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A STUDY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS AND
PRACTICES IN TEN SMALL EASTERN
NEBRASKA SCHOOLS

by

Henry J. Clinch

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the
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of the
UNIVERSITY OF OMAHA

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H. J. C.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

The Problem

This study was undertaken to determine the character of the administrative standards and practices in the small school system. More specifically, the problems involved were: 1. standards and practices of the superintendent as established by the board of education; 2. standards and practices of the board of education; 3. the relationship of the board of education to the public; 4. the relationship of the superintendent to the public; 5. the relationship of the board of education to the staff; and 6. the relationship of the superintendent to the staff.

The study is based on the belief that administrative standards and practices in the small school systems are often detrimental to educational progress. Improvement in this area would result in better educational opportunities of the youth of today.

Delimitations

The problem was limited to a study of the standards and practices of the administrative functions listed in an interview guide. A copy of this guide may be found in the Appendix. The interview method

was used in gathering information, and ten schools were assigned for the project. The ten schools were in a seven-county area in the extreme eastern part of Nebraska. The counties in which the schools were located were Colfax, Dodge, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders, Butler, and Platte.

Definitions

The "small school system" in this study refers to those schools located in towns having a population of 1,000 or less. The schools consist of both grade and high schools. The personnel includes a qualified administrator, from three to fourteen teachers, janitors, bus drivers, and cooks, depending on each individual case.

The "superintendent" is the administrator or chosen head of the school. He is a duly certified individual elected by the board of education to assume the duties and responsibilities which they have through custom and practice conferred upon him.

The "board of education" is an elected body of six citizens of the district who are generally the more influential, often more educated, prominent men and women of the community.

The "teacher" was a high school principal, grade principal, coach, or any one of the members of the faculty other than the superintendent.

History and Method of Investigation

The problem chosen for this study concerns the administration of ten small school systems. But, this is only a part of a larger study carried on by six students of the University of Omaha. The six interviewers were selected because of their interest in school administration. Each student conducted interviews in ten school systems making a total of sixty schools in the project. These schools were located in eastern and central Nebraska and western Iowa. In collecting the data, the superintendent, a schoolboard member, and two teachers were interviewed according to the guide found in the Appendix. The board member was generally the president or, if he was not available, one of the other influential members. The teachers interviewed were recommended by the superintendent as capable of furnishing valuable assistance. *6 new*

The superintendents, board members, and teachers in this particular study were found to be very cooperative. When informed of the problem being studied, they enthusiastically gave of their time and knowledge because of the contribution they might make toward bettering schools.

CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A considerable amount of research has been done relative to school administration; however, most of it seems to pertain to the larger school systems. A few of the studies are concerned with schools similar in size to those being surveyed here. A distinction was made whenever possible regarding the sizes of schools studied.

Gerstbacher and Luckmann¹ in 1951 made a questionnaire study to determine the following; (1) Are California superintendents chief executive officers in fact as well as legally; (2) How do California Boards of Education infringe upon the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent; and (3) What should be the relationship between the boards and superintendents.

The respondents to the questionnaire gave 258 instances of ways in which boards interfered in administration. The following five were cited most frequently: (1) used executive power; (2) personal favors were granted; (3) sympathized with complainants; (4) interfered with teacher selection; and (5) promoted interests other than education.

1. Charles A. Gerstbacher, Jr. and Lloyd D. Luckmann, Areas of Conflict in California School Administration, Pasadena, California; California Association of School Administrators, 1951.

In regard to personnel, superintendents were encouraged to give instances where boards overstepped their authority. This is shown to be a common area of board interference. Some board action is shown as "provincial", other as "political." Little conflict seems to exist between the boards and the administrators with respect to the curriculum. However, boards often like to assume budgetary responsibilities and in six instances took full charge of budgeting. Setting of salaries varies greatly. Purchasing creates many difficulties particularly in the smaller districts. Public relations are generally left to the school superintendent and his staff.

The relationship between the boards and the superintendents was given as follows; (1) Each should stay in his own area; (2) Decisions should be made in regular meetings; (3) the superintendent should keep the board of education informed, strive for unanimous decisions whenever possible, always try to be professional, cooperative, and business like; and, others.

The authors concluded (1) Superintendents are only becoming chief executive officers; (2) Schoolboards infringe upon duties and responsibilities of the superintendent; (3) Relationship between the boards and superintendents should be the same as given in professional literature.

