4% as unimportant. Overall 73.9% of the respondents felt the criterion was unimportant.

TABLE XXVI

## Statement 26

Past background in speech making appearances

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
1	VI	— 1.1%
15	I	— 16.9%
66	U	— 71.0%
8	VU	— 8.7%
3	ND	— 3.3%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 26 responses had 8.7% as very unimportant and 71.0% as unimportant. Overall 78.7% of the respondents felt the criterion was unimportant.

TABLE XXVII

## Statement 28

Research studies that candidates had completed or worked on with others

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
5	VI	5.5%
24	I	25.8%
50	U	53.8%
7	VU	7.5%
7	ND	7.5%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Statement 28 responses were 7.5% as very unimportant and 53.8% as unimportant. Overall 61.3% of the respondents felt the criterion was unimportant.



TABLE XXVIII

## 29 Criteria Statements

Ranked Based Upon Importance in Selection Process

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VD	ND	TOTAL
1.	*10. Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	71	20	2	0	0	93
2.	*13. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	60	33	0	0	0	93
3.	*20. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	59	33	1	0	0	93
4.	*17. Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	51	40	2	0	0	93
5.	*14. Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	45	41	1	0	0	93
6.	*18. General physical and mental health appearance	27	64	2	0	0	93

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	Total
7.	1. Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	27	63	2	0	1	93
8.	19. Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	37	49	5	0	1	92
9.	15. The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	32	55	5	1	0	93
10.	16. Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	26	57	9	1	0	93
11.	29. Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	23	60	9	0	1	93
12.	8. Content of personal reference letters	16	63	11	1	2	93
13.	9. Appearance and content of application letter	15	64	9	2	2	92

Rank	Statement	Responses					Total
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	
14.	2. Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	38	40	13	1	1	93
15.	12. Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	22	52	17	1	1	93
16.	24. Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of superintendent position	10	61	20	1	1	93
17.	22. Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	10	60	23	0	0	93
18.	27. Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	14	55	14	3	7	93

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	Total
19.	7. Grades received in college courses	14	55	14	3	7	93
20.	3. Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	22	22	6	3	3	89
21.	11. Salary candidate made in last position	4	38	47	3	1	93
22.	23. Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	3	38	45	5	2	93
23.	4. Age of candidate	2	36	49	6	0	93
24.	21. Religious and moral preference statement of candidate	3	28	52	4	6	93
25.	28. Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	5	24	50	7	7	93

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	Total
26.	5. Marital status of candidate	3	20	58	11	1	93
27.	26. Past background in speech making appearances	1	15	66	8	3	93
28.	25. Number and types of publications that candidate had received	1	7	71	12	2	93
29.	6. Number of candidate's children and ages	0	6	70	17	0	93

## Part II

## Superintendency Behavior Roles

Part III of the questionnaire consisted of 17 superintendent behavioral roles which are fundamental to the position of superintendent. The respondents were to rank the roles as very important (VI), important (I), or not important (NI) in their selection process. The five most often selected roles are reviewed as well as the 2 least important roles as perceived by the board presidents. All seventeen are ranked as to the importance that was placed on each in the selection process.

The three division ranking of Part II of the survey as contrasted to the Part I five division ranking was based on a clarification of the degree of importance to the role rather than of a behavioral role's lack of importance.

TABLE XXIX

## Role 2

To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
80	VI	86.%
13	I	14.%
0	NI	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 2 responses were 86% Very Important and 14% Important. There were no, "Not Important" responses.

TABLE XXX

## Role 12

To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
76	VI	81.7%
17	I	18.3%
0	NI	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 12 responses were 81.7% Very Important and 18.3% Important. There were no "Not Important" responses.



TABLE XXXI

## Role 4

To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
72	VI	————— 77.4%
21	I	——— 22.6%
0	NI	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 4 responses were 77.4% Very Important and 22.6% Important. There were no "Not Important" responses.

TABLE XXXII

## Role 9

To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
69	VI	74.2%
24	I	25.8%
0	NI	
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 9 responses were 74.2% Very Important and 25.8% Important. There were no "Not Important" responses.

TABLE XXXIII

## Role 6

To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
63	VI	67.7%
29	I	31.2%
1	NI	1.1%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 6 responses were 67.7% Very Important and 31.2% Important; 1.1% were Not Important.

Of the behavioral roles considered Very Important, roles 2,4,6,9 and 12 dealt with the superintendent's ability to accomplish specific tasks and communicate the results to all parties involved.

TABLE XXXIV

## Role 15

To be an active individual in local political activities

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
1	VI	— 1.1%
11	I	— 11.7%
81	NI	————— 87.2%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 15 responses were 1.1% Very Important and 11.7% Important. The "Not Important" response was 87.2% making role 15 the least important role.

TABLE XXXV

## Role 3

To be affiliated with one church body

Responses	Ratings	Percentages
3	VI	3.3%
19	I	20.4%
71	NI	76.3%
93		10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Role 3 responses were 3.3% Very Important and 20.4% Important. The "Not Important" response was 76.3%.

TABLE XXXVI

Table XXXVI represents the rank order of the 17 behavioral roles of superintendents as viewed by the school boards selecting a superintendent for the 1987-88 school year.

Rank	Statement	Responses			
		VI	I	NI	Total
1.	* 2. To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	80	13	0	93
2.	*12. To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	76	17	0	93
3.	* 4. To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	72	21	0	93
4.	* 9. To be consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	69	24	0	93
5.	* 6. To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	63	29	0	93

Rank	Statement	Responses			
		VI	I	NI	Total
6.	11. To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	63	28	2	93
7.	5. To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	59	34	0	93
8.	10. To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel board members and community patronage	57	36	0	93
9.	7. To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	53	39	1	93
10.	13. To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	46	41	6	93
11.	14. To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	37	56	0	93

Rank	Statement	Responses			
		VI	I	NI	Total
12.	16. To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	37	48	7	93
13.	8. To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	37	47	8	92
14.	17. To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	26	61	5	92
15.	1. To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	21	55	17	93
16.	3. To become affiliated with one local church body	3	19	71	93
17.	15. To be an active individual in local political activities	1	11	81	93



## Part III

## Interviews

Fifty-three of the surveys had respondents willing to participate in the interview process. Of the fifty-three only forty-eight were able to be contacted. As many as three attempts were made to contact each respondent.

The forty-eight interviewees are represented by the following demographic Table XXXVII.

TABLE XXXVII

## Interviewees

Category	No.
1. Board Composition	
a. Majority of Board is Male	42
b. Majority of Board is Female	6
2. District Demographic	
a. Urban	3
b. Suburban	13
c. Rural	32
3. District Type	
a. Elementary	11
b. High	7
c. Unit	30
4. Gender of Superintendent Selected	
a. Male	45
b. Female	3

### **Interview Question 1**

**Did you read and study the application material supplied by the final candidates?**

All but two of the interviewees said yes; the other two stated that they read most of the material. There was an overall perception from the interviewees that not all of their fellow board members were as prepared as they should have been. Whether the perception was correct, the interviewees felt that some of their fellow board members came less than 100% prepared to interview based upon the information that was to be reviewed and the questions or lack of questions that were asked by board members. Several commented that fellow board members were just opening their packets of information on the candidates at the interview.

### **Interview Question 2**

**Did you formulate questions that you believe needed answers from each final candidate?**

Twenty-six of the interviewees or 54% of the interviewees stated that questions to ask candidates had been formulated immediately prior to

the beginning of the interviews. Several mentioned that each board member was asked to formulate a set of questions to ask, but only one or two board members had listed questions. It appeared in the interview with the candidates that several board members were monopolizing all the time.

Several others mentioned that consultants gave them a list of possible questions to ask. Some of the board presidents felt insulted by the list (as if they could not formulate their own questions), and others felt that the questions were a big help in the interviews.

### **Interview Question 3**

**Did you ask questions of candidates whose answers served as important information to you in your preference decision-making?**

Thirty-seven of the interviewees or 81% stated that they or other board members asked questions of the candidates that helped them make a decision on the candidates. More than 50% of the 81% or twenty of the thirty-seven interviewees felt that the candidates' answers helped them eliminate specific candidates rather than choose a specific one. Once

the final candidates were down to two or three, board members would talk about the better candidate of the finalists. Several of the presidents stated that the special interest board members and board members who appeared to have already chosen a specific candidate always had a list of questions, questions which dealt with one issue such as: (Do you believe in corporal punishment? Have you ever paddled a student? Do you use corporal punishment with your children?). The special interest areas that were mentioned were athletics, special education, and tax increases.

#### INTERVIEW QUESTION 4

**Was your support/non-support position for each candidate already determined before you met them?**

All of the interviewees stated that their position had not been predetermined before they met the candidates. However, in several situations where in-district administrators had been chosen to fill the position, the selection process was an attempt to "see what was out there" and determine "how our process would compare." Several stated that even though they chose an in-district

candidate, they wanted to meet their obligation to advertise all positions before they chose the person they wanted. While the survey instrument did not address the issue of in-district versus out-of-district candidate selection, it was a perception that was very strong among the interviewees that the board had to advertise the position, interview candidates, and then select the in-district candidate to keep the process legal.

#### INTERVIEW QUESTION 5

After the introductory remarks were made (within 5 minutes), did you make up your decision on each candidate. The rest of the interview time was spent noting data to "back-up" your decision?

Thirty-seven or 77% of the interviewees stated that the process of eliminating the candidates to the best two or three candidates was determined in the first five minutes. The finalist took much more time, based on how well the finalist communicated with the board. One interviewee commented that one candidate did not know what he would do in several specific situations, but he stated what he would do before making a decision on

the specific situations. The candidate was chosen over what the interviewee considered were "seasoned veterans" and has been a good superintendent.

#### INTERVIEW QUESTION 6

Did it take you nearly the entire interview session (within 45 - 60 minutes) to decide to support/non-support each candidate?

Forty-one or 85.4% of the interviewees stated that it did not take more than 20 minutes to decide to support or not to support a candidate. However, it was mentioned that with the initial interviews most of the candidates who became finalists spent the full time or longer with the board. It was suggested that the finalists were better communicators, and the time passed very quickly. The lesser candidates were finished in the minimal time.

#### Interview Question 7

Did you deliberately postpone making a support/non-support decision about each candidate until you had met all of them?

Forty-one or 85.4% of the interviewees felt that their support for a candidate did change as

they interviewed more candidates. Twenty-two of the forty-one felt that their support for a previously interviewed candidate increased the more they interviewed other candidates. .

#### **Interview Question 8**

**After each board member who had visited the superintendent candidate's former school community shared this information, did you then make up your mind of support/non-support?**

Only 38 or 79% of the group visited the candidate's school community. The board had decided on the candidate; however, the visit to the community was to confirm the board's position on the candidate. If the board member returned with conflicting information, then the board would have chosen another candidate and made another visit. Among the interviewees no changes in candidates came about due to visits to the community. The visit process affirmed the board's decision.

#### **Interview Question 9**

**Were you influenced most by the written letters of recommendation by former school board members and school patrons?**

While the interviewees felt the recommendations from former school board members and former community patrons were important, none of the interviewees felt the board members were influenced most by the recommendations. Several interviewees stated that all the candidates had good written recommendations, but until "we meet with them and talk with them" no decision could be made. Those who had used consultants felt that it was the consultants' responsibility to compare the paperwork of the candidates and make recommendations to the board. The board responsibility was to interview and decide which candidate would fit the district needs.

#### **Interview Question 10**

**Were you comfortable with your decision-making position, and if not, did you perceive that most of the board members were favoring a certain candidate, ... so you went along with them?**

Forty-five or 93.7% of the interviewees felt that it was a board consensus on the candidate. The remaining interviewees felt that the boards were split on candidates and that they went along



with the majority to strengthen the support even if that candidate was not their choice. The majority of interviewees felt that a board member or several board members had gone along with another board member without making an individual decision. Whether the decision was made because of friendship, loyalty, specific issue, or lack of preparation, the interviewees would not speculate.

#### Interview Question 11

**Are your first impressions usually the best, so do you stay with those impressions of each candidate?**

Forty-two or 87.5% of the interviewees felt that their first impressions were true. There was not a clear-cut answer as to what brought about the first impression, but it ranged from handshake, dress, voice, and answers to questions, to ability to ask questions. One interviewee commented that perhaps they had not chosen the best candidate but a "three piece, pin-striped suit" was not necessarily representative of the community. However, the candidate chosen was accepted and is doing a good job.

**Interview Question 12**

**Do you put your confidence in those persons who had experience in selecting individuals who had job responsibilities such as the superintendent of schools?**

Forty-four or 91.6% of the interviewees felt that they had confidence in the retiring superintendent, regional superintendent, Illinois Association of School Boards consultant, or independent consultants to limit initially the field of candidates and bring to the board the top 8 to 10 candidates to fill the position. The remaining 4 interviewees felt that they had not had good success with consultants in the past or that the board was looking for a change in the type or style of superintendent that they had and would do the entire process. The cost of using a consultant or not was never an issue or seen as an issue by the interviewees. While forty-four felt they had confidence in the consultants, some did not use the consultants.

### Interview Question 13

Did your support/non-support decision on each candidate become clear when all board members discussed the different candidate interview data and related it to the superintendency responsibilities?

All interviewees felt that their decisions on each candidate were clear after the board as a whole was able to discuss the candidates. Twenty-seven or 56% of the interviewees felt that fellow board members did tend to talk candidates out of contention rather than talking about their candidate and his/her strong points. It appeared from most of the interviewees that they eliminated candidates based upon their inability to communicate or demonstrate strengths that the overall board wanted in their superintendent. Rather than stating, "I prefer this candidate because . . . , " the feeling was one of "this candidate didn't say . . . ."

Forty-four of the interviewees felt that it was relatively easy to get down to the two or three

finalists. In selecting from the finalists, the decision was then based upon what a candidate could or did do rather than what a candidate could not or did not do.

#### Interview Question 14

Did your choice of the superintendency candidates express the ideas and values that were important to you?

Fifty-two percent or twenty-five of the interviewees stated that the candidate did express the same ideas and values held by the interviewee. Forty-seven percent or twenty-three of the interviewees explained that the candidate chosen expressed the ideas and values that were important to the board or school district or community, or all of the aforementioned groups; the twenty-three interviewees wanted it to be very clear that the choice was a group decision, and that it was not individual ideas and values that were important but those of the group as a whole that needed to be met.

**Interview Question 15**

**Did you learn more about the candidate when conversing with him on a one-to-one basis than when all board members were present?**

Seventy-five percent or 36 of the interviewees stated that they did not have a chance to converse with the candidates individually. The remaining 25% felt that the opportunity for some individual conversation gave them a chance to see the person in not nearly such a tense situation. Some interviewees felt that there were candidates who were very personable and professional in a one-on-one basis but who did not interview very well.

**Interview Question 16**

**Did you make one or more telephone call(s) to persons who knew of the final candidate(s)' abilities and past work experiences?**

Twelve or 25% of the interviewees stated that they had made calls to people who would know of the candidates' ability. Twenty-four or 50% of the

interviewees felt that the consultants or assistants had made calls to check on candidates. Four interviewees felt that somebody on the board had made a call. Eight interviewees felt that no one had made calls to check on final candidates.

## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE AND TWO

It is obvious according to Part I and Part II of the survey instrument and the interviewees that there is not one specific criterion that is more important than another to boards of education in Illinois in the selection of a superintendent. However, there are some specific criteria and categories of criteria that are considered very important in the selection of a superintendent. According to Table XXI, page 80, seven of the top ten criteria selected dealt with the candidate's ability to utilize his/her communication skills. Two of the top ten criteria dealt with personal information and appearance of candidates, while only one of the top ten criteria dealt with the educational background and accomplishments of the candidates. The educational background and accomplishments of a candidate did rank fourth in the top five; however, the other four in the top five dealt with the candidates' ability to communicate in the interview process.

The number 1 criterion was the "manner in which the candidate responded to interview

questions." Does this mean if the candidate sounds good or says the right words he/she will be on his/her way to being a finalist in the selection process? Does it mean that one has investigated the district, found the needs, and can respond appropriately? There is nothing from the responses in the interview that will guarantee the board of education that the candidate has accomplished the tasks that are needed to meet the goals of the employing district. A review and check of the candidates' previous experiences will provide such needed information, but these practices are seldom used.

The second criterion is "the self-confidence exhibited by candidate during the interview." Some of the worst world leaders in history have exhibited self-confidence during situations similar to the interview process; however we do not want them for a school superintendent. A candidate can be "smooth" even "slick" but not be the candidate to accomplish the goals of the district. There is nothing in the criterion to demonstrate that the candidate can accomplish or has accomplished the



same or similar goals as those of the board.

The third ranking statement is "concern expressed for student academic achievement in the district." Any candidate can express concern for student academic achievement, but more important is the candidate's prior performance.

The fourth ranking statement is "background checking of candidate in former position." If the background of a candidate is reviewed and investigated based upon the goals of the hiring board, that board of education has some basic understanding of the accomplishments of the candidate before the interview process. This does mean that the hiring board must have established district goals, established questions to ask the candidate's present and past employers, and be willing to make the contacts with previous employers before the initial interview. With the fourth place ranking it is evident that the practice of thoroughly checking the background of a candidate against the goals of the hiring board are seldom followed.

The fifth top criterion is "ways in which

candidate listened to board member questions." Regardless of the candidate's observed interest in the board member questions, it is important to remember that the candidate's answers must be analyzed for substance based upon the hiring board's goals and upon the candidate's previous experience.

Four of the five top criteria suggest that the most charismatic candidate will be the one most likely considered for the position.

According to the data gathered from Part II of the survey instrument, the top five behavioral roles selected by the boards of education are related to the candidate's ability to accomplish a task and communicate results.

It is obvious that the most important behavioral roles sought by the boards in a superintendent candidate listed in Table XXXV require more than simply a candidate's ability to communicate. The number one behavioral role is thoroughly checked with previous employers; it is an unknown ability. The next four behavioral roles are 2) to be a sound business advisor and manager

of school district funds; 3) "to handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons; 4) to be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel; and 5) to present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons." The four behavioral roles require the superintendent to accomplish specific tasks and communicate results or findings and be a leader. While the important behavioral roles to the employing boards require specific abilities important to the position of the superintendent, the top five criteria utilized by boards of education concentrated on the candidate's ability to communicate in the interview process rather than the candidate's demonstrated ability to get the job accomplished in previous positions.

During the interview process all but two of the interviewees stated that they had read and studied the final candidates' material; however, interviewees felt that not all board members came to the interviews prepared. Only 54% of the

interviewees had prepared questions, and those were prepared immediately prior to the beginning of the interviews. Seventy-seven percent of the interviewees stated that the process of eliminating the candidates to the best two or three candidates was determined in the first five minutes; the finalists, however, spent more time communicating with the board of education. Forty-two or 87.5% of the interviewees felt that their first impressions of candidates were accurate. All interviewees felt that the decisions on each candidate were clear, and that the selection of a new superintendent was a consensus of the board. Thirty-eight or 79% of the boards visited a candidate's community, but only after the board had made a final selection. If a board member returned from the visit with no conflicting information, the candidate was selected as the new superintendent. Only 12 of the 48 or 25% of the interviewees had made telephone calls to check on the background of the candidates, while twenty-four of the interviewees or 50% felt that the consultants had made calls to check on candidates. It appears from the interviews that

little was accomplished based upon the behavioral roles of the superintendency; most of the decisions and selections of the superintendent were based upon the candidate's ability to communicate in the interview. While background checking can be accomplished before the interviews, little is apparently done to prepare for each candidate based upon the superintendency behavioral roles expected by the board of education and what has been accomplished by the candidate in previous positions.

The five criteria statements that were determined the least important by the boards included three statements from the educational background and accomplishments and two from personal information and appearance.

Ninety-three percent of the boards felt the number of children a candidate had and their ages were least important. Possibly the children and ages is a given from the candidate application and is not considered important. The number and type of publications the candidate had written were considered least important by 89.2% of the boards.

An individual's publications are based on fact and normally demonstrated ability and research which could assist boards in reviewing the accomplishments of a candidate. The marital status of a candidate was determined to be unimportant by 73.9% of the boards; however that information is requested on an application or expected to be present on the candidate's resume. The final two of least importance criteria dealt with a candidate's past speech making appearances and research studies that the candidate had completed. Both of those criteria could be important, for the speech making appearances would provide background on the candidate's ability to speak before groups. The number one superintendent behavioral role sought often by the boards was "To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community." Research study would provide a basis for documentation of an individual's problem-solving approach and ability.

The least sought after superintendency behavior roles were "to become affiliated with one church body" and "to be an active individual in

local political activities." Eighty-seven percent of boards considered being an active individual in local political activities of least importance.

Thus, the overall strengths a superintendent candidate should develop based upon the study are in the category of communication skills and include the ability to:

- respond to questions from the board
- exhibit self-confidence while addressing the board
- address the issue of student academic achievement
- to be a good listener to board concerns.

However, the boards must do or have the background of the candidate checked whether by a consultant or individual board members. Based upon the interview data the background checking by the boards is a confusing area based upon who has performed the check and the importance it has in the selection.

Only 25% of the interviewees positively stated that they had made calls to check on candidates. Fifty percent of the interviewees thought but could not confirm that consultants had made calls. The

remaining 25% thought someone had called or that no contact had been made.

Based upon this study, the candidate will find that boards, overall, have little interest in the following criteria when employing a superintendent.

- number and ages of candidate's children
- number and types of publications
- marital status of candidate
- past speech making appearances
- research studies and projects

During the interview process the boards expressed the concern that all candidates had good letters of recommendation and that the letters were not of great importance.

Candidates must be aware that the major expectations, the behavior roles, for the superintendency by the participating boards require specific abilities that are different from the criteria utilized to select a superintendent. The boards of educations involved in the study overwhelmingly considered the following behavioral roles for the superintendency very important. To be able to stay or keep the position of



superintendent no matter how he/she performed in the selection process the candidate must:

- demonstrate a strong school leadership image
- be a sound business advisor and manager of funds

- handle the stressful situations associated with the school and community populations

- be a consistent and fair evaluator

- be able to present sound accountability recommendations to the board that may be

unpopular.

According to the overall study the candidates do not need to be concerned with the following behavioral roles:

- being active in local political activities

- being affiliated with one church body.

### Research Question Three

What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high; or unit school boards in Illinois?

The following tables represent the demographic survey of the 24 elementary districts, 14 high school districts, and 55 unit school districts participating in the research.

TABLE XXXVIII

#### Persons Completing the Survey

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Board President	22	14	48	84
Designees	2	0	7	9
Total	24	14	55	93

The two designees in the elementary districts were other school board members; and the seven designees in the unit districts were superintendents of the school districts. The board presidents of the high school districts completed the surveys.

TABLE XXXIX

## Composition of the Board

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Majority Male	19	14	52	85
Majority Female	5	0	3	8
Total	24	14	55	93

The female majority was 26.3% in the elementary districts, insignificant in the unit districts, and nonexistent in the high school districts.

TABLE XL

## District Demographic Data

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Urban	1	0	3	4
Suburban	7	8	3	18
Rural	16	6	49	71
Total	24	14	55	93

TABLE XLI  
Student Population

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Less than 200	12	0	4	16
201-500	3	3	20	26
501-1000	3	3	18	24
1001-1500	2	5	5	12
1501-2000	1	1	5	7
Over 2001	3	2	3	8
Total	24	14	55	93

TABLE XLII  
Gender of Superintendent Selected

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Male	22	14	54	90
Female	2	0	1	3
Total	24	14	55	93

Of the 24 elementary districts, 26% were dominated by a female board; only 2 females were chosen as superintendents. Only 1 female superintendent was chosen by the unit districts and none were chosen by the 14 high school districts.

TABLE XLIII  
Contract Length

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
1 year	5	2	25	32
Multi-year	19	12	30	61
Total	24	14	55	93

Seventy-nine percent of elementary districts and 86% of the high school districts offered and gave multi-year contracts. The unit districts were split with 45% offering one-year contracts and 55% offering multi-year contracts.

TABLE XLIV

## Salary Range of Superintendent

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Under \$40,000	12	0	10	22
40,000-49,999	5	5	34	44
50,000-59,999	4	4	6	14
60,000-69,999	3	1	3	7
70,000 and over	0	4	2	6
Total	24	14	55	93

Based upon the data 50% of the elementary districts employed their superintendents at salaries under \$40,000. The majority, or 68% of unit school districts, employed their superintendents at a salary between \$40,000 and \$49,999. High school districts employed 36% of the superintendents at \$40,000 to \$49,999, 29% between \$50,000 to \$59,999, and another 29% at \$70,000 or over. The high school districts offered more to their superintendents than did unit and elementary districts, and unit districts offered more in salary than did the elementary districts.

TABLE XLV

## The Selection Process

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Board selection without help	10	3	17	30
Board selection with help of present Supt.	3	2	8	13
Board selection with help from IASB	4	6	19	29
Board selection with help from ESR	4	1	9	14
Board selection with help from outside consultant	3	2	2	7
Total	24	14	55	93

Forty-two percent (10 of 24) of the elementary districts had completed the selection process without any assistance, while 43% (6 of 14) of the high school districts completed their selection with the assistance of the Illinois School Board Association. Thirty-one percent (17 of 55) of the unit districts made their selection without help, and 35% (19 of 55) made their selection with the assistance of the Illinois Association of School

Boards. Utilizing the services of the Illinois Association of School Boards and completing the selection process without help were the primary means of selecting the superintendent.

TABLE XLVI

Approximately how much time did the Board spend on all aspects of the selection process?

	Elem	High	Unit	Total
Less than 5 hours	1	0	6	7
6-15 hours	4	1	8	13
16-25 hours	8	3	17	28
26-35 hours	4	4	9	17
36-50 hours	4	2	5	11
Over 50 hours	3	4	10	17
Total	24	14	55	93

Thirty-three percent of the elementary districts spent 16-25 hours in the process of selection a superintendent. Thirty-nine percent of the high school districts spent 26-35 hours in the selection process, and another twenty-nine percent spent over 50 hours in the process. Thirty-one percent of the unit districts spent between 16-25 hours in the selection process, and 18% spent over



50 hours in the process of selecting a superintendent. The conclusion drawn from the data is that the high school and unit school districts spent more time in the selection process than did elementary school districts.

## ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The boards of education participating in the study represent the approximate percentages of the types of districts found throughout the State of Illinois in 1987-88 (See Table XXXVIII page 128). Twenty-four elementary districts were represented, with 5 or 26.3% of the boards female-majority; of the 55 unit districts, only 3 were female-majority, and there were no female-majority high school boards of education represented in the study. While three types of districts are represented overwhelmingly by male-majority boards, one might surmise that there is a relationship between female-majority boards and the target student population within the district. An elementary district is more likely to have a female-majority board. The converse would also be true: a high school district or a unit district is less likely to have a female-majority board. The belief that the majority of elementary and high school districts are located in urban and suburban areas did not hold for the study group. Eight of the 14 high school boards were represented by suburban

areas, with the remaining 6 being rural. The majority of districts, 71 of 93, represented rural settings, with one elementary and 3 unit boards being urban and 7 elementary and 3 unit boards being suburban.

Three superintendents selected by the boards were female with one selected for a unit district, two for elementary districts and none for the high school district. The data address the issue that the younger the children in the district the better chance a female has of being selected superintendent.

The elementary and high school districts overwhelmingly offered selected superintendents multi-year contracts at the rates of 79% and 86% respectively. The unit districts were split relatively evenly with 45% offering one-year contracts and 55% multi-year. Analysis of the study data and interviews reveals no apparent relationship between multi-year and one-year contracts among unit, elementary and high school districts.

According to Table XLIV the high school

districts offered more in salary than did unit districts, and unit districts offered more than elementary districts. The Illinois state aid formula for students provides that elementary students will be counted as 1 student, the junior high students will be counted as 1.05 students, and the high school as 1.25 students. The high school districts would have more money theoretically available to them than unit districts, and unit districts would have more money available to them than elementary districts. Therefore, the high school districts would have more funds available to attract candidates than unit districts, and unit districts would have more funds to attract candidates than elementary districts.

The selection of candidates is handled similarly in all three kinds of districts, with 42% of the elementary boards completing the process without assistance; 43% of the high school boards completing the process with the assistance of the Illinois School Board Association; and 31% of the unit school districts completing the selection without assistance, and 35% made the selection with

the assistance of the Illinois School Board Association. Conjecture would be that the wealth of the school district would determine if the board completed the process without assistance or with assistance; however, interviews reflected that the choice of process was a board decision and the cost of a consultant was not significant.

When considering time spent in the process of selecting a superintendent, the high school boards utilized consultants more than any of the other types of district boards and spent more time in the selection process. Thirty-eight percent of the high school boards spent 26-35 hours in the selection process, and 29% spent over 50 hours. Of the unit boards, 31% completed the process without assistance, and 35% completed with assistance of IASB. Thirty-one percent of the unit boards spent between 16-25 hours in the selection process and another 18% spent more than 50 hours in the process. Forty-two percent of elementary boards completed the selection process without assistance; 54% of these districts spent less than 25 hours in the selection process. When districts employ a

consultant, it is apparent that more time is spent in preparation for the selection of a candidate; perhaps less time is spent when the process is completed without assistance simply because the knowledge and expertise of as well as the preparation for the selection process is absent.

### Part I

#### Criteria Used by Boards to Select a New Superintendent of Schools for 1987-88.

The following are responses of the elementary, high and unit school district boards to the 29 criteria utilized when selecting a superintendent. Tables XLVII, XLVIII, XLIX will represent the rank order of the responses for each of the 29 criteria as given by the different types of districts.