The American Association of School Administrators² conducted an extensive survey prior to February, 1952. The questionnaire method was used for collecting the data. The schools were located in rural communities of 2500 population or less. In the selection of teaching personnel, (1416 superintendents replying) boards assumed responsibility in 5.6% of the cases. The superintendent made suggestions and the board made the final decision in 35.9% of the cases. In 58.5% of the instances, the superintendent made specific recommendations and the board appointed only those. However, in the selection of custodians (1363 superintendents replying) the percentages were 29.0%, 32.3%, and 34.5% respectively.

Another portion of the questionnaire that is related to the study shows the executive status of the superintendent in this same size school. In 78.5% of the cases he is recognized as the executive officer. Those that have clerical rather than executive duties number 1.5% and 20% of the superintendents found their position not fully established.

Benben³ in 1952 attempted to determine changing concepts of school administration as shown in school

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2. American Association of School Administrators, The American School Superintendent, 1952, p. 463.
 3. John S. Benben, Changing Concepts of School Administration as Revealed in City School Surveys, 1920-1950. Doctoral Dissertation, School of Education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 1952.

surveys. Twenty-one of these surveys dated about 1920, 1930, 1940, and 1950 were used. Recommendations were taken out and classified in twenty-five areas. These were then available for study.

The most significant change regarding the board of education was its position in the administration of the school and the need for clearer division of responsibility. The board of education is paying less attention to details of administration and more to the whole school district and its larger problems. Another changing concept is placing the administration and supervision of the schools in the hands of a chief executive.

The concept of the superintendency is also changing. The board of education has constantly been transferring more and more of the duties and the responsibilities to him. The position of the superintendent is still not always clear due to the overlapping of responsibilities of the executive and the board. The present superintendent should no longer deal with details of management but should direct personnel, finance, school plant, curriculum, and public relations.

Hazelbaker⁴ made a study to determine certain methods and procedures used in Arkansas by boards of education. Information blanks were sent to these boards and professors of educational administration throughout

4. N. D. Hazelbaker, An Analysis of Certain Methods and Procedures Used By Local Boards of Education in Arkansas, 1953.

the United States. Both professors and boards agreed upon certain practices and disagreed on others. Some of those are closely related to this study and were included.

Both agreed that the superintendent should perform the following administrative functions:

1. Interviewing applicants for all school positions
2. Planning courses of study
3. Assignments of teachers
4. Notifying teachers of dismissal
5. Preparation of budget
6. Supervision of extra-curricular activities
7. Purchasing supplies
8. Prepare order of business for board meetings
9. Establishing rules of conduct

They also agreed that the following functions should be performed cooperatively:

1. Promoting employees
2. Evaluation of the educational program
3. Preparation of salary schedule
4. Deciding upon policy for use of school facilities
5. Establishing board policies

Among the areas where little or no agreement was found between the practices of the boards and the opinions of the professors were:

1. Determining graduation requirements
2. Determining the curriculum

3. Expulsion of pupils
4. Selecting candidates for school personnel.

Hazelbaker concluded that boards of education in Arkansas should consider carefully certain practices which are considered to be good. Among those listed were:

1. Using different methods of evaluating the educational program
2. Preparation of a set of rules and regulations for the board of education

Morrison⁵ in 1922 stated that preparing certain reports, keeping certain records, issuing transfer cards and work certificates, and other routine matters were often done by the superintendent independently of the board of education. On the other hand, the board can act only upon the recommendation of the superintendent in matters of general supervision of the schools and with attendance laws. In a few states, the laws also include the areas of appointment of teachers, attendance officers, and other employees; suspension of pupils; purchase of textbooks and supplies; and the transfer, promotion, suspension, and dismissal of teachers.

Gilland⁶ and Reller⁷ reported that the history of the superintendency might be considered a struggle for

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5. J. C. Morrison, "The legal Status of the City School Superintendent", Warwick and York, 1922.
 6. T. M. Gilland, "The Origin and Development of the Power and Duties of the City-School Superintendent", University of Chicago Press, 1935.
 7. T. L. Reller, "The Development of the City Superintendency of Schools in the United States."

responsibility. Some outstanding superintendents gained recognition in some cities in the late 19th Century. They commanded the respect of both the community and the board of education. In other cities the superintendents are still struggling for a clear definition of responsibilities and a chance to be a real leader. Many would like to give the superintendent legal authority in every aspect of education but this might not be a completely sound solution. It is necessary that public opinion be developed to the effect that members of the board of education are legislators of policy and not administrators of schools.

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS AND PRACTICES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In order to determine the standards and practices of the small school systems, information was gathered by interviewing ten superintendents and ten board members. The superintendents were asked what their duties were in regard to the sixteen functions as shown in Table I. The extent to which the superintendent was given authority to carry out executive duties was shown by the divisions "minor," "cooperative," and "major." These terms as explained in the next paragraph were used throughout the study.