TABLE XLVII

#### Elementary School Boards

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	UV	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	18	6	0	0	0	24
2	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	18	6	0	0	0	24

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
3	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	17	7	0	0	0	24
4	Background checking of candidate in former position	15	9	0	0	0	24
5	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	13	11	0	0	0	24
6	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	11	10	2	1	0	24
7	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	10	10	3	1	0	24
8	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	9	13	2	0	0	24
9	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	7	16	0	0	0	23
10	General physical and mental health appearance	7	15	2	0	0	24
11	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	7	14	3	0	0	24
12	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	7	11	4	1	1	24

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
13	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	6	13	4	1	0	24
14	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	5	5	2	2	10	24
15	Appearance and content of application letter	4	14	4	2	0	24
16	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	3	14	7	0	0	24
17	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	3	11	5	2	3	24
18	Content of personal reference letters	2	16	4	1	1	24
19	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	2	12	10	0	0	24
20	Salary candidate made in last position	1	11	10	2	0	24
21	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	1	8	10	4	1	24
22	Marital status of candidate	1	3	14	6	0	24



Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
23	Grades received in college courses	0	13	8	3	0	24
24	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	9	13	2	0	24
25	Age of candidate	0	8	13	3	0	24
26	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	0	6	16	1	0	23
27	Numbers and types of publications that candidate had written	0	3	16	4	0	23
28	Past background in speech making appearances	0	3	18	3	0	24
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	1	14	9	0	24

TABLE XLVIII

## High School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	12	2	0	0	0	14
2	Background checking of candidate in former position	11	3	0	0	0	14

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
2	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	11	3	0	0	0	14
4	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	11	2	0	0	0	13
5	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	10	4	0	0	0	14
6	General physical and mental health appearance	8	6	0	0	0	14
6	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	8	6	0	0	0	14
8	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	7	7	0	0	0	14
9	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	7	5	2	0	0	14
10	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	6	8	0	0	0	14
10	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	6	8	0	0	0	14

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
12	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	5	6	0	0	3	14
13	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	4	9	0	0	1	14
14	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	3	11	0	0	0	14
14	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	3	11	0	0	0	14
16	Content of personal reference letters	3	10	1	0	0	14
17	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	3	6	5	0	0	14
18	Appearance and content of application letter	2	11	1	0	0	14
19	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of superintendent position	2	10	0	1	1	14

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
20	Age of candidate	2	9	3	0	0	14
21	Salary candidate made in last position	2	6	6	0	0	14
22	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	1	13	0	0	0	14
23	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	1	3	9	1	0	14
24	Grades received in college courses	0	12	2	0	0	14
25	Recognition and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	6	8	0	0	14
26	Marital status of candidate	0	5	7	1	1	14
27	Past background in speech making appearances	0	4	9	1	0	14
28	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	0	1	13	0	0	14
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	0	10	4	0	14

TABLE XLIX  
Unit School Boards

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	41	12	2	0	0	55
2	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	32	23	0	0	0	55
3	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	31	23	1	0	0	55
4	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	25	29	1	0	0	55
5	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	25	28	2	0	0	55
6	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	24	24	7	0	0	55
7	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	17	34	3	0	1	55
8	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	14	39	2	0	0	55

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
9	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	13	39	3	0	0	55
10	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	13	36	6	0	0	55
11	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	13	28	13	0	1	55
12	General physical and mental health appearance	12	43	0	0	0	55
13	Remarks of consultant (s) who helped during screening of candidates	12	11	4	1	23	51
14	Content of personal reference letters	11	37	6	0	1	55
15	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	10	39	6	0	1	56
16	Appearance and content of application letter	9	39	4	0	2	54
17	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	7	35	9	1	3	55

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
18	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	7	35	13	0	0	55
19	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	5	38	13	0	0	56
20	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	3	23	24	3	2	55
21	Grades received in college courses	2	33	17	1	1	54
22	Religious and moral preference statements of candidates	2	19	29	2	5	57
23	Marital status of candidate	2	12	37	4	0	55
24	Salary candidate made in last position	1	21	31	1	1	55
25	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	1	10	35	3	6	55
26	Past background in speech making appearances	1	8	39	4	3	55
27	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	1	3	42	8	1	55

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
28	Age of candidate	0	19	33	3	0	55
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	5	46	2	0	53

TABLE L

The table ranks the top ten statements from each type of district with the designation of whether the statement is representative of Communication skills (C), Personal information (P), or Educational experience (E).

	H.S.		ELEM.		UNIT	
Rank	Stat. No.	Desig	Stat. No.	Desig	Stat. No.	Desig
1	10	C	10	C	10	C
1	17	E	13	C		
2					13	C
3	20	C	20	C	20	C
4	19	C	17	E	14	C
5	13	C	14	C	17	E
6	18	P	15	C	2	E
7	15	C	16	C	19	C
8	14	C	19	C	1	P
9	2	E	1	P	15	C
10	1	P	18	P	16	C
10	29	C				



A comparison of the top ten ranking criteria utilized by high, elementary and unit school districts shows that Statement 10 ranks first among all districts participating in the study. Criterion 10 states the "Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions." Thus, the interview is the most important process, and the candidate who can communicate the best in the interview will have the best opportunity to obtain the position. The ability to communicate ranks as the top criterion area for all three types of districts. The 2nd top ranking criterion for unit districts was number 13 -- "Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview." Criterion number 13 tied for first in the elementary districts, while the high school districts selected criterion number 17 and criterion 10 as equal in importance. Thus, the high school districts felt the way the candidates responded in the interview and the background checking were the most important criteria in selecting a candidate to be superintendent. The elementary and unit schools indicated that the way

the candidates responded in the interview (#10) and the self-confidence in the interview were the most important criteria in selecting a candidate.

The third top criterion was agreed upon by all three types of districts. Criterion 20, "Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district," is categorized as a communication skill; thus, two of the top three criteria for high school districts, and the top three for elementary and unit districts are based upon the communication skills exhibited in the interview. Seventy percent or seven of the top ten criteria used by high, elementary and unit school districts in the selection of a superintendent were based upon the candidate's communication skills.

TABLE LI

The bottom five ranking statements for each type of district with the designation of whether the statement is representative of Communication Skills (C), Personal Information and Appearance (P), and Educational Background and Experience (E) are represented in the following table.

	H.S.		ELEM.		UNIT	
Rank	Stat. No.	Desig	Stat. No.	Desig	Stat. No.	Desig
25	23	E	4	P	28	E
26	5	P	21	P	26	E
27	26	E	25	E	25	E
28	25	E	26	E	4	P
29	6	P	6	P	6	P

All three types of districts agreed that criterion #6 "Number of candidate's children and ages" was the most unimportant criterion to be considered. Within the five least important criteria, there were no criteria statements dealing with communication skills.

## Part II

**Superintendency Behavioral Roles**

The following are survey responses of the elementary, high, and unit district boards to the 17 superintendency behavior roles utilized when selecting a superintendent.

Tables LII, LIII, and LIV will represent the rank order of the responses of each type of district for each of the behavior roles.

TABLE LII

## Elementary School Districts

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	22	2	0	24
2	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	21	3	0	24
3	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	19	5	0	24
4	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	18	6	0	24

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
5	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	16	8	0	24
5	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	16	8	0	24
5	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	16	8	0	24
8	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	15	9	0	24
8	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	15	9	0	24
8	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	15	9	0	24
11	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	10	12	2	24
12	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision making	9	13	2	24
13	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	7	17	0	24

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
14	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	7	14	3	24
15	To be a member of a local, civic, or service organization	4	12	8	24
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	1	3	20	24
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	3	21	24

TABLE LIII

## High School Districts

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	13	1	0	14
1	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	13	1	0	14
3	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	12	2	0	14
4	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	11	3	0	14

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
4	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	11	3	0	14
6	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	10	4	0	14
6	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	10	4	0	14
6	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	10	4	0	14
9	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	9	5	0	14
10	To be a member of a local civic or service organization	8	6	0	14
10	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	8	6	0	14
12	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	7	7	0	14
13	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	6	8	0	14

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
13	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision making	6	8	0	14
13	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	6	8	0	14
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	1	4	9	14
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	0	14	14

TABLE LIV

## Unit School Districts

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	45	10	0	55
1	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	45	10	0	55
3	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	43	12	0	55
4	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	40	15	0	55



Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
5	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	37	17	1	55
6	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	35	18	2	55
7	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	3	22	0	55
8	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	30	25	0	55
9	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	28	26	1	55
10	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	24	26	5	55
11	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	23	32	0	55
12	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision making	22	30	3	55

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
13	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	19	33	3	55
14	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	13	40	1	54
15	To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	9	37	9	55
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	1	12	42	55
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	1	8	46	55

A review of the responses to the behavior roles revealed that all three types of districts agreed that role #2 "To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community" was very important and ranked number 1. The unit districts felt that role #12 "To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds" had the same importance as role #2, while the elementary districts rated role #12 as the second most important role. The high school districts felt that role #5 "To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the

board of education for the superintendent of schools position" was as important a role as #2.

The elementary and unit districts agreed that the third most important role was role #4, "To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons." High school districts felt that role #1, "To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings," was the third most important superintendency role. All three types of districts agreed on the fourth important role, role #9, "To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel."

All three types of districts felt that the two least important behavioral roles were #3, "To become affiliated with one local church body," and #15, "To be an active individual in local political activities."

### Interviews

The following are responses of the elementary, high and unit school district boards to the sixteen interview questions. Of the forty-eight interviews conducted, eleven were from elementary districts, seven from high school districts, and thirty from unit districts.

**1. Did you read and study the application materials supplied by the final candidates?**

According to the interviews all of the seven high school district interviewees stated they had read all the material, and six of the seven felt that all of their fellow board members had read and studied the application materials. One of the eleven elementary district interviewees stated that he had not studied all the application material. Nine of the eleven interviewed felt that not all of their fellow board members had studied the application materials supplied. One interviewee from the unit districts stated that he had not studied the material supplied, and eighteen of the

thirty interviewees felt that not all of their fellow board members had studied the application material supplied.

**2. Did you formulate questions that you believe needed answers from each final candidate?**

Interviewees from all three types of districts stated that they had formulated questions to be asked. Fifty-four percent of the interviewees from all types of districts stated that the questions were formulated before the interviews. Several districts that utilized consultants stated that the consultants had provided or assisted with a list of questions.

**3. Did you ask questions of candidates whose answers served as important information to you in your preference decision-making?**

Five of the seven high school interviewees, eight of the eleven elementary interviewees, and twenty-four of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that they had asked questions of candidates that helped them make a preference on candidates.

4. Was your support/non-support position for each candidate already determined before you met them?

All of the interviewees from all types of districts stated that they had not predetermined who they wanted from the candidates. Several stated that where in-district candidates were chosen the boards of education were interested in meeting their obligation to advertise any openings or to test the water "and see what candidates might be available."

5. After the introductory remarks were made (within five minutes) did you make up your decision on each candidate? The rest of the interview time was spent noting data to "back-up" your decision?

Three of the seven high school interviewees, ten of the eleven elementary school interviewees, and twenty-four of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that they had made up their mind about eliminating the candidates to the two or three finalists within the first five minutes. The top two or three candidates took much longer to finalize.

6. Did it take you nearly the entire interview session (within 45 - 60 minutes) to decide to support/non-support each candidate? .

Five of the seven high school interviewees, ten of eleven elementary school interviewees, and twenty-six of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that they had made up their minds on the initial candidates in much less time than the finalist.

7. Did you deliberately postpone making a support/nonsupport decision about each candidate until you had met all of them?

Six of seven high school interviewees, eight of eleven elementary school interviewees, and twenty-seven of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that their support for a candidate did change as they interviewed more candidates. Sixty-eight percent felt that their support for a previously interviewed candidate increased as they interviewed more candidates.

8. After each board member who had visited the superintendent candidate's former school community shared this information did you then make up your mind of support/non-support?

Six of seven high school interviewees, six of eleven elementary school interviewees, and sixteen of thirty unit school interviewees had visited the candidate's school communities, and such visit was to confirm the board's selection rather than to choose among candidates.

9. Were you influenced most by the written letters of recommendation by former school board members and school patrons?

The consensus from all interviewees was that the written letters were helpful but were not of significance. Interviewees did not commit to a yes or no on this issue but seemed to side step the letters' significance or insignificance.

10. Were you comfortable with your decision-making position, and if not, did you perceive that most of the board members were favoring a certain candidate, ... so you went along with them?



All of the high school interviewees, ten of the eleven elementary school interviewees, and twenty-eight of the thirty unit school interviewees agreed that it was a consensus of the entire board on the selection of a candidate.

**11. Are your first impressions usually the best, so do you stay with those impressions of each candidate?**

Six of seven of the high school interviewees, ten of eleven elementary school interviewees and twenty-six of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that their first impressions of candidates were true.

**12. Do you put your confidence in those persons who had experience in selecting individuals who had job responsibilities such as the superintendent of schools?**

All of the high school interviewees, nine of eleven of the elementary school interviewees and twenty-eight of the thirty unit school interviewees felt that they had confidence in the retiring superintendent, regional superintendent, IASB, or outside consultant to do the initial screening for

the board. While forty-four of forty-eight interviewees had confidence in consultants, sixteen did not use them.

**13. Did your support/non-support decision on each candidate become clear when all board members discussed the different candidate interview data and related it to the superintendency responsibilities?**

Each interviewee felt that his/her decision on each candidate was clear after the board as a whole was able to discuss the candidates.

**14. Did your choice of the superintendency candidates express the ideas and values that were important to you?**

Five of seven high school interviewees, five of eleven elementary school interviewees, and fifteen of thirty unit school interviewees stated that the candidate of their choice did express the same ideas and values that were important to them.

Four of the seven high school interviewees, five of the elementary school interviewees, and fourteen of the thirty unit school interviewees

explained that the candidate chosen expressed the ideas and values that were important to the board or school district or community.

**15. Did you learn more about the candidate when conversing with him on a one-to-one basis than when all board members were present?**

Two of the seven high school interviewees, nine of the eleven elementary school interviewees, and twenty-five of the thirty unit school interviewees stated that they did not have a chance to converse with the candidates individually. The remaining interviewees felt that the opportunity to visit with candidates individually was helpful.

**16. Did you make one or more telephone call(s) to persons who knew of the final candidate(s) abilities and past work experiences?**

Three of seven high school interviewees, three of eleven elementary school interviewees, and six of thirty unit school interviewees stated that they had made calls to people who would know of the candidate's ability.

Four of seven high school interviewees, six of eleven elementary school interviewees, and fourteen of thirty unit school interviewees felt that consultants had made calls to check on candidates. Four interviewees felt that someone on the board had made a call and eight interviewees felt that no one had called anyone.

## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The candidate seeking positions in all three types of districts (elementary, high and unit) must have excellent communication skills to compete for a superintendency position. However, the similarities and differences of the boards of the different types of districts will need to be addressed by the candidates. A candidate seeking a high school superintendency needs to know that while he/she must be able to communicate well in the interview, the second most important criterion is a background check to substantiate the candidate's answers. The elementary boards and unit boards considered the background check of lesser concern. The elementary boards considered the candidate's display of self-confidence during the interview as important as the candidate's ability to communicate during the interview. The unit district boards considered the candidate's display of self-confidence as the second important criterion. A candidate for all three types of districts must be able to address the third ranking criterion, which is the concern expressed for

student academic achievement.

The boards representing the three types of districts differ on the fourth important ranking criterion. High school district candidates need to address the issue of why he/she wants the district superintendency. At the elementary level the candidate will need to be prepared for background checking, and the unit candidate must be prepared to be a good listener to board members concerns. While the elementary boards are doing a background check, the high school boards are asking candidates, "Why do you want this job?" and unit district boards are saying, "Listen to my concerns."

After the third important criterion statement, the boards of education from the three types of districts have no agreement on statements. All boards did agree that the number and age of the candidate's children was of least importance. The boards of education were interested in employing the best possible candidate for the position of superintendent and not his/her children.

The candidates for the position of

superintendent in the three types of districts must be aware that 70% of the top ten criteria utilized to select a superintendent reflect his/her ability to communicate. However, the boards' expectations of the behavioral roles for the superintendency are not representative of the criteria. The expectations are quite specific and task oriented. The boards from all three types of districts stated overwhelmingly that the greatest expectation for the superintendent would be to demonstrate a strong school leadership image. The superintendent selected is in charge and responsible to the school.

The high school boards selected behavioral role statement #5, "To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position" as equal in importance to behavioral role statement #2, "To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community." Of some significance is that high school boards have indicated strong interest in assessing the performance of the superintendent on a yearly

basis. In effect, high school boards indicate a strong desire to maintain control.

The unit district boards equate "Being a sound business manager of school district funds" with "Being the leader of the school to the community." The unit district boards are stating that the superintendent will need to be the district leader and balance the budget with balancing the budget being top priority.

Elementary district boards rated "Being a sound business manager of school district funds" as the second most important superintendency behavioral role. Superintendent candidates must realize that elementary and unit school districts in Illinois have traditionally had funding and finance problems in contrast to high school districts. High school districts encompass several elementary districts to receive assessed valuation for students grades 9 - 12. The high school districts receive the same tax rate of each smaller elementary district with K - 8 grades. The unit school districts grades K - 12 would have the same assessed valuation locally as a high school and



elementary district, but the combined tax rate of the elementary and high districts is more than the unit districts. The state aid for high school students is more than for elementary, which adds to the wealth of the high school districts over the elementary and unit. Thus the elementary and unit boards of education would expect the superintendent to be a financial manager first and foremost as compared to the high school boards, who consider it very important but may consider the finances of the district the responsibility of the business manager or some other assistant to the superintendent.

The third most important expectation for the high school district is that the superintendent will keep the board informed between meetings. The high school board wants to be informed and be in control. The unit and elementary boards third expectation is that the superintendent be able to handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, the board, and community. A candidate for superintendent of an elementary or unit district must realize that with financial problems come difficult decisions including at

times reduction of personnel and elimination of programs for students.

The boards from the three types of districts agreed that the fourth important expectation was that the superintendent had to be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel. The candidate for the superintendency of all three types of districts must be able to evaluate staff and make the decisions leading to the recommendations to keep or release individuals.

The boards from all three types of districts agreed that the affiliation with one specific church body or being an active member in local politics were the least important expectations of the superintendent. However, the candidates for the superintendency can assume that the boards are stating that there is not just one church an individual should join, and that it would be best to be involved with the school and try to stay away from local politics.

Based upon the interviews it was obvious that the high school districts prepared more for the selection of a superintendent. Six of seven high

school board interviewees felt that all board members had studied the candidate material, while 9 of 11 elementary board interviewees and 18 of the 30 unit board interviewees felt that not all of their fellow board members had studied the application material. The boards of all three types of districts overwhelmingly felt that they had asked questions of candidates that helped them determine a preference of candidates. While only 3 of 7 high school board interviewees felt that a decision had been made in the first five minutes of each interview, 10 of 11 elementary interviewees and 24 of 30 unit interviewees felt a decision regarding each candidate had been made in the first five minutes. More preparation than the elementary and unit boards helped high school boards to avoid snap decisions on candidates. The elementary and unit boards reacted on first impressions; high school boards did not. All three kinds of boards used the visits to a candidate's former school community to confirm the board's selection rather than to choose among candidates. The important difference is that 6 of 7 high school boards made

visits while only 6 of 11 elementary and 16 of 30 unit boards made a visit to confirm the board selection. The high school boards have typically been much more thorough in the selection of a superintendent. When the board members were asked if they had made telephone calls to check on the final candidates, only 3 of 7 high school boards, 3 of 11 elementary boards, and 6 of 30 unit boards had made telephone calls to check on the final candidates. It was apparent that initial contact or consultant recommendation must have taken preference over final contact to verify candidates' positions, successes and/or failures. The boards of all three types of districts did agree that after the board as a whole was able to discuss the different candidates' responses, the selection of a superintendent represented a true consensus of the board. Based upon the overall interviews, the high school boards were more prepared for selecting a candidate and did follow through more fully in the selection process than did the elementary or unit boards.

The candidate for the high school

superintendent positions would need to meet the board expectations of being the school leader to the community, having a strong working relationship with the board of education justifiable through board evaluation, and an informed, knowledgeable board.

In the elementary and unit districts with financial problems and program cutbacks, the candidate must be the school leader to the community, but just as important he/she must try to be a financial wizard with a tough skin to be able to make recommendations for the district which are unpopular with the educational community and/or community in general.

For a candidate to have a chance of becoming a superintendent in the elementary or unit district he/she must be charismatic in the interview while answering board questions with self-confidence and expressing concern for the continual improvement of student academic achievement. The candidate for the high school superintendency must demonstrate excellent communication skills in the interview and needs to express concern for continued student

academic success; the candidate must be able to relate accomplishments in the past, for high school boards considered the background checks as an important criterion.

All three types of districts felt that the two least important behavioral roles were #3, "To become affiliated with one local church body," and #15, "To be an active individual in local political activities." As long as the superintendent does not mix church and school he/she will have no problems; in addition, the local superintendent should be the leader of the school and leave local politics to the locals.

#### Research Question Four

What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male verses female superintendent?

Of the ninety-three surveys that were returned for the research project only three females were selected to fill superintendent vacancies for the 1987-88 school year. With less than 3% of the total selection being female the data are insufficient to draw any specific conclusions; however, there are some comparisons and generalities that were drawn. Due to the limitation of data available an analysis of Part I and II of the survey instrument and interviews is not available. When appropriate, comparisons and generalities will be addressed with the presentation of the limited data for Part I and II of the survey instrument and the interviews.

## Part I

**Demographic Data**

1. From the demographic data the people completing the survey were board presidents.
2. The composition of the board was that two boards were majority male while one was majority female.
3. All the districts selecting a female as superintendent were rural districts.
4. Two of the districts selecting a female superintendent were elementary and one was a unit district.
5. All three school districts selecting a female superintendent had a student population of less than 200.
6. All three school boards selecting a female superintendent offered a one-year contract.
7. Two of the female superintendents received salaries in the range of \$40,000 - 49,999 while the third female superintendent received a salary under \$40,000.
8. Each board selecting a female superintendent utilized a different selection process. One



board completed the selection without any assistance; another utilized the assistance of the present superintendent; and the third utilized the assistance of the regional superintendent of schools.

9. The board that made the selection without assistance spent between 11 - 25 hours on the process. The board that utilized the present superintendent for assistance spent between 36 - 50 hours in the process. The board that utilized the regional superintendent of schools spent between 6 - 15 hours in the process.

## Part I

**Criteria Used By Board Members To Select A  
Superintendent of Schools**

TABLE LV

The following represents the ranked responses of the three district boards that chose a female superintendent.

Rank	Statement	Response					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	3	0	0	0	0	3
2	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	2	1	0	0	0	3
2	Way in which candidate listened to board member questions	2	1	0	0	0	3
2	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	2	1	0	0	0	3
2	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	2	1	0	0	0	3
6	Content of personal reference letters	1	2	0	0	0	3
6	Appearance and content of application letter	1	2	0	0	0	3

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
6	General physical and mental health appearance	1	2	0	0	0	3
6	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	1	2	0	0	0	3
6	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	1	2	0	0	0	3
6	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	1	2	0	0	0	3
12	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	1	1	1	0	0	3
12	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	1	1	1	0	0	3
14	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	1	1	0	1	0	3
15	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening candidates	1	0	0	0	2	3
16	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	0	3	0	0	0	3

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
16	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	0	3	0	0	0	3
16	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	0	3	0	0	0	3
19	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	0	2	1	0	0	3
19	Age of candidate	0	2	1	0	0	3
21	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	0	2	0	1	0	3
22	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	1	1	1	0	3
23	Past background in speech making appearances	0	0	3	0	0	0
23	Grades received in college courses	0	0	3	0	0	3
23	Salary candidate made in last position	0	0	3	0	0	3
26	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	0	0	2	1	0	3
26	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	0	0	2	1	0	3

Rank	Statement	VI	V	U	VU	ND	T
28	Marital status of candidate	0	0	1	2	0	3
28	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	0	1	2	0	3

Of the twenty-nine criteria, the three surveys agreed on only one criteria as being "very important," #13, "Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview."

Two of the three surveys agreed on the following four criteria as being very important.

- #10. Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions
- #14. Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions
- #17. Background checking of candidate in former position(s)
- #19. Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency

The two surveys that agreed on the importance of the criteria did differ with the questions. Although there were two elementary districts and one unit district, there was no conclusive agreement among the elementary districts. While there was no great consistency in agreement among the three districts, the five major criteria utilized were also those utilized by the entire 93 districts.

## Part II

## Superintendency Behavior Roles

TABLE LVI

The following represents the ranked responses of the three district boards that chose a female superintendent.

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	3	0	0	3
1	To handle stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	3	0	0	3
1	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	3	0	0	3
1	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	3	0	0	3
5	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	2	1	0	3

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
5	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	2	1	0	3
5	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	2	1	0	3
5	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	2	1	0	3
5	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	2	1	0	3
10	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	1	2	0	3
10	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	1	2	0	3
12	To be a member of a local civic or service organization	1	0	2	3
13	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	0	3	0	3
13	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	0	3	0	3

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
15	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	0	2	1	3
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	0	0	3	3
16	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	0	3	3

The three district boards agreed unanimously on the following behavior roles as being "very important."

- #2. To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community
- #4. To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons
- #5. To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position
- #7. To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district.

All four statements agreed upon refer to one's ability to communicate. The four statements rank within the top ten selected by the entire 93 district boards.



## Part IV

### Interviews

All three boards selecting a female superintendent were interviewed; the following is a summary of their remarks:

1. Agreed that the selection of a superintendent was a total board decision.
2. Each board member played a significant part in the selection.
3. The superintendent had to be an individual that had an understanding of small schools.
4. The superintendent had to be one that would "fit in" and be part of a small community.
5. The person had to be able to communicate with all facets of the school, board, and community.

Based upon the interviews the three districts were seeking the best candidate to fit their situation just as all the other districts. The three districts found a female candidate that was the best candidate for the district superintendency.

### Research Question Five

What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban and urban school boards?

#### Demographic Data

The following tables represent the demographic survey of the 4 urban school districts, 18 suburban, and 71 rural school districts.

Table LVII

#### Persons Completing the Survey

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
64	17	4	a. Board President
7	1	0	b. President Designee
71	18	4	TOTAL

The vast majority of the surveys were completed by board presidents rather than a designee. Approximately 11% of the surveys of the rural boards were completed by board president designees.

Table LVIII  
Composition of the Board

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
67	15	3	a. Majority of Board is male
4	3	1	b. Majority of Board is female
71	18	4	TOTAL

The urban schools have the highest percentage of female majority boards of the survey group with 25%. However, the significance is minimal since only four urban school districts are represented in the group.

Table LVIX  
District Type

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
16	7	1	a. Elementary
6	8	0	b. High
49	3	3	c. Unit
71	18	4	TOTAL

For the 1987-88 school year no urban high school districts were selecting a superintendent.

The high school districts seeking a superintendent were in the rural and suburban area.

Table LX  
Student Population

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
16	0	0	a. less than 200
25	1	0	b. 201 - 500
19	4	1	c. 501 - 1000
6	5	1	d. 1001 - 1500
5	2	0	e. 1501 - 2000
0	6	2	f. over 2001
71	18	4	TOTAL

Fifty-eight percent of rural schools represented had a student population of less than 500 and no schools over 2,000. Of the suburban schools represented, 55% had a student population of less than 1,500. The other 45% had a student population of over 1,500, with 33% of the total schools having a student population of over 2,001. Urban schools were represented with 50% or 2 schools with student populations of over 2001.

Table LXI

## Gender of Superintendent Selected

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
68	18	4	a. Male .
3	0	0	b. Female
71	18	4	Total

The significance of the gender of superintendent selected was actually a lack of numbers. Previous data established that of the 93 participants, only three had chosen a female superintendent. Previous data also indicated that one was in a unit district, two in elementary districts and none in high school districts. The three female superintendents were all selected in rural districts.

Table LXII

## Contract Length

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
32	1	0	a. 1 year
39	17	4	b. multi year
71	18	4	TOTAL

An overwhelming number, seventeen of eighteen suburban, and all urban boards represented offered or agreed on a multi-year contract with the new superintendent. In the rural districts approximately 55% agreed on multi-year contracts and 45% agreed on one-year contracts.

Table LXIII

## Salary Range of Superintendents

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
21	0	0	a. Under \$40,000
41	3	1	b. 40,000 - 49,000
8	5	1	c. 50,000 - 59,999
1	5	1	d. 60,000 - 69,999
0	5	1	e. 70,000 and over
71	18	4	TOTAL

The significance was that the suburban and urban districts paid better than the rural schools in 1987-88 when selecting a superintendent. While 29.6% of the rural school superintendents received under \$40,000, there were no suburban or urban superintendents in the same category. While 41 or 57.7% of the rural superintendents received between \$40,000 and \$49,999 only 3 or 16.7% of suburban and

1 of the 4 urban superintendents was in the same category. None of the rural superintendents received \$70,000 or over while 5 or 27.8% of the suburban superintendents and 1 of 4 urban superintendents was in the top salary category.

Table LXIV

## The Selection Process

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
25	4	1	a. Board completed selection without any assistance
9	3	0	b. Board completed selection with assistance of present superintendent
21	7	1	c. Board completed selection with assistance of IASB
14	0	0	d. Board completed selection with assistance of Regional Superintendent
2	4	2	e. Board completed selection with assistance of outside consultant
71	18	4	TOTAL

While the largest number of rural school boards (25 or 35%) completed the selection process on their own, only 4 or 22.2% of the suburban and 1 of 4 of the urban districts used the same process. The largest number of suburban school boards (7 or 38.9%) utilized the services of the Illinois Association of School Boards to assist in the selection of a superintendent, while 21 or 29.6% of the rural schools and 1 of 4 of the urban districts used the same process. The assistance of the regional superintendent was utilized by 14 or 19.7% of the rural school boards; none of the suburban or urban school boards utilized the assistance of the regional superintendent. Outside consultant services were utilized most by the urban school boards, less by the suburban school boards, and least by the rural school boards.



Table LXV

## Approximate Time Spent on Selection Process

Rural	Suburban	Urban	
7	1	0	a. Less than five hours
12	0	1	b. 6 - 15 hours
25	3	0	c. 11 - 25 hours
12	4	0	d. 26 - 35 hours
8	3	1	e. 36 - 50 hours
7	7	2	f. Over 50 hours
71	18	4	TOTAL

The largest number of rural school boards, 25 or 35.2%, spent between 11 - 25 hours in the selection of a superintendent. The largest number of suburban school boards (7 or 38.9%) and 2 of 4 of the urban school boards spent over fifty hours in the selection process. Approximately 10% or 7 of the rural school boards spent over 50 hours in the selection process, and 10% or 7 of the rural school boards spent less than 5 hours in the selection process. Based upon the survey the suburban and urban school boards spent more time in the selection process than did their rural counterparts.

## ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Research question five is represented by seventy-one rural, eighteen suburban, and four urban boards of education. Of the seventy-one rural boards only four are represented by boards with a female majority; three of eighteen suburban and one of four urban boards were represented by a female majority board. While the numbers are not large it is evident that the more urban the area the better chance of having a female majority board. The rural area was represented by sixteen elementary boards, six high school boards, and forty-nine unit boards. The suburban area was presented by seven elementary, eight high school and three unit boards. The urban area was represented by one elementary, three unit and no high school boards. Of the seventy-one rural boards 58% represented student populations of less than 500; 55% of the suburban boards represented student populations of 1,500 or less and the remaining 45% represented student populations of 2,001 or more; 50% of urban boards represented student population of 2,001 or more. The data

indicates that the rural area contains more school districts and fewer students per district than the suburban and urban districts. The three female superintendents were selected for rural school districts. As previously stated, they represented two small elementary districts and one small unit district. The tendency would be to think that the suburban and urban schools with the female-majority boards would choose female superintendents; however, that has not been true. All four of the urban boards offered new superintendents a multi-year contract, while seventeen of eighteen suburban boards offered candidates a multi-year contract. The rural boards provided thirty-nine multi-year contracts and thirty-two one-year contracts to superintendents. The supposition is that the rural districts are smaller in student population and have less resources to offer candidates as evidenced by the salary range. The rural boards employed twenty-one superintendents under \$40,000, forty-one between \$40,000 and \$49,999 and none at \$70,000 and over. They employed five each in the three categories ranging from \$50,000 to \$70,000

and over with no superintendents under \$40,000. The urban boards employed one each in all categories except the under \$40,000 category where there was none. Twenty-five of the rural boards did not seek assistance in the selection process while twenty-one utilized the Illinois School Board Association and fourteen utilized the regional superintendent of schools. Neither the suburban nor the urban utilized the regional superintendent of schools in the process. The regional superintendent of schools was previously the county superintendent who was responsible for the education and student testing in the small, one room rural schools in Illinois until the mid 1950's. In some of the rural areas the regional superintendents have extended the office services to include superintendent search services. The office is still politically elected, the only elected educational executive in Illinois. Boards in more populated areas are more likely to seek assistance from nonpartisan consultants. The largest group of suburban boards utilized the Illinois Association of School Boards; two of the

four urban boards utilized outside consultants. The selection of superintendent is the most important responsibility that a board of education does possess; however, the data indicate that the time spent is minimal. Seven rural and one suburban board spent fewer than five hours in the selection process while two of the four urban boards spent more than fifty hours in the process. However, seven of seventy-one rural and seven of eighteen suburban boards spent more than fifty hours in the process. The largest number of rural boards, twenty-five or 35.2%, spent between eleven and twenty-five hours in the process. The importance and significance of the superintendent selection process must be reviewed by school boards and their state association in an effort to prepare and educate boards on how to obtain the best candidate for the success of the students of the school district. The process is not easy or short.

## Part I

**Survey of Criteria Used By Board Members To  
Select A Superintendent of Schools**

The following, Tables LXVI, LXVII, and LXVIII represent the ranked responses of the rural, suburban, and urban school boards who participated in the survey.

Table LXVI

## Rural School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	56	15	0	0	0	71
2	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	47	24	0	0	0	71
3	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	46	25	0	0	0	71
4	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	36	33	2	0	0	71
5	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	35	35	1	0	0	71
6	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	29	31	11	0	1	72

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
7	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	24	42	4	0	1	71
8	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	23	46	2	0	0	71
9	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	22	42	6	1	0	71
10	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	20	50	1	0	0	71
11	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	17	38	14	1	1	71
12	General physical and mental health appearance	16	55	0	0	0	71
13	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	15	13	5	1	35	69
14	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	14	48	8	0	1	71
15	Content of personal reference letters	11	50	8	0	2	71
16	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	10	49	7	2	3	71

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
17	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	9	48	13	0	1	71
18	Appearance and content of application letter	8	54	7	0	2	71
19	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	7	49	15	0	0	71
20	Salary candidate made in last position	2	27	40	1	1	71
21	Grades received in college	0	47	21	2	1	71
22	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	4	20	40	2	5	71
23	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	4	28	33	4	2	71
24	Age of candidate	0	27	40	4	0	71
25	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	3	15	40	7	6	71
26	Marital status of candidate	2	17	44	7	1	71
27	Past background in speech making appearances	1	11	49	7	3	71



Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
28	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	1	5	53	11	1	71
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	6	52	13	0	71

Table LXVII

## Suburban School Boards

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	14	4	0	0	0	18
2	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	13	5	0	0	0	18
3	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	13	4	1	0	0	18
4	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	11	7	0	0	0	18
5	General physical and mental health appearance	11	6	1	0	0	18
5	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	11	6	1	0	0	18
7	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	8	10	0	0	0	18

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
8	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	8	7	2	1	0	18
9	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	7	10	0	0	1	18
10	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	7	10	1	0	0	18
11	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	7	8	2	1	0	18
12	Appearance and content of application letter	6	9	1	2	0	18
13	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	6	7	0	2	3	18
14	Content of personal reference letters	5	11	1	1	0	18
15	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	4	13	1	0	0	18
16	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	4	6	4	0	4	18
17	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	3	13	2	1	0	18
18	Salary candidate made in last position	3	8	6	1	0	18
19	Age of candidate	2	8	6	2	0	18

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
20	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	2	8	7	0	1	18
21	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	1	12	5	0	0	18
22	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	1	11	5	0	1	18
23	Grades received in college courses	1	10	5	2	0	18
24	Marital status of candidate	1	3	10	4	0	18
25	Past background in speech making appearances	1	2	14	0	1	18
26	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	8	10	0	0	18
27	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	0	4	12	1	1	18
28	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	1	2	14	0	1	18
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	0	14	4	0	18

Table LXVIII

## Urban School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	4	0	0	0	0	4
1	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	4	0	0	0	0	4
1	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	4	0	0	0	0	4
4	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	3	1	0	0	0	4
4	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	3	1	0	0	0	4
4	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	3	1	0	0	0	4
7	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	2	2	0	0	0	4
8	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	1	3	0	0	0	4
8	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	1	3	0	0	0	4
8	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	1	3	0	0	0	4

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
11	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Grades received in college	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Appearance and content of application letter	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	General physical and mental health appearance	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Past background in speech making appearances	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	4	0	0	0	4
11	Past background in speech making appearances	0	4	0	0	0	4
20	Content of personal reference letters	0	3	1	0	0	4
21	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	0	2	2	0	0	4

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VI	ND	T
21	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	0	2	2	0	0	4
21	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	0	2	2	0	0	4
21	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	0	2	2	0	0	4
25	Salary candidate made in last position	0	1	3	0	0	4
26	Age of candidate	0	0	4	0	0	4
26	Marital status of candidate	0	0	4	0	0	4
26	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	0	4	0	0	4
26	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	0	0	4	0	0	4

The number one criterion agreed upon by rural, suburban, and urban school boards was Statement 10 "Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions." Statement 10 was the number one criterion agreed upon by the entire 93 board members of the survey group.

There were only four urban school boards selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year. The four did also rate the following statements as number one.

- #13. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during the interview
- #14. Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions.

The next highest rated criteria by the urban school boards was a tie among the following statements:

- #15. The eye contact candidate had with interviewers
- #16. Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions
- #19. Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency.

All six top criteria considered very important by the urban schools are based upon a candidate's communication skills.

While there were only four urban school boards represented, it is significant that the top six criteria utilized in their selection of a superintendent deal with the candidate's ability to communicate in the interview process.

Of the eighteen suburban schools represented in the survey the following criteria statements ranked as follows:

Rank	Statement
2	#17. Background checking of candidate in former position(s)
3	#20. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district
4	#13. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview
5	#18. General physical and mental health appearance
5	#19. Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency.

While the suburban school boards agreed with rural and urban boards on the number one criterion they rated background checking as the second most important and third was the concern for student achievement. One of the fifth ranking criteria dealt with the personal appearance of the candidate. Thus, the suburban school boards did consider criteria important in the areas of communication skills (Statements 10, 20, 13, and 19), professional experience (Statement 17), and personal appearance (Statement 18).

Of the 71 rural school boards that participated in the survey the following important criteria statements ranked as follows:



Rank	Statement
2	#13. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview
3	#20. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district
4	#17. Background checking of candidate in former position(s)
5	#14. Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions.

Of the criteria considered very important by rural school boards in the selection of a new superintendent, four of the top five (Statements 10, 13, 20, and 14) represent the use of communication skills by the candidates. One of the top five (Statement 17) represents the checking of past professional experiences of the candidate.

The rural and suburban school boards were very similar in their choice of specific criteria. Both types of boards chose four identical criteria in the top five criteria selected. While the specific criteria statements (10, 13, 20, 17) were not in the same order they did rank in the top five. With only four urban school boards represented in the survey, there is not enough data to realistically justify specific conclusions about the group.

The criteria statement considered the least important in the selection process of a superintendent by urban, suburban, and rural school boards was number six, "Number of candidate's children and ages."

## Part II

### Superintendency Behavior Roles

Tables LXIX, LXX and LXXI represent the ranked responses of the rural, suburban, and urban school boards who participated in the survey.

Table LXIX

#### Rural School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	64	7	0	71
2	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	59	12	0	71
3	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	53	18	0	71
4	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	50	21	0	71

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
5	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	46	24	1	71
6	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	44	26	1	71
7	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	41	30	0	71
8	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	40	31	0	71
9	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	36	34	1	71
10	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	35	30	6	71
11	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	28	43	0	71
12	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	25	39	7	71

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
13	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	24	40	7	71
14	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	19	49	3	71
15	To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	12	45	14	71
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	3	15	53	71
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	1	9	61	71

Table LXX

## Suburban School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	18	0	0	18
2	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	16	2	0	18
2	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	16	2	0	18

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
4	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	15	3	0	18
4	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	15	3	0	18
4	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	15	3	0	18
7	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	14	4	0	18
8	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	12	6	0	18
9	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	11	7	0	18
10	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	10	8	0	18
11	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	9	9	0	18
12	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	9	8	1	18

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
13	To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	9	7	2	18
14	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	8	10	0	18
15	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	5	11	2	18
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	1	3	14	18
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	2	16	18

Table LXXI

## Urban School Boards

Rank	Statement	Response			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	4	0	0	4
1	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	4	0	0	4
3	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	3	1	0	4

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
3	To handle stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	3	1	0	4
3	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	3	1	0	4
3	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	3	1	0	4
3	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	3	1	0	4
3	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	3	1	0	4
3	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	3	1	0	4
3	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	3	1	0	4
11	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	2	2	0	4
11	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	2	2	0	4
13	To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	1	3	0	4

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
13	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	1	3	0	4
13	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	1	3	0	4
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	0	1	3	4
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	0	4	4

The rural, suburban and urban boards did not agree on a specific behavioral role as being the most important.

Ninety per cent of the rural boards considered Statement #12 (To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds) to be the most important behavior role of a superintendent. The next four roles of significance were: Statement #2 (To demonstrate a strong school leadership role to the community) with 83% of the boards considering it very important; Statement #4 (To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons) with 75% of the boards considering it very



important; Statement #9 (To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel) with 70% of the boards considering it very important; and Statement #6 (To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons) with 65% of the boards considering it very important.

One hundred per cent of the 18 suburban schools considered Statement #2 (To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community) to be a very important behavior role of a superintendent. The second most important behavioral role considered by suburban boards was a tie between Statement #5 (To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position) and Statement #9 (To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel), with 88% of the suburban boards considering the statements very important. The fourth most important behavior role considered by suburban boards was a tie between Statement #4 (To handle the stressful situations associated with

school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons), Statement #7 (To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district), and Statement #11 (To keep board members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings) with 83% of the suburban boards considering the statements very important.

Although there were only four urban school boards involved in the survey, all agreed on Statement #10 (To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage) and Statement #16 (To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making).

While there were very few similarities in the most important behavior roles considered by the rural, suburban, and urban boards, there was definite agreement among all of the groups as to the least important behavior roles. Statement #15 (To be an active individual in local political activities) found 100% of the urban schools, 89% of the suburban and 86% of the rural school boards

stating that this was the least important behavioral role of a superintendent. All three groups also agreed that Statement #3 (To become affiliated with one local church body) was the second least desirable behavioral role for a superintendent with 75% of the urban boards, 78% of the suburban boards and 75% of the rural boards concurring.

### Interviews

Of the forty-eight interviews conducted three were from urban school boards, thirteen from suburban boards and thirty-two from rural school boards.

**1. Did you read and study the application materials supplied by the final candidates?**

All of the urban and suburban interviewees expressed that they had studied all the application material and felt confident that their fellow board members had, while 18% of the rural board members expressed a concern that not all of their fellow board members appeared to have reviewed all the material. Nine per cent of the rural board members

interviewed stated that they had not read all the application material but had read enough to make a decision.

**2. Did you formulate questions that you believed needed answers from each final candidate?**

All of the interviewees stated that they had questions they wanted answered. Fifteen percent of the interviewees stated that they had written the questions; 50% stated that they had them mentally ready; 20% felt there were certain issues in the district that had to be addressed by the candidate; and 15% had chosen several questions to ask from a list given to them by their consultant.

Thirty-one per cent of the rural board interviewees felt that not all board members were prepared to ask questions. Twenty-three per cent of the suburban board members felt that not all fellow board members were prepared, and 100% of the urban board members felt that all board members were prepared to ask questions.

**3. Did you ask questions of candidates whose answers served as important information to you in your preference decision-making?**

All of the interviewees stated that they asked questions that helped eliminate the majority of the candidates. Rural and suburban interviewees expressed a concern that some fellow board members presented questions that were of a special interest. There was also a concern expressed that the special interest board members did monopolize more time than necessary. Special interest areas that were mentioned were anti-taxes, special education, athletics, transportation, means of evaluation of personnel, and reorganization.

**4. Was your support/non-support position for each candidate already determined before you met them?**

Approximately 34% of the rural interviewees and 30% of the suburban interviewees felt that they had determined their positions on most candidates based upon the application materials. At least 10% of each group felt that their support for some candidates changed after the interviews. All of the urban interviewees stated that they had not determined specific positions on candidates before the interviews.

5. After the introductory remarks were made (within 5 minutes) did you make up your decision on each candidate? The rest of the interview time was spent noting data to "back-up" your decision?

In the initial interviews 33% of the suburban school boards and 19% of the rural school boards stated that they had decided on a candidate shortly after the introductory remarks. All of the urban school boards, 81% of the rural and 66% of the suburban school boards stated that during the initial interviews it took less time to make a decision on a candidate than with the finalists. Eighty-eight per cent of the interviewees stated that on the initial interviews they looked at why a candidate would not be good for their situation rather than why a candidate would be good.