The superintendent whose duties were more clerical than administrative was shown as having "minor" authority. He generally had to obtain the consent of the majority of the board members before reaching decisions. If the board and the superintendent shared authority in making administrative decisions, their methods were shown to be "cooperative." When the superintendent was given authority to control administrative functions he was shown as having a "major" part.

Schools were listed numerically one to ten and the same number was used consistently throughout the study for each school.

An inspection of Table I, which shows the relation of the superintendent to the duties as stated

TABLE I
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND HIS RELATION TO
THEM AS VIEWED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

| Responsibility | Authority | Schools | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | | x | | | | | x | 3 |
| | Major | | x | x | | | x | x | | x | | 5 |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | x | | x | | | | x | x | x | | 6 |
| | Cooperative | | x | | | x | x | | | | | 3 |
| | Major | | | | x | | | | | | | 1 |
| 3. Determining salaries | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | x | x | 4 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | | | | x | | | | 4 |
| | Major | | | | x | | x | | | | | 2 |
| 4. Decisions on personnel policies | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | | | | | x | | x | 4 |
| | Major | | | | x | x | x | x | | x | | 5 |
| 5. Promotion, retention, & discharge | Minor | | | | | | | | x | | x | 2 |
| | Cooperative | x | x | x | | x | x | | | x | | 6 |
| | Major | | | | x | | | x | | | | 2 |
| 6. Preparation of budget | Minor | | | | | | | | | | x | 1 |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | | | x | x | | | 3 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | | 6 |
| 7. Purchases of supplies & equipment | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | x | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | x | | | 1 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | 7 |
| 8. Using school facilities | Minor | x | x | | | | | | | | x | 3 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | x | x | | | x | x | | 5 |
| | Major | | | | | | x | x | | | | 2 |
| 9. Interpreting school to public | Minor | | | x | | | | | x | | | 2 |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | | | x | | | x | 3 |
| | Major | | x | | x | x | x | | | x | | 5 |
| 10. Attacks against the school | Minor | | | | | | | | | | x | 1 |
| | Cooperative | x | x | x | | x | x | | x | x | | 7 |
| | Major | | | | x | | | x | | | | 2 |
| 11. Dealing with irate parents | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | x | 3 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | | | | | | | | 2 |
| | Major | | | | x | x | x | x | | x | | 5 |
| 12. Graduation requirements | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | | x | | x | x | | x | | x | 6 |
| | Major | | x | | x | | | x | | x | | 4 |
| 13. Rules of conduct | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | x | | x | x | 3 |
| | Major | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | | 7 |
| 14. Construction of the curriculum | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | | | x | x | x | | 5 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | | | | x | | 5 |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | x | | | | | x | 3 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | 7 |
| 16. Evaluation of school program | Minor | | | x | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | | | | x | | x | 3 |
| | Major | | x | | x | x | x | x | | x | | 6 |

by him, indicated that there was a wide variation in the ten schools. There is a definite trend for superintendents whose power was limited in one area, to be limited in many others also. The superintendents whose powers were more extensive in one area, also had more power in carrying out most of the other functions. To explain further, the superintendent in School 1 had a minor part in seven responses, a cooperative part in eight responses, and a major part in one responsibility. The superintendent in School 4 had a major part in fifteen responsibilities and the other function was cooperative. The other schools fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Table II was constructed by converting totals from Table I to percentages. This table indicated some interesting trends. While 50% of the superintendents had a major part in hiring teachers only 10% had the same power in hiring other personnel such as janitors, cooks, and bus drivers. The areas in which 50% or more of the superintendents had a major part were: hiring teachers; determining personnel policies; preparation of the budget; making purchases; interpreting the school to the public; dealing with irate parents; determining rules of conduct; constructing the curriculum; controlling extracurricular activities; and evaluation of the school program.

The responsibilities carried on in a cooperative way by one half or more of the superintendents are:

TABLE II

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEIR RELATION
TO THEM AS VIEWED BY THE SUPERINTENDENTS

| Duties and Responsibilities | Minor | Cooperative | Major |
|--|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. Hiring teachers | 20% | 30% | 50% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | 60% | 30% | 10% |
| 3. Determining salaries | 40% | 40% | 20% |
| 4. Personnel policies | 10% | 40% | 50% |
| 5. Promotions, retentions and discharge | 20% | 60% | 20% |
| 6. Preparation of budget | 10% | 30% | 60% |
| 7. Making purchases | 20% | 10% | 70% |
| 8. Using school facilities | 30% | 50% | 20% |
| 9. Public relations | 20% | 30% | 50% |
| 10. Attacks against the school | 10% | 70% | 20% |
| 11. Irate parents | 30% | 20% | 50% |
| 12. Graduation requirements | | 60% | 40% |
| 13. Rules of conduct | | 30% | 70% |
| 14. Curriculum | | 50% | 50% |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | | 30% | 70% |
| 16. Evaluation of program | 10% | 30% | 60% |
| | 17.5% | 38.1% | 44.4% |

promotion, retention, and discharge of teachers; using school facilities; attacks against the school; determining graduation requirements; and construction of the curriculum.