6. Did it take you nearly the entire interview session (within 45 - 60 minutes) to decide to support/nonsupport each candidate?

Most of the interviewees stated that the initial interviews took less time, and it was relatively easy to eliminate candidates. With the final candidates all interviewees expressed that it

took the entire time to interview. However, 56% of the rural interviewees, 61% of suburban interviewees, and 66% of the urban interviewees felt that they did support one of the finalists before the final interview began and their support for that candidate continued. Only three of the rural interviewees stated that they had changed their support after the final interview.

**7. Did you deliberately postpone making a support/non-support decision about each candidate until you had met all of them?**

There were 78% of the suburban school boards, 75% of the rural, and 100% of the urban that stated that they had made a selection of a candidate from the finalists before the final interviews. On the initial interviews 88% of the interviewees stated that while it was easy to see why a candidate would not meet the needs of the district, it was just as easy to recognize the candidates who would be good for the specific districts.

8. After each board member who had visited the superintendent candidate's former school community shared this information, did you then make up your mind of support/non-support?

There were three rural districts that did not visit the former district or area of the superintendent finalists. Of the remaining districts only two urban, three rural and four suburban visited the former district or area of all the finalists. The remaining boards visited the former school district or area of only the final candidate. All interviewees who had made visits stated that the visits were really made after the final decision had been made, and if nothing drastic was found that would change the board's mind, the candidate received a contract.

9. Were you influenced most by the written letters of recommendation by former school board members and school patrons?

All of the interviewees stated that they did not have or see a single weak or bad letter in a file. Based upon the recommendations the interviewees stated that one could tell if the



candidate was from a large, medium, or small school district. The candidate's resume, accomplishments, and a statement of interest in the position were more helpful as stated by 83% of the suburban interviewees, 75% of the urban interviewees and 78% of the rural interviewees.

10. Were you comfortable with your decision-making position and if not did you perceive that most of the board members were favoring a certain candidate, ... so you went along with them?

While all of the interviewees stated that the decision on the selection of a new superintendent was a total board decision, there were compromises that had to be made in several of the decisions. However, the compromises were made in getting the best candidate. Approximately 94% of the rural, 89% of the suburban, and 75% of the urban stated that they were comfortable with their specific candidate and how they arrived at their choice, and they did not need to compromise position.

There were twelve interviewees that expressed a concern that a few fellow board members just went along with other board members because of being

friends, special issues, or because they had been pressured into favoring a certain candidate.

**11. Are your first impressions usually the best, so do you stay with those impressions of each candidate?**

One rural interviewee stated that his first impressions about a person were always reliable but whether those impressions would cause the person to be a good school superintendent he did question. Approximately 66% of the suburban interviewees, 63% of the rural, and 50% of the urban would put their faith in their first impressions and stay with them on the candidates.

The remaining interviewees felt that they needed to know more about the candidate and experiences they had, and how a candidate would handle certain situations existing in the school district. The feeling was that they needed more than a first impression.

**12. Do you put your confidence in those persons who had experience in selecting individuals who had job responsibilities such as the superintendent of schools?**

According to the interviewees 65% of the rural, 78% of the suburban, and 75% of the urban boards utilized the assistance of a consultant in the selection process. The interviewees felt that the consultants did much of the preliminary screening and had given them good candidates.

The remaining interviewees expressed a concern for the selection being their responsibility and they needed to see every candidate; that they had bad experiences with a consultant in the past; and that it was a consultant who had recommended the last superintendent and there would never be another consultant used. No one expressed a concern about the cost of using a consultant as being the reason for not using one.

**13. Did your support/non-support decision on each candidate become clear when all board members discussed the different candidate interview data and related it to the superintendency responsibilities?**

Some interviewees stated that when discussing final candidates the notion of why a candidate would not be acceptable changed to why one

candidate was better than another or the best. Interviewees stated that special interest board members tried to convince other board members why their choice was the best. Most interviewees felt that special interest board members actually hurt a candidate's position.

According to the interviews 83% of the suburban, 88% of the rural, and 100% of the urban interviewees felt their support for a candidate increased after full board discussions of candidates and what the board wanted in a superintendent.

**14. Did your choice of the superintendency candidates express the ideas and values that were important to you?**

The following was expressed by several interviewees: If my ideas and values were the same as were needed by the school district then the candidate of my choice and I would be very compatible. However, if my choice of a candidate meets the needs of the school district then that is more important to me.

Approximately 94% of the suburban, 94% of the rural and 100% of the urban stated that the candidate they preferred did express the ideas and values they felt were important.

**15. Did you learn more about the candidate when conversing with him on a one-to-one basis than when all board members were present?**

Few of the interviewees had an opportunity to meet and spend time with the candidates. Based upon the few who had the opportunity, a feeling was expressed that the candidates were a little more relaxed, and in most instances the candidate was asked to invite his/her spouse to attend. All of the interviewees who had met with candidates informally stated that meeting with the spouse had no bearing on their decision.

**16. Did you make one or more telephone call(s) to persons who knew of the final candidate(s) abilities and past work experiences?**

Many of the interviewees who had used consultants stated that they thought the consultants had made telephone contacts.

There were 50% of the urban, 53% of the rural, and 56% of the suburban interviewees who had made or knew that board members had made calls on the final candidates. More than 50% of those who had done the entire selection process by themselves expressed that they thought some board members had called but were not sure.

## ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE

The suburban, urban, and rural school boards chose Statement #10 "Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions" as the most important criterion. Candidates seeking superintendency positions must realize that no matter the location of the school district the successful superintendent candidate must possess excellent communication skills. The candidate seeking a superintendency in an urban area must realize that the top six criteria utilized by the boards in the selection process were communication skills. Not only does the candidate need to respond well in the interview, he/she must exhibit self confidence while being interviewed; be a good listener to board questions; demonstrate good eye contact with board; display body expression and spontaneity of speaking while being interviewed; and be able to convince the board why he/she wants the position more than anyone else.

The urban schools behavioral roles for the superintendency support the criteria that were

established for the selection process. The number #1 behavioral role of urban schools was "to display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage." To emphasize support, the second behavior role expectation was for the superintendent to delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making. Candidates for urban districts must realize that the superintendent is the mouth piece of the district and will be held responsible by the board of education for addressing the district education issues and providing the leadership for the district.

From the interviews the urban boards expressed that 100% had reviewed all application material; had prepared questions; then asked questions to help eliminate the majority of candidates; had not determined specific positions on candidates before the interviews; took minimum time to eliminate candidates; had made a selection of a candidate before the final interviews; knew the candidate



they preferred did express the ideas and values they felt were important; and support for a candidate increased after full board discussions.

The urban boards established their expectations for the superintendency, interviewed utilizing criteria based upon the expectations, and based upon the interviews, they were prepared and in agreement on what they were doing and how to accomplish the selection task.

The areas lacking attention were in background checking. If a visit was made to the community of a candidate the visit was to confirm the board's selection. Interviewees thought telephone calls to check on candidates were done by consultants or some one else but could not confirm.

The suburban and rural boards agreed upon four of five criteria for selecting a superintendent; however, the order of importance was different. The suburban boards second most important criterion dealt with the background checking of the candidates. The candidates for suburban districts would need to have like or similiar experiences

that would serve to meet the needs of the employing district board of education. The suburban boards as the urban boards were interested in the concern expressed by the candidate for student academic achievement and the self-confidence exhibited by the candidate. The candidates must be able to express themselves very well while displaying self-confidence and having the past experiences to back up their statements. The suburban boards were the first to address the issue of a candidate's general physical and mental health appearance as an important criterion. The suburban boards also agreed with the urban districts in that they wanted to know why the candidate wanted the position. Thus, according to the criteria, the candidate for a suburban superintendency must possess excellent communication skills; have a physical and mental appearance to meet the board's approval; be able to demonstrate self-confidence in the interview; express concern for student academic success; be a good listener to the board; and have the past

experiences to back up what has been stated. Yet the behavioral areas the suburban boards sought were for the superintendent candidate to demonstrate a strong school leadership image to community; be able to review and follow through on the board's evaluation of the position of superintendent, as well as be a consistent evaluator; be able to handle stressful situations with all groups from the school and community; and be able to keep board members informed between board meetings. All of the expectations of the suburban boards reflect the candidate with past experience as a superintendent who has good public speaking skill, has the ability to accomplish a task, and the ability to communicate the results no matter how controversial to the appropriate people. The candidate that will best succeed as a suburban superintendent based upon the boards criteria and expectations is an experienced superintendent who is a communicator first and problem solver second.

The interviews demonstrate that the suburban boards were less prepared for the interview process

than the urban schools but more prepared than the rural. Twenty-three percent of the suburban board members felt that not all fellow board members were prepared to interview; 66% of interviewees stated that it took a very short time to eliminate candidates except for the finalists; 78% stated that they had made a selection of a candidate from the finalists before the final interviews; four of the eighteen suburban boards had visited the finalists' districts, and 56% of the suburban interviewees had made calls or knew that other board members had called on the finalists. The suburban boards as the urban boards stated that the board decision on a superintendent had been a group decision.

The majority of superintendency candidates did seek positions in rural areas, if for no other reason than there are more rural districts in Illinois. Thus, most candidates have a better opportunity for a superintendency in the rural areas. If the superintendent is seeking a district that will have more students, pay more, and offer more security with a multi-year contract, then

he/she will be a candidate for a superintendency in a suburban or urban area.

Candidates for rural superintendencies have basically the same criteria to meet as the suburban candidates except that the background checking of a candidate is of lesser importance to the rural board. The rural boards find the self-confidence exhibited by the candidate and the concern expressed for student academic improvement more important than the background check. The ways in which a candidate listens to board members' questions is really as important to rural board members as the background checks.

To meet the rural boards' criteria a candidate will need to have excellent communication skills to respond in the interview, exhibit self-confidence, demonstrate good listening skills, be able to express concern for student academic achievement, and have had some experiences in past positions to justify his/her position.

The number one behavioral role or expectation of the superintendency by rural boards, however, is

that the superintendent be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds. The majority of rural school districts are small in student population, in community population, and in assessed valuation as compared to the urban and rural; therefore the first concern is for the superintendent to be a good finance person. The rural superintendent can be the school leader to the community, the person to handle stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education, and school patrons as well as being a fair and consistent evaluator of school personnel. With financial problems, however, will come the elimination of personnel, academic programs and courses, and extracurricular activities. To survive in the rural school a candidate will need to be an excellent evaluator of more than just personnel, and the candidate will need to be strong enough to take the heat when eliminating a community-supported faculty member or cutting programs. The fifth behavioral role requires the candidate to the rural superintendency to be able

to present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education that may be unpopular with some groups. The interviewees from rural districts when asked about preparing questions for candidates stressed that there were some specific statements that needed to be addressed and answered for the district by the candidates before questions could be asked. Perhaps the candidates' interview responses to those statements would quickly determine whether a candidate was a finalist. Nine percent of the rural interviewees stated they had not read all of the candidate application material, and 18% of all rural interviewees expressed concern that not all of fellow board members had prepared for the interviews. Rural interviewees expressed a concern that board members with a special interest did monopolize more time. The special interests again dealt with taxes, athletics, transportation, evaluation of personnel, reorganization and special education costs. The special interest issues are related to finance and personnel, issues that must be addressed eventually by all rural superintendents; candidates for rural positions

must be ready to address these issues. Rural interviewees agreed with urban and suburban interviewees that it took less time to eliminate candidates who were not finalists. The boards were looking for the specific criteria or behavioral roles to fit the district situation. The candidates that met the criteria and could communicate their ideas most effectively were the finalists.

The rural interviewees as well as the urban and suburban stated that all candidates had good recommendations. The recommendations were not as helpful as the candidate's resume, accomplishments, and statement of interest according to 83% of the rural interviewees. Specifically, candidates must be able to put together a brief but concise resume, an impressive listing of accomplishments that will be recognizable to the board members, and a very sincere statement of interest in the position that will be able to convey confidence and concern for the position. Eighty-eight percent of the rural interviewees stated that their support for a candidate increased after the full board discussion



of candidates and what the board wanted in a candidate. Ninety-four percent of the rural interviewees stated that the selection of the superintendent was a total board decision.

The candidate for a rural superintendency must be strong in school finance, able to make unpopular recommendations and decisions, and lead the school district through difficult times.

Candidates for the superintendency in rural, suburban and urban areas should be aware that boards find the number and ages of a candidate's children and the number and types of publications that have been written the least important criteria in the selection process. The boards were employing an individual to be the school leader, and that task was first priority. The boards were more interested in what the candidate had experienced in a superintendency or similar position, not what a candidate is able to write and have published.

The boards of education from all three areas expressed the opinion that the least important expectations that they had were for the

superintendent to become affiliated with one local church body or to be actively involved in local political activities. As long as the superintendent does not mix church and school he/she will have no problems regarding church membership; in addition, the local superintendent should be the leader of the school and leave local politics to the locals.

### Research Question Six

Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male or female-dominated boards?

In the ninety-three surveys that were returned for the research project, only eight female-dominated boards were involved in the selection of a superintendent. With less than 10% of the total selection being female-dominated boards, the data is insufficient to draw specific conclusions; however, there are some comparisons and generalizations that were formulated. Due to the limitation of data available an analysis of Part I and II of the survey instrument and interviews is not available. When appropriate comparisons and generalities will be addressed with the presentation of the limited data for Part I and II of the survey instrument and the interviews.

## Demographic Data

Table LXXII

Person Completing the Survey

Majority of Board Female

NO.	
8	Board President
0	President Designee

The board president of all boards with a female majority answered the survey.

Table LXXIII

District Location

Majority of Board Female

NO.	Location
1	Urban
3	Suburban
4	Rural

Female-dominated boards did exist in all locations.

Table LXXIV  
District Type

NO.	District Type
5	Elementary
0	High
3	Unit

While the districts were located in urban, suburban, and rural locations, the majority of female-dominated boards existed in elementary districts; there were no female-dominated high school boards in the survey group.

Table LXXV  
Student Population

NO.	Student Population
1	a. less than 200
0	b. 201-----500
3	c. 501-----1000
1	d. 1001-----1500
1	e. 1501-----2000
2	f. over 2000

The female-dominated boards existed in almost all of the student population ranges with 4 or 50%

of the districts with populations of less than 1000 and 4 or 50% of the districts with populations of more than 1000.

Table LXXVI

## Gender of Superintendent

NO.	Gender
7	a. Male
1	b. Female

Seven of the eight female-dominated boards chose a male superintendent. There was no correlation that female-dominated boards tend to choose female superintendents.

Table LXXVII

## Contract Length

NO.	Contract
2	1-year
6	multi-year

While it is apparent that the female-dominated boards preferred the multi-year contract with the new superintendent, this was not uncommon with the male-dominated boards.

Table LXXVIII

## Salary Range of Superintendents

NO.	Salary Range
0	Under \$40,000
4	40,000--49,999
2	50,000--59,999
2	60,000--69,999
0	70,000 and over

Female-dominated boards employed 50% of the new superintendents at salaries under \$50,000 and 50% at salaries over \$50,000.