Sixty percent of the superintendents seemed to have very little to say about the hiring of personnel other than teachers. This could be explained somewhat on the basis that these people are generally local and sometimes unknown by the superintendents as they indicated in the interviews.

The results of Table II show that in the ten schools surveyed, the superintendents have a minor part in 17.5% of the cases; in 38.1% of the cases, the functions are carried on cooperatively; and, in 44.4% of the cases, the superintendents have definite executive powers.

Table III shows the responses of the ten schoolboards when they were asked what they felt were the superintendents' and boards' duties in regard to the given functions. A study of the table indicates that boards were somewhat less willing to allot power to the superintendents than the superintendents were willing to accept it. In School 1 the board wanted the superintendent to have a minor role in all areas except one and that one was to be done cooperatively. The statement of a board member in this particular school definitely reflects their attitude: "The trouble with superintendents is that they want to run the schools!" A glance at School 4 shows that the board gave the superintendent a major part in twelve of the responsibilities but wanted the rest carried out cooperatively. Again, the other schools fall somewhere between the two extremes.

TABLE III
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPERINTENDENTS'
RELATION TO THEM AS VIEWED BY THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

| Responsibility | Authority | Schools | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | | x | x | | | x | x | 5 |
| | Major | | x | | x | | | x | | | | 3 |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | x | | | | | x | x | | x | | 5 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | | | | | x | | x | 4 |
| | Major | | | | x | | | | | | | 1 |
| 3. Determining salaries | Minor | x | | x | | | | | x | | | 3 |
| | Cooperative | | x | | | x | x | x | | x | x | 6 |
| | Major | | | | x | | | | | | | 1 |
| 4. Decisions on personnel policies | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | 6 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | | | | | | | 3 |
| 5. Promotion, retention, & discharge | Minor | x | | | | | | x | | | | 3 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | x | x | | | | x | x | 7 |
| | Major | | | | | | | x | | | | 1 |
| 6. Preparation of budget | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | 8 |
| | Major | | | | | | | x | | | | 1 |
| 7. Purchases of supplies & equipment | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | | | x | 1 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | 7 |
| 8. Using school facilities | Minor | x | | x | | | | | x | | | 4 |
| | Cooperative | | x | | x | x | x | | x | x | | 6 |
| | Major | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Interpreting school to public | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | | x | | x | x | | | 4 |
| | Major | | x | | x | | x | | | x | x | 5 |
| 10. Attacks against the school | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | | x | | | x | x | x | 5 |
| | Major | | x | | x | | x | x | | | | 4 |
| 11. Dealing with irate parents | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | x | | x | | | | x | x | 4 |
| | Major | | x | | x | | x | x | x | | | 5 |
| 12. Graduation requirements | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | x | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | x | | | 1 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | 7 |
| 13. Rules of conduct | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 9 |
| 14. Construction of the curriculum | Minor | x | | | | | | x | | x | | 4 |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | x | x | | | x | | x | 6 |
| | Major | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 2 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | 8 |
| 16. Evaluation of school program | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Cooperative | | | | | x | x | | | | | 2 |
| | Major | | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | 7 |

Table IV was constructed in the same manner as was Table II. It shows the degree to which all the superintendents were given responsibility by the boards. One half or more of the boards of education felt that superintendents should have a major part in the following: making purchases; interpreting school to the public; dealing with irate parents; determining graduation requirements; rules of conduct; control of extracurricular activities; and evaluating the school program. But all felt that superintendents should not have full authority in these; promotions, retentions, and discharge; using school facilities; and determining the curriculum.

The areas that one-half or more of the boards wished carried out cooperatively were; hiring teachers; determining salaries; setting up personnel policies; promotions, retentions, and discharge; preparation of the budget; using school facilities; settling attacks against the school; and, constructing the curriculum. Fifty percent of the schoolboards felt that the superintendent does have a minor part in hiring personnel other than the teachers.

The results, then, are as follows; the boards of education thought that superintendents have major responsibilities in 38% of the cases, 42% are done cooperatively, and in 20% of the cases he has minor responsibility.

TABLE IV

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE SUPERINTENDENTS'
RELATION TO THEM AS VIEWED BY THE BOARDS OF
EDUCATION

| Duties and Responsibilities | Minor | Cooperative | Major |
|--|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. Hiring teachers | 20% | 50% | 30% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | 50% | 40% | 10% |
| 3. Determining salaries | 30% | 60% | 10% |
| 4. Personnel policies | 10% | 60% | 30% |
| 5. Promotions, retentions and discharge | 30% | 70% | |
| 6. Preparation of budget | 10% | 80% | 10% |
| 7. Making purchases | 20% | 10% | 70% |
| 8. Using school facilities | 40% | 60% | |
| 9. Public relations | 10% | 40% | 50% |
| 10. Attacks against the school | 10% | 50% | 40% |
| 11. Irate parents | 10% | 40% | 50% |
| 12. Graduation requirements | 20% | 10% | 70% |
| 13. Rules of conduct | 10% | | 90% |
| 14. Curriculum | 40% | 60% | |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | | 20% | 80% |
| 16. Evaluation of program | 10% | 20% | 70% |
| | 20% | 42% | 38% |

A comparison of Table II and Table IV reveals that there is a difference of opinion between the superintendents and the boards in relation to their duties. This is shown in Table V. The superintendents' point of

TABLE V
A COMPARISON OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' AND THE BOARDS'
VIEWPOINTS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

| Responsibility | Authority | Superintendent | Board |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | 20% | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 50% |
| | Major | 50% | 30% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | 60% | 50% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 40% |
| | Major | 10% | 10% |
| 3. Determining salaries | Minor | 40% | 30% |
| | Cooperative | 40% | 60% |
| | Major | 20% | 10% |
| 4. Decisions on personnel policies | Minor | 10% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 40% | 60% |
| | Major | 50% | 30% |
| 5. Promotion, retention, & discharge | Minor | 20% | 30% |
| | Cooperative | 60% | 70% |
| | Major | 20% | |
| 6. Preparation of budget | Minor | 10% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 80% |
| | Major | 60% | 10% |
| 7. Purchases of supplies & equipment | Minor | 20% | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 10% | 10% |
| | Major | 70% | 70% |
| 8. Using school facilities | Minor | 30% | 40% |
| | Cooperative | 50% | 60% |
| | Major | 20% | |
| 9. Interpreting school to public | Minor | 20% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 40% |
| | Major | 50% | 50% |
| 10. Attacks against the school | Minor | 10% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 70% | 50% |
| | Major | 20% | 40% |
| 11. Dealing with irate parents | Minor | 30% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 20% | 40% |
| | Major | 50% | 50% |
| 12. Graduation requirements | Minor | | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 60% | 10% |
| | Major | 40% | 70% |
| 13. Rules of conduct | Minor | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | |
| | Major | 70% | 90% |
| 14. Construction of the curriculum | Minor | | 40% |
| | Cooperative | 50% | 60% |
| | Major | 50% | |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | Minor | | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 80% |
| | Major | 70% | |
| 16. Evaluation of school program | Minor | 10% | 10% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 20% |
| | Major | 60% | 70% |
| 17. All responsibilities | Minor | 17.5% | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 38.1% | 42% |
| | Major | 44.4% | 38% |

view was that the boards had granted them more administrative authority than was actually the case. The superintendents felt that they had major jurisdiction in 44.4% of the decisions made, while the boards said they gave major authority in only 38% of such decisions.

The boards thought that 42% of the administrative decisions were made cooperatively, while superintendents were of the opinion that only 38.1% of the decisions were reached in that fashion. In 20% of the functions the boards felt the superintendent had a minor role while the superintendents felt they had such a role in only 17.5% of the cases. This table, therefore, shows that there was a misunderstanding between the boards and the school superintendents. Such misunderstanding leads to poor practices in school administration.

The superintendents and the boards were also asked what they thought would be the ideal situation in carrying out six of the duties and responsibilities as designated in the interview guide. Table VI reveals that the superintendents are a homogeneous group in so far as ideal practices are concerned. One hundred percent of the superintendents interviewed felt that they should have major authority in preparing the budget and making the purchases for the school. Ninety percent thought they should have major authority in interpreting the schools to the public, while 70% seemed to think they should have such authority in hiring teachers and controlling extracurricular activities.