Table LXXIX

## The Selection Process

NO.	Selection Process
4	a. Board completed selection without any help
0	b. Board completed selection with assistance of present superintendent
2	c. Board completed selection with assistance of IASB
2	d. Board completed selection with assistance of Regional Superintendent
0	e. Board completed selection with assistance of outside consultant

Of the eight female-dominated boards 50% completed their selection without any assistance; 50% utilized the IASB or Regional Superintendent for assistance.

Table LXXX

## Time Spent on Selection Process

NO.	Time Spent
1	a. Less than five hours
1	b. 6---15 hours
1	c. 11--25 hours
0	d. 20--35 hours
3	e. 36--50 hours
2	f. over 50 hours

Three of the female-dominated boards spent less than twenty-five hours in the selection process; five spent more than thirty-six hours, with two of the five spending more than 50 hours.



## Part I

**Criteria Used by Board Members to Select a Superintendent of Schools**

The following, Table LXXXI, represents the ranked responses of the eight female-dominated boards who participated in the survey.

Table LXXXI

Rank	Statement	Responses					
		VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
1	Manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions	5	3	0	0	0	8
2	Background checking of candidate in former position(s)	5	2	1	0	0	8
3	Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview	4	4	0	0	0	8
4	Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions	3	5	0	0	0	8
5	Previous experience as a superintendent of schools	3	2	3	0	0	8
6	Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in his community	2	6	0	0	0	8
7	Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district	2	5	0	0	1	8
8	General physical and mental health appearance	2	5	1	0	0	8

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
8	Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency	2	5	1	0	0	8
10	Appearance and content of application letter	2	3	3	0	0	8
11	Candidate grooming and personal manner of dress	1	7	0	0	0	8
12	The eye contact candidate had with interviewers	1	6	1	0	0	8
13	Content of personal reference letters	1	5	2	0	0	8
14	Past background in speech making appearances	1	0	7	0	0	8
15	Candidate spontaneity of speaking and use of body expressions	0	7	1	0	0	8
16	Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position	0	1	7	0	0	8
17	Grades received in college courses	0	4	4	0	0	8
17	Sense of humor and wit displayed by candidate	0	4	4	0	0	8
17	Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district	0	4	4	0	0	8
20	Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others	0	3	5	0	0	8
21	Age of candidate	0	3	4	1	0	8
22	Salary candidate made in last position	0	2	6	0	0	8

Rank	Statement	VI	I	U	VU	ND	T
22	Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences	0	2	6	0	0	8
24	Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel	0	2	5	0	1	8
25	Remarks of consultant(s) who helped during screening of candidates	0	2	0	1	4	7
26	Number and types of publications that candidate had written	0	1	7	0	0	8
27	Marital status of candidate	0	1	6	1	0	8
28	Religious and moral preference statements of candidate	0	1	5	1	1	8
29	Number of candidate's children and ages	0	0	6	2	0	8

The top criterion for the female-dominated board group was number 10 (manner in which the candidate responded to interview questions). Question 10 was also the number one ranked criterion among the entire group of 93 boards represented in the survey.

The criterion that ranked second among the group was number 17 (Background checking of candidate in former position(s)). The same criterion ranked fourth among entire survey group.

The criterion that ranked third among the group was number 13 (Self-confidence exhibited by candidate during interview). The criterion ranked second among the entire survey group.

The fourth ranking criterion among the group of female-dominated boards was criterion number 14 (Ways in which candidate listened to board member questions). The same criterion ranked fifth among the entire survey group.

The least important criterion for the female-dominated boards was number 6 (Number of candidate's children and ages). This was also the number one least important criterion for the entire survey group.

The female-dominated board also agreed with the entire survey group by placing statements 5 (Marital status of candidate) and number 25 (Number and types of publications that candidate had written) in the five least important criteria.

Very little difference exists between the female-majority boards and the entire survey group. The candidates who possess good communication skills will dominate those chosen.

Part II

**Superintendent Behavior Roles**

Table LXXXII

Female-dominated Board Responses to the Seventeen Superintendency Behavioral Roles

Rank	Statement	Responses			
		VI	I	NI	T
1	To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community	7	1	0	8
2	To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which may be unpopular to some school patrons	6	2	0	8
2	To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district	6	2	0	8
2	To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel	6	2	0	8
2	To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings	6	2	0	8
2	To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds	6	2	0	8

Rank	Statement	VI	I	NI	T
7	To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons	5	3	0	8
7	To annually review and follow through on the evaluation procedures and data with the board of education for the superintendent of schools position	5	3	0	8
7	To display sharp thinking and speaking ability to school personnel, board members, and community patronage	5	3	0	8
10	To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies	3	4	1	8
10	To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making	3	4	1	8
12	To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities	2	6	0	8
13	To be the man in control of the school district and operate it as he sees fit	2	5	1	8
14	To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies	2	4	2	8
15	To be a member of a local civic, or service organization	1	5	2	8
16	To become affiliated with one local church body	0	2	6	8
17	To be an active individual in local political activities	0	0	8	8

The number one behavioral role was number 2 (To demonstrate a strong school leadership image to the community). The number one behavioral role from the entire survey group was also behavioral role number 2.

The next five important behavioral roles to female-dominated boards all ranked second on the survey. Three of those five ranked in the top five behavioral roles as ranked by the entire survey group. The additional three were:

Statement 12. To be a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds

Statement 9. To be a consistent and fair evaluator of school personnel

Statement 6. To present sound accountability recommendations to the board of education which maybe unpopular to some school patrons

The female-dominated boards ranked role number 7 (To be the verbal and written spokesperson for the school district) and number 11 (To keep board of education members informed of pending business between scheduled board meetings) with the same importance as numbers 12, 9, and 6. Both roles seven and eleven deal with the superintendent's

ability to be able to communicate with all district constituency and especially to keep the board informed. The entire survey group ranked number 4 (To handle the stressful situations associated with school personnel, board of education members, and school patrons) as the additional behavioral role in the top five. This role deals more with the personal strength and stamina of the individual to be able to survive the stress-related situations which occur when one deals with all the individuals and groups existing in a school district.

The only item in the entire survey that the female-dominated boards totally agreed upon was that the least important behavioral role was number 15 (To be an active individual in local political activities). The second least important behavioral role was number 3 (To become affiliated with one local church body), which six of the eight female-dominated boards stated "not important," and two stated "important."

The entire group ranked the least important behavioral roles the same with 87.2% stating that number 15 was not important and 76.3% stating that



number 3 was not important.

Basically the female-dominated boards followed the same choices as the entire survey group. There was no indication that the group had major differences when compared to the entire group.

### **Interviews**

Six of the forty-eight interviewees were from female-dominated boards.

#### **Interview Question 1**

**Did you read and study the application materials supplied by the final candidates?**

All eight interviewees did acknowledge that they had reviewed all the materials of the final candidates. However, five of the eight expressed a feeling that not all board members had reviewed the materials and were not prepared for the final interviews. One of the interviewees stated that the board as a whole reviewed each other's questions before the final candidates were interviewed. The interviewee felt that it helped unite the board in agreeing upon the type of superintendent they were seeking.

### Interview Question 2

**Did you formulate questions that you believed needed answers from each final candidate?**

The interviewees stated that they had, but only the one board had spent much time reviewing each others questions before the interview. Four of the interviewees expressed that board members with special interests formulated questions for those specific interests.

### Interview Question 3

**Did you ask questions of candidates whose answers served as important information to you in your preference decision-making?**

Three of the interviewees stated that the candidates' answers reaffirmed their personal decisions as to the best candidate. Two of the interviewees stated that what helped them choose among several candidates was questions asked by other board members; one stated that because of the final questions asked by others she/he changed his/her support from one candidate to the other who was chosen as the district superintendent.

#### Interview Question 4

Was your support/non-support position for each candidate already determined before you met them?

Four of the six stated that they had already determined who they felt was the best candidate. Two candidates felt they had no preference before they met and interviewed the candidates.

#### Interview Question 5

After the introductory remarks were made (within 5 minutes) did you make your decision on each candidate. The rest of the interview time was spent noting data to "back-up" your decision?

All interviewees felt that in the initial interviews they were able to make a decision on each candidate relatively quickly. During the interviews with the finalists, all but one of the interviewees felt that the time was spent noting data to "back up" their decision.

#### Interview Question 6

Did it take you nearly the entire interview session (within 45-60 minutes) to decide to support/non-support each candidate?

No interviewees felt the decision on

candidates in the initial interviews took very long. However, they did feel that the entire interview time was needed with the final candidates.

#### Interview Question 7

Did you deliberately postpone making a support/non-support decision about each candidate until you had met all of them?

Five of the six interviewees felt that they compared one candidate against the preceding candidate or the best candidate prior to that interview. The opinion was expressed that "when one candidate stated what you wanted to hear, it was hard to listen to other candidates."

#### Interview Question 8

After each board member who had visited the superintendent candidate's former school community shared this information, did you then make up your mind of support/non-support?

All interviewees stated that they had made a decision as to who they favored as a candidate before the board visit. Of the six interviewees only three made district visits, and those were

made after the interview with the finalists. A visit was made only to the district of the candidate that the board felt was the best candidate. If the board member(s) visiting found nothing dramatically wrong with the candidate, then the candidate became the choice of the board.

#### **Interview Question 9**

**Were you influenced most by the written letters of recommendation by former school board members and school patrons?**

The majority of interviewees stated that all candidates had positive recommendations. No board member could recall a negative recommendation. One interviewee recalled that a recommendation stated that the candidate would be an excellent superintendent in a small district. The district was a large district, and this eliminated the candidate before the interviews began.

#### **Interview Question 10**

**Were you comfortable with your decision-making position, and if not, did you perceive that most of the board members were favoring a certain candidate, ... so you went along with them?**

All of the interviewees stated that they were comfortable with their decision-making position, and they did feel that the final decision regarding the best candidate was a total board decision.

#### Interview Question 11

Are your first impressions usually the best, so do you stay with those impressions of each candidate?

Five of the six candidates felt that their first impressions have been very good. Some of the factors contributing to first impressions were handshake, dress for interview, shoes, car, family, and ability to look at or focus on a person when answering a question.

#### Interview Question 12

Do you put your confidence in those persons who had experience in selecting individuals who had job responsibilities such as the superintendent of schools?

Three of the interviewees had used consultants (IASB or Regional Superintendent) in the selection of a superintendent. They expressed confidence in the consultants to bring in a list of the top

candidates for the board to interview. Three of the interviewees expressed concern as to the impartiality of the consultants and the consultants' knowledge of the type of superintendent that the district needed. All felt that cost of a consultant to assist was not an issue.

### Interview Question 13

Did your support/non-support decision on each candidate become clear when all board members discussed the different candidate interview data and related it to the superintendency responsibilities?

Four of the interviewees stated that their position on the final candidates became stronger as the board discussed the strengths of the candidates. Special interest members were recognizable to the interviewees, and if a board member was unhappy with the board selection, it was a member with a special interest.

One of the remaining interviewees felt that he did not make a decision on a candidate until he had heard from the other candidates.

The final interviewee admitted that he had two candidates that he preferred, and he did not make a decision on either of them until he knew the position of the majority of the board members.

#### **Interview Question 14**

**Did your choice of the superintendency candidates express the ideas and values that were important to you?**

All interviewees stated that the candidate they preferred did express the same ideas and values that they held important. Three of the interviewees continued to express that the ideas and values that they were looking for were the same as those of the entire board and represented the position of the district.

#### **Interview Question 15**

**Did you learn more about the candidate when conversing with him on a one-to-one basis than when all board members were present?**

Four of the interviewees stated that they did not have an opportunity to spend time one-on-one with the candidates.

Two of the interviewees had an opportunity to



visit with the candidates in a less formal interview situation. The two interviewees felt that those candidates who did well in the interviews did well communicating in a less formal situation.

#### Interview Question 16

Did you make one or more telephone call(s) to persons who knew of the final candidate(s) abilities and past work experiences?

One of the interviewees had made telephone calls or made contact with individuals who knew of the abilities of the final candidates. Five of the interviewees thought that several members had made calls or that the consultants had checked on the candidates.

### Summary

Chapter IV has been a presentation and analysis of the data collected through the use of a two part survey and direct interviews with the boards of education in Illinois who were selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year. The six research questions were the focal points for the presentation and interpretation of data collected. Eighty-five tables were utilized as well as narrative presentations to accurately present the data collected in relationship to the research questions.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the criteria utilized by school boards in the selection of a new superintendent in Illinois for the 1987-88 school year.

Six research questions were developed to address the issue of criteria utilized by school boards in the selection process:

- 1.) What were the actual criteria used by school boards in Illinois when selecting a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year?
- 2.) Is there one specific criterion that is considered more important than another by boards of education in Illinois for the selection of superintendent?
- 3.) What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by elementary, high, or unit school boards in Illinois?

4.) What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a male versus female superintendent?

5.) What are the differences/similarities in criteria considered in the selection of a superintendent by rural, suburban, and urban school boards?

6.) Is there a difference in criteria utilized in the selection of a superintendent by male- or female-dominated boards?

An extensive review of the literature has revealed the most important function of the school board is the selection of a superintendent. The literature also revealed that much has been written on the process of selecting a new superintendent from the board handling the entire process to utilizing different types of consultants to aid and assist the board in the process of selecting a new superintendent. However, very little was found that dealt with the actual criteria utilized by boards, or if criteria utilized met the expectations of the boards, and if the actual

interview proceedings utilized the criteria established to meet board expectations before the superintendent was selected.

The literature does indicate that the final selection of a candidate to be superintendent does rest with the board of education. The board of education must accomplish this important task when their own occupational background and years of service generally offer no opportunities for the recruitment, selection, or appointment of personnel.

To accomplish the purpose of this study the following methods and procedures were applied:

- 1.) The data were gathered for the study utilizing the opinion/fact survey and the interview technique.
- 2.) The instrument consisted of a demographic section; a list of 29 selection criteria that have importance in the selection of a superintendent; and a section consisting of 17 superintendent behavioral roles which are fundamental to the role of superintendent. The 29 criteria and 17 behavior roles were

developed by Dr. Robert Anderson of Wichita State University and utilized in studies in Kansas and Missouri during 1982 and 1984. The instrument was further validated by having the questionnaire distributed to six Iowa superintendents and their board presidents (Addendum III).

3.) With the assistance of the Illinois School Board Association and Illinois Association of School Administrators a data base of Illinois School Boards seeking superintendents for the 1987-88 school year was established. There were 106 superintendency vacancies in Illinois between January 1, 1987 and September 1, 1987.

4.) All 106 school district board presidents were sent a survey and 93 of the respondents participated in the survey process. Forty-eight of the respondents participated in the interview process.

The interview segment of the study was based upon an additional questionnaire that had been developed by Dr. Robert Anderson in 1982. The interview probe was designed to review the

selection process with the interviewees based upon the board preparation for the candidate interview; the actual interview process; and board follow-up on the candidates before the final selection of a superintendent. The interview probe also allowed the survey respondents, serving as interviewees, an opportunity to clarify any questions asked and the researcher a chance to probe for specific meanings of responses.