TABLE VI

SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN IDEAL SITUATION AS HE THINKS THEY SHOULD BE

| Responsibility | Authority | Schools | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-------|------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | |
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | | | | | x | | x | x | | | | 30% |
| | Cooperative | x | x | x | x | | x | | | | x | x | 70% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | | | | | | x | x | x | | | | 60% |
| | Cooperative | x | x | | | | | | | | x | x | 40% |
| 3. Preparation of budget | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 100% |
| 4. Making purchases | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 100% |
| 5. Interpreting school to public | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 90% |
| 6. Extracurricular activities | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | | | | x | | | | | | x | 30% |
| | Major | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | | 70% |

The responses of the boards as to what they felt would be the ideal situation in the six areas are given in Table VII. Here again is an indication that the boards wished to retain some executive power.

Most of the boards felt that superintendents should prepare the budget, make the purchases, and have charge of the extra-curricular activities but realized that at present this situation does not always exist. Very few boards thought that superintendents should have only a minor part in any of the responsibilities mentioned but said that occasionally it is true in their own schools.

Table VIII was constructed by recording the percentages as given in Tables VI and VII. It shows the variation between what the superintendents and boards

TABLE VII
SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN IDEAL
SITUATION AS THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION THINK THEY SHOULD BE

| Responsibility | Authority | Schools | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | x | | | | | | | x | | | 20% |
| | Cooperative | | | x | x | | | | | | x | 30% |
| | Major | | x | | x | | x | x | | x | | 50% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | x | | x | x | | | | x | | | 40% |
| | Cooperative | | x | | x | | x | x | | x | x | 60% |
| | Major | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Preparation of budget | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | | | | | x | | | | | x | 20% |
| | Major | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | | 70% |
| 4. Making purchases | Minor | x | | | | | | | | | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | | | | | | | | x | | x | 20% |
| | Major | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | 70% |
| 5. Interpreting school to public | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | x | x | | | x | | | x | | x | 50% |
| | Major | | | x | x | | x | x | | x | | 50% |
| 6. Extra-curricular activities | Minor | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperative | | x | x | | | | | | | | 20% |
| | Major | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 80% |

TABLE VIII
A COMPARISON OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' AND THE BOARDS'
VIEWPOINTS AS TO WHAT THEY THINK ARE IDEAL
ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

| Responsibility | Authority | Superintendents | Boards |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------|
| 1. Hiring teachers | Minor | | 20% |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 30% |
| | Major | 70% | 50% |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | Minor | | 40% |
| | Cooperative | 60% | 60% |
| | Major | 40% | |
| 3. Preparation of budget | Minor | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | | 20% |
| | Major | 100% | 70% |
| 4. Making purchases | Minor | | 10% |
| | Cooperative | | 20% |
| | Major | 100% | 70% |
| 5. Interpreting school to public | Minor | | |
| | Cooperative | 10% | 50% |
| | Major | 90% | 50% |
| 6. Extra-curricular activities | Minor | | |
| | Cooperative | 30% | 20% |
| | Major | 70% | 80% |
| All six responsibilities | Minor | | 13.3% |
| | Cooperative | 21.7% | 33.3% |
| | Major | 78.3% | 53.3% |

felt was ideal. The superintendents thought that, as chief executive, they should have control of most of the six areas studied. However, boards felt that control by the superintendents should be limited in many cases.

The teachers interviewed in this study were asked to state some of the ways that administration of schools could be improved. Their answers as recorded in Table IX

TABLE IX
ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT AS
GIVEN BY TWENTY TEACHERS IN THE TEN SCHOOLS

| <u>Duties and Responsibilities</u> | <u>Frequency</u> |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Hiring teachers | 1 |
| 2. Hiring other personnel | |
| 3. Determining salaries | 7 |
| 4. Personnel policies | 20 |
| 5. Promotions, retentions and discharge | 1 |
| 6. Preparation of budget | |
| 7. Making purchases | 6 |
| 8. Using school facilities | |
| 9. Public relations | 10 |
| 10. Attacks against the school | |
| 11. Irate parents | |
| 12. Graduation requirements | |
| 13. Rules of conduct | 1 |
| 14. Curriculum | 24 |
| 15. Extra-curricular activities | 3 |
| 16. Evaluation of program | |

were varied but most of them were related to the sixteen areas as studied previously. This table shows that teachers believe that unsatisfactory conditions exist particularly in the construction of the curriculum and the formulation of personnel policies.

In addition to the materials concerning the practices in the ten schools, other pertinent data were gathered. Schoolboard members were asked in what areas superintendents were the weakest. Four said that they had known superintendents who were poor business managers and the same number thought that public relations was a failing point. Poor discipline was cited by three. Various other reasons were given but only one more need be mentioned here. One board member said that a superintendent failed to contact the board of education on various matters. Many factors determined the selection of a new superintendent of schools. Past record was given by seven, qualifications by four, personality by three, experience and good discipline by two, and availability and ability to get along with teachers by one each.

Most of the board members seemed to be at a loss when asked how Colleges and Universities were failing in training administrators though a few mentioned financial matters. One board member, however, said very emphatically, "They are training the superintendents to run the schools and that is bad." The superintendents on the other hand felt that more public relations work should be given and theory should be replaced by practice.

Table X shows the number of superintendents employed in the ten schools in the past ten years. Obviously, too many schools have had too many changes

TABLE X

| TENURE OF BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE PAST TEN YEARS | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Schools | Number of Superintendents | Tenure of Present Superintendent | Changes in Board |
| 1 | 5 | 1 | Few |
| 2 | 7 | 1 | Few |
| 3 | 3 | 5 | Frequent |
| 4 | 1 | 10 | Moderate |
| 5 | 4 | 4 | Frequent |
| 6 | 3 | 6 | Few |
| 7 | 2 | 9 | Moderate |
| 8 | 7 | 1 | Few |
| 9 | 2 | 3 | Frequent |
| 10 | 5 | 1 | Few |

for the best educational results. School 4 seemed to run true to form, indicating that the school system seemed to be well in hand as previous evidence shows. Tenure of the present superintendents runs all the way from one to ten years but none have stayed over that.

Also shown in Table X is the turnover in board membership. Whether the tenure of school superintendents and board members is directly related to the problem is a matter of debate and the facts shown here are inconclusive. Nevertheless, the schools with longest tenure of superintendents show moderate changes in the board. Perhaps that is a good situation. Nothing of any special significance is done in procuring new board members in any school. The greatest number (over 50%) of the board members were businessmen, dentists, doctors, postmasters,

and the like. About 30% were farmers. The group also included six housewives.

Each superintendent was asked how he spent his working hours at school. Each spent the greatest amount of time teaching. The time ranged from 30% in School 7 to 75% in Schools 1, 5, and 9. There is a great variation due partly to the different sizes of schools. All superintendents agreed that they would like more time for certain phases of school administration. Six would like to have more time for supervision, five for guidance, four for public relations, and four other reasons were given.

Until recently no effort had been made to outline schoolboard policies. Pressure from the State Department of Education has awakened the ten schools to the importance of constructing such policies and consequently eight out of ten schools were working on them while two had completed theirs. All superintendents generally attend all board meetings except in a few cases. This probably depends on whether the superintendent is to be reelected or whether he has the full favor of the board of education. The superintendent usually plans only a part of the board meeting.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study points out that superintendents would like to have more authority in the management of the schools. Boards of Education are reluctant to give administrative control to superintendents. The teachers, too, feel that there is a need for improvement of administrative standards and practices. The following generalizations indicate that the standards and practices in the schools studied conflict with educational advancement.

1. There is a great variation in the superintendents' authority in discharging responsibilities in the ten schools.
2. The superintendents believe that they have somewhat more authority than the boards of education have given them.
3. The superintendents would like to have more authority and control in administrative matters.
4. The boards of education think that superintendents should have more authority than they actually have but not as much as the superintendents want.
5. The teachers believe that administrative practices could be improved.
6. The average tenure of the superintendents in

the ten schools interviewed was 3.9 for the past ten years.

7. The majority of the superintendents spend half or more of their time in classroom teaching.

8. Schoolboard policies are being adopted in all the ten schools interviewed. None of them had written policies previous to this year.

9. Superintendents generally attend all of the board meetings.

Conclusions

In view of the facts presented in this study, it is safe to conclude that misunderstandings exist in all six phases of the problem. This results in confusion for the superintendent as the head of the school. If there is confusion in the mind of the superintendent then, it follows, that there must be confusion in the school as a whole. Consequently, 1. a newly appointed superintendent should know what his position will be in regard to these problems and 2. the way in which these six problems are solved would help us to evaluate school systems. Furthermore, additional studies in establishing good standards and practices in the small schools are advisable.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OMAHA UNIVERSITY PROJECT

Used in interviews of superintendents and board members

Personnel

1. In the selection of teachers (interviewing and hiring)
 - a. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?
 - b. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?
 - c. What are the duties of the members of the board of education?
 - d. What should be the duties of the board members in an ideal situation?
2. In the selection of non-teaching personnel (interviewing and hiring)
 - a. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?
 - b. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?
 - c. What are the duties of the members of the board of education?
 - d. What should be the duties of the board members in an ideal situation?
3. In preparing a salary schedule, or determining salaries for the coming year:
 - a. To what extent do the teachers have a voice?
 - b. What is the superintendent's responsibility?
 - c. What is the board's responsibility?
 - d. What difficulties arise with this problem of salaries, etc.?