5.) The data collected from the survey and interview probe were tabulated and presented. The data generated by research questions 1 and 2 were analyzed based upon the frequency of the responses to the questionnaire and interview probe. The data generated by research question 3 - 6 have been analyzed based upon frequencies, and/or variability found in the differences/similarities of each of the responses.

6.) The conclusions were drawn from the data and recommendations were made.

### CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are derived from this study. The conclusions are based upon the analysis of the data for this study.

**Conclusion.** The overwhelming criterion recognized by all participating boards in the selection of a new superintendent was the manner in which a candidate responded in the interview process. The responses during the interview were important whether the district was elementary, high school, or unit and whether the district was rural, suburban, or urban.

**Conclusion.** While the interview process and procedures were most important in the selection of a new superintendent, nearly 50% of the interviewees felt that not all board members had reviewed all the candidate information and prepared questions for the interview.

**Conclusion.** A review of candidate follow-up activities revealed that nearly 50% could not verify that contacts to listed references had been made. Visits to the final candidates' former communities were limited to the candidate selected



as a final check. Since all candidates had excellent recommendations in their credentials, boards tended to view such letters of less importance in the selection process..

**Conclusion.** The interviews revealed that the boards were unanimous in the position that after the full board discussed the candidates, the selection of the superintendent was clear. The boards also agreed that the selection of the superintendent was a decision of the total board.

**Conclusion.** Four of five of the most important criteria in the selection of a superintendent were based upon the candidate's ability to communicate during the interview. The communication skills required of the candidates included listening, verbalizing, and using body language to address questions presented by the board members.

**Conclusion.** The boards involved in the study overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of a candidate being an excellent communicator over an excellent problem solver.

**Conclusion.** The boards involved in the study

did not match their expectations and behavioral roles of the superintendency with the criteria utilized to select a superintendent.

**Conclusion.** According to the data the four urban school boards and the 14 high school boards involved in the study matched criteria and expectations of the superintendency the best in their respective categories.

**Conclusion.** The four urban districts according to the criteria data were prepared the most and completed the interview process with the most consistent agreement of members in the selection of a superintendent.

**Conclusion.** The candidate seeking an urban superintendency will need to respond well in the interview, he/she must exhibit self confidence while being interviewed; be a good listener to board questions; demonstrate good eye contact with board; display body expression and spontaneity of speaking while being interviewed; and be able to convince the board why he/she wants the position more than anyone else.

**Conclusion.** The candidate who will be more

likely to be selected as a suburban superintendent would have administrative experience and be a communicator first and problem solver second.

**Conclusion.** The candidate more likely to be selected as a rural superintendent would possess excellent communication skills, but must meet the boards expectations of being a sound business advisor and manager of school district funds.

**Conclusion.** The school boards that utilized the assistance of a consultant spent more time in the selection process than those who chose to complete the selection without assistance. The utilization of a consultant did cause the boards to spend more time in the selection process, however, there was no evidence that the additional time was spent in planning for the selection process or preparing for the interviews.

**Conclusion.** According to the data, only 8 of 93 1987 - 88 boards of education involved in the study had a female-majority, the female majority board existed primarily in the suburban and rural areas with the boards being only in elementary and small unit districts.

**Conclusion.** The female superintendent is more rare than the female-majority board of education in Illinois. Of the 93 boards of education participating in the study, only three female superintendents were chosen. Two female superintendents were employed for elementary districts and one for a unit district. The districts were all rural and had student populations of less than 200. Two of the employing boards were male-majority boards.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations resulting from study of the data include:

1. Boards of education should be able to identify and define the needs of the district.
2. Boards of education should be able to define the criteria to be used in the selection process based upon the identified needs of the district.
3. Boards of education should be prepared to define the process and procedure to be used in the interview process.
4. Boards of education should formulate and evaluate individually and collectively questions to be included in the interview process.
5. Boards of education choosing to utilize a consultant should choose a consultant who will be able to screen candidates, prepare boards for the interview process and assist in identifying district needs,

- establishing criteria, and developing interview questions and procedures.
6. Boards of education should recognize that the interview is only a part of the selection process; the board should investigate the past accomplishments of a candidate.
  7. Boards of education should consider a visit to a candidate's present community a must.
  8. Boards of education should ultimately work as a unit to synthesize the interview and follow-up data for each final candidate before a selection is made.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations are suggested for further research:

1. The development of training programs for board members in the process of selecting a new superintendent that includes but is not limited to:
  - a. defining the needs of the district

- b. establishing interview criteria based upon the district needs
  - c. establishing the interview procedure
  - d. preparing board members for the interview
  - e. conducting follow-up activities on candidates after the interview
  - f. developing group decision making skills when synthesizing the data gathered and making the best selection for the district.
2. A follow-up study of the same districts to determine if there is a relationship between the time spent in the selection process and the life of the superintendent selected in the district.
  3. A follow-up study of the superintendents selected for the 1987-88 school year to evaluate their perception of the position three years later.
  4. A companion study for the year 1990-91 to determine if the actual selection criteria have changed since 1987-88.

5. A study should be conducted of the major consulting firms as to the different assistances that are given and available to school boards in the process of selecting a superintendent.
6. A similar national study should be conducted identifying the criteria utilized by boards when selecting a woman for the superintendency.
7. A study should be conducted to determine the follow-up activities that are utilized by boards of education after the interview in the selection of a superintendent.



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**APPENDIX A**

AN ANALYSIS OF CRITERIA USED BY ILLINOIS SCHOOL  
BOARDS IN THE SELECTION OF A NEW SUPERINTENDENT  
DURING THE 1987-88 SCHOOL YEAR

BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Place an (x) on the appropriate blank.

1. Person completing the survey
  - a. Board President
  - b. President designee
2. Composition of the Board
  - a. Majority of Board is male
  - b. Majority of Board is female
3. District Demographics
  - a. Urban
  - b. Suburban
  - c. Rural
4. District Type
  - a. Elementary
  - b. High
  - c. Unit
5. Student Population
  - a. Less than 200
  - b. 201 - 500
  - c. 501 - 1000
  - d. 1001 - 1500
  - e. 1501 - 2000
  - f. Over 2001
6. Gender of Superintendent Selected
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
7. Contract Length
  - a. 1 year
  - b. Multiyear

8. Salary Range of Superintendent
- a. Under \$40,000
  - b. \$40,000 - \$49,999
  - c. \$50,000 - \$59,999
  - d. \$60,000 - \$69,999
  - e. \$70,000 and over
9. The selection process
- a. Board completed selection without any help.
  - b. Board completed selection with assistance of present superintendent.
  - c. Board completed selection with assistance of IASB.
  - d. Board completed selection with assistance of Regional Superintendent.
  - e. Board completed selection with assistance of outside consultant.
10. Approximately how much time did the Board spend on all aspects of the selection process?
- a. Less than five hours
  - b. 6 - 15 hours
  - c. 11 - 25 hours
  - d. 26 - 35 hours
  - e. 36 - 50 hours
  - f. Over 50 hours



SURVEY OF CRITERIA USED BY BOARD MEMBERS TO SELECT  
A SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

PART I. Recall the experiences you had in the  
1987-88 superintendent selection process.  
Select one of the following letter codes  
and place it on the blank before each  
statement to indicate the importance it  
had with you during the selection process.

-----

"VI" -- Very Important "I" -- Important

"U" -- Unimportant "VU" -- Very Unimportant

"ND" -- No Data for this type of experience

-----

- \_\_\_ 1. Candidate grooming and personal manner  
of dress
- \_\_\_ 2. Previous experience as a superintendent  
of schools
- \_\_\_ 3. Remarks of consultant(s) who helped  
during screening of candidates
- \_\_\_ 4. Age of candidate
- \_\_\_ 5. Marital status of candidate
- \_\_\_ 6. Number of candidate's children and ages
- \_\_\_ 7. Grades received in college courses
- \_\_\_ 8. Content of personal reference letters
- \_\_\_ 9. Appearance and content of application  
letter
- \_\_\_ 10. Manner in which the candidate responded  
to interview questions
- \_\_\_ 11. Salary candidate made in last position
- \_\_\_ 12. Sense of humor and wit displayed by  
candidate
- \_\_\_ 13. Self-confidence exhibited by candidate  
during interview
- \_\_\_ 14. Ways in which candidate listened to  
board member questions
- \_\_\_ 15. The eye contact candidate had with  
interviewers
- \_\_\_ 16. Candidate spontaneity of speaking and  
use of body expressions
- \_\_\_ 17. Background checking of candidate in  
former position(s)

- \_\_\_ 18. General physical and mental health appearance
- \_\_\_ 19. Reason(s) for wanting the district superintendency
- \_\_\_ 20. Concern expressed for student academic achievement in district
- \_\_\_ 21. Religious and moral preference statements of candidate
- \_\_\_ 22. Candidate interest in different extra-curricular offerings of the school district
- \_\_\_ 23. Recognitions and awards that candidate had received in past experiences
- \_\_\_ 24. Way in which candidate reacted when discussing salary and benefits of the superintendent position
- \_\_\_ 25. Number and types of publications that candidate had written
- \_\_\_ 26. Past background in speech making appearances
- \_\_\_ 27. Candidate inquiry of how competent and satisfied board members were with present school district personnel
- \_\_\_ 28. Research studies that candidate had completed or worked with others
- \_\_\_ 29. Ways in which candidate clarified the different superintendent duties expected in the community

PART II. To each of the following  
superintendency behavioral roles, select  
one of the letter codes and place it on  
the blank space before it to indicate  
the importance you placed upon it.

---

"VI" -- Very Important      "I" -- Important

"NI" -- Not Important

---

1. To be a member of a local civic, or  
service organization
2. To demonstrate a strong school  
leadership image to the community
3. To become affiliated with one local  
church body
4. To handle the stressful situations  
associated with school personnel, board  
of education members, and school  
patrons
5. To annually review and follow through  
on the evaluation procedures and data  
with the board of education for the  
superintendent of schools position
6. To present sound accountability  
recommendations to the board of  
education which may be unpopular to  
some school patrons
7. To be the verbal and written  
spokesperson for the school district
8. To be the man in control of the school  
district and operate it as he sees fit
9. To be a consistent and fair evaluator  
of school personnel
10. To display sharp thinking and speaking  
ability to school personnel, board  
members, and community partonage
11. To keep board of education members  
informed of pending business between  
scheduled board meetings
12. To be a sound business advisor and  
manager of school district funds

- \_\_\_ 13. To be the curriculum leader of the school district program of studies
- \_\_\_ 14. To supervise and make recommendations for needed changes in school buildings and facilities
- \_\_\_ 15. To be an active individual in local political activities
- \_\_\_ 16. To delegate full building responsibility to principals and hold them accountable for their decision-making
- \_\_\_ 17. To draft new and recommend changes in existing school board policies

As a follow-up, I will be interviewing approximately 50% of those returning questionnaire to further verify the results. If I may contact you for an interview, please complete the following:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did you read and study the application materials supplied by the final candidates?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you formulate questions that you believed needed answers from each final candidate?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you ask questions of candidates whose answers served as important information to you in your preference decision-making?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Was your support/non-support position for each candidate already determined before you met them?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. After the introductory remarks were made (within 5 minutes) did you make up your decision on each candidate. The rest of the interview time was spent noting data to "back-up" your decision?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did it take you nearly the entire interview session (within 45 - 60 minutes) to decide to support/non-support each candidate?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you deliberately postpone making a support/non-support decision about each candidate until you had met all of them?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. After each board member who had visited the superintendent candidate's former school community and shared this information did you then make up your mind of support/non-support?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Were you influenced most by the written letters of recommendation by former school board members and school patrons?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

10. Were you comfortable with your decision-making position and if not did you perceive that most of the board members were favoring a certain candidate, ... so you went along with them?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. Our your first impressions usually the best, so do you stay with those impressions of each candidate?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you put your confidence in those persons who had experience in selecting individuals who had job responsibilities such as the superintendent of schools?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Did your support/non-support decision on each candidate become clear when all board members discussed the different candidate interview data and related it to the superintendency responsibilities?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Did your choice of the superintendency candidates express the ideas and values that were important to you?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Did you learn more about the candidate when conversing with him on a one-to-one basis than when all board members were present?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Did you make one or more telephone call(s) to persons who knew of the final candidate(s) abilities and past work experiences?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B



# Allison-Bristow Community Schools

513 Birch Street  
Box 428  
Allison, Iowa 50602

301

Member of the Big Iowa Conference

George Maurer, Superintendent  
Telephone 319-267-2205

David Ghormley, K-12 Principal  
Telephone 319-267-2552

Board of Education  
Floyd Senne, Pres.  
Vernon Harms Jr.  
Kenneth DeBower  
Jerre Grefe  
Roger Wubbena

Bonnie L. Dralle  
District Secretary  
319-267-2205

August 26, 1988

Mr. Donald Kussmaul, Superintendent  
East Dubuque Unit District No. 119  
200 Park Lane Drive  
East Dubuque, Illinois 61025

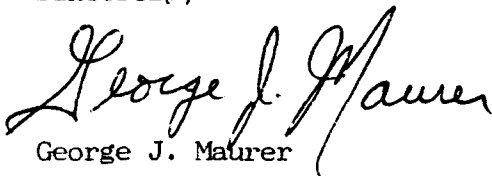
Dear Mr. Kussmaul;

Your request to submit your questionnaire to six Iowa superintendents and their board presidents to review and make recommendations has been completed.

In summarizing the data accumulated there is little doubt that the respondents had any difficulty with the content or style of the questionnaire.

If you have any additional question, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

  
George J. Maurer

**APPENDIX C**

East Dubuque Unit District No. 119

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

200 PARK LANE DRIVE

EAST DUBUQUE, ILLINOIS 61025

(815) 747-3188

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Dear School Board President,


Attached is a questionnaire which has been developed as part of a doctoral dissertation designed to analyze the criteria used by school boards in the selection of a new superintendent, one of the most important decisions confronting school boards. By September 30, 1987, more than 100 school districts in Illinois selected a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year. You and your school board are among the 100 who did so that year.

You are being invited to participate in this study to analyze the criteria used by Illinois School Boards in the selection of a new superintendent for the 1987-88 school year. Discovering the criteria considered important to school board members in that selection can be important to other school boards as well as to future superintendent candidates. The results of this study will be provided to the Illinois Association of School Boards for the benefit of its members.

Your cooperation in completing the enclosed questionnaire is respectfully requested. This questionnaire is designed to gather information on criteria used by you in your district's most recent superintendent selection process. All board presidents of school districts in Illinois who employed a superintendent for the 1987-88 school year will receive a copy of the questionnaire. With the limited number of questionnaires being distributed, your response is particularly important.

Thank you for your assistance with the study. Please return the questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope by \_\_\_\_\_ . All statements will be held in absolute confidence. Thank you for your participation.

Respectfully,

  
Donald E. Kussmaul

( ) Please send me a summary of the results.

(Please provide name and address if requesting summary.)

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Donald L. Kussmaul has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Mel Heller, Director  
Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola University of Chicago

Dr. Edward Rancic  
Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola University of Chicago

Dr. Howard Smucker  
Assistant Professor, Educational Research and Curriculum Development, Loyola University of Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

4/15/91  
Date

Mel Heller  
Director's Signature