Interview Guide continued.

4. A. Who makes the decisions in regard to personnel policies such as sick leave, arrangements for securing substitute teachers, and the fixing of working hours for the staff?
 - B. What misunderstandings, if any, exist as to the proper responsibilities of board and superintendent in these matters?

5. With respect to the evaluation of teaching skill, especially in relation to promotion, retention, and discharge:
 - A. How are judgments reached? Who participates and what methods are used?

 - B. Have you encountered any difficulties which may be attributed to the methods used?

FINANCE

6. In the preparation of the budget:
 - A. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?

 - B. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?

 - C. What are the duties of the members of the Board of Education?

 - D. What should be the duties of the Board members in an ideal situation?

7. In the purchase of supplies and equipment:
 - A. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?

 - B. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?

 - C. What are the duties of the members of the Board of Education?

Interview Guide continued.

- D. What should be the duties of the Board members in an ideal situation?

8. In permitting the use of building and school facilities for public gatherings:
 - a. Does the board have an established policy or does it decide each request on the basis of merit?

 - b. Are the arrangements for using facilities made with the superintendent or the board?

 - c. What problems have arisen over the use of buildings or facilities?

9. In the interpretation of the school to the general public:
 - a. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?

 - b. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?

 - c. What are the duties at present of board members in this area?

 - d. What should be the duties of the board members in an ideal situation?

10. In case of an attack against the school system from the community:
 - a. What would be the responsibility of the superintendent?

 - b. What would be the responsibility of the board members?

11. A. In case an irate parent approaches a board member:
 - a. What does the board member usually do?

 - b. In your opinion, what should he do?

Interview Guide continued.

- B. In case a patron demanding a special favor approaches a member of the board?

PUPILS

- 12. A. What part does the board play in determining policies governing the school entrance age, graduation requirements, etc.
- B. What is the superintendent's role in determining such policies?
- C. Are these arrangements satisfactory?
- 13. A. Who establishes rules of conduct?
- B. Who enforces these rules?
- C. If unfavorable community action develops, who accepts the responsibility for the policies in force?

CURRICULUM AND SUPERVISION

- 14. A. What is the board's role in determining what shall be included in the curriculum?
- B. What is the superintendent's role?
- C. To what extent do teachers have a voice in curriculum construction?
- 15. In the control of extra-curricular activities:
 - a. What are the duties of the superintendent at present?
 - b. What should the duties of the superintendent be in an ideal situation?
 - c. What are the duties at present of board members in this area?

Interview Guide continued.

- d. What should be the duties of board members in an ideal situation?
16. In evaluating the total school program:
 - a. To what extent are pupils, teachers, and patrons asked to consider the effectiveness of the school program?
 - b. How much does the board rely upon the superintendent to judge the quality of the school work?
 - c. To what extent does the board base its judgments upon school visitations?
 - d. To what extent do board members control the school program by making suggestions to teachers, janitors, etc.?
 17. Among the superintendents you have known, what seems to be the area or areas in which they are the weakest? (board only)
 18. If you had additional time, in what areas would you do more work? (supt. only)
 19. What determines the selection of a new superintendent of schools?
 20. In what respects are colleges failing to train school administrators well?

Vital Statistics Concerning School System

1. How many superintendents of schools has this school system had in the past ten years?
2. How many principals of the high school has this system had in the past ten years?
3. What has been the turn-over in school board membership in the past ten years?
4. How long have you been in your present position?

Interview Guide continued.

5. As a superintendent, how do you divide your time during the year as far as percentage is concerned:
- Personnel problems
 - Financial problems
 - Building and repair problems
 - Supervision of teaching
 - Working with the curriculum
 - Clerical work (letters, etc.)
 - Purchasing (interviewing salesmen, etc.)
 - Working with community groups
 - Other activities
6. What methods are used by the community to assure the selection of good school board members?
7. Schoolboard members are from what trade or occupation group?
8. Is there a record of policies determined by the board which is available to teachers and the general public?
9. To what extent does the superintendent attend board meetings?

Does he plan the program for the board meetings?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS, ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL, AND ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

1. From your experience as a teacher what do you consider some of the ways in which administration of schools could be improved?

(Provide a list of areas which is to be used only when the teacher has difficulty in responding.)

- 1. Curriculum
- 2. Public relations
- 3. Working hours for staff
- 4. Passing on information
- 5. Getting supplies