

A STUDY OF SELECTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
SUPERINTENDENTS AND SCHOOL BOARDS IN KANSAS

by

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INTRODUCTION

The success of any organization depends upon the people who do the work. A school system is especially dependent on the quality of its staff because of the complex relationships that develop among members of the school board, staff, teachers, and pupils. It is important that the superintendent and the school board establish a good working relationship, since this team is charged with the responsibility of managing the business affairs of the school system. How well this relationship works depends much on the communications between the school board and superintendent.

The school board works more closely with the superintendent than with any other staff member in the employ of the school district. How effectively the school board and superintendent work together determines in a large part how well the program is planned and executed. The board and superintendent must strive to maintain a wholesome understanding of this relationship.

There are several prerequisites for board-superintendent teamwork. First, the board and superintendent need to be aware of their separate responsibilities and avoid encroaching on the area belonging to the other. Second, there needs to be a clear understanding by both that concurrence is of utmost importance to the welfare of the schools. Third, honest differences of opinion must be acknowledged, and constant efforts should be made not to emphasize these differences in conducting the

district's business. Fourth, both the board and superintendent need to be careful to assign credit where due and admit errors when necessary. Boards should try for unanimous decisions most of the time and this can usually be more readily accomplished if all the facts are examined.

Failure to establish proper relationships and communications between school boards and superintendents will result in disruption of the educational program and poor community attitudes about the schools. Unless unity exists, a good educational program is difficult to develop and the children of the community become the losers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The superintendent and school board are charged with the responsibility of managing and caring for the business of a school system. This requires a good working relationship that gets things accomplished between the superintendent and school board. It is necessary to use several means of communication to carry out the operation of a school system properly.

The purposes of this study were: (1) to obtain information about the organization of Kansas school systems employing a school board and superintendent; (2) to find out what avenues of communication are being used in 1964 between the school boards and superintendents in Kansas; (3) to determine to what extent and for what the superintendent relies on the board; and (4) to obtain suggestions for improving the avenues

of communication between Kansas school boards and superintendents.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Superintendent and school board relationships is one of the major concerns of both school people and lay people today. Poor relationships have been one of the major reasons for superintendent dismissals in recent years. Kennan reports:

In a recent polling of state superintendents and state school boards associations' be executive secretaries regarding turnover during 1959-60 in 48 states, poor community relations, budgetary and financial problems, superintendent-board friction, pressure groups and poor staff relations were identified as the five most frequent factors in dismissals.¹

The degree and character of the relationships between school boards and school administrators in our country is variable. At one extreme is the superintendent who thinks that the less the board knows about school matters the better he will get along. At the other extreme, the school board actually runs the school and the superintendent is only a figurehead. Tuttle feels that:

The ideal situation lies midway between these two extremes, where the board, consulting with the superintendent, and on the basis of available facts, establishes the policies by which the schools will operate, and where the superintendent, with the full approval of the board, exercises his professional skill in administering these policies and in reporting their effectiveness or need for modification to the board.²

¹Richard B. Kennan, "Where Public Schools Administrators Come From", Georgia School Boards Bulletin, 9:2, June 1961.

²Edward Mowbray Tuttle, School Boards Leadership in America, p. 93.

There has been considerable material written on superintendent-school board relationships. Most books for school boards and for school administrators contain chapters about the relationships between the two. Reeves says:

The relationship places on the board the responsibility for defining the functions of the superintendent in general terms. It is not necessary that the board define his duties in great detail or that it formally approve all his actions. Of course the board's authorizations should be stated clearly and should place full responsibility upon the superintendent for administration of the schools, but such responsibility will be directly to the board.³

It is well to point out at this time some of the underlying principles and principal factors involved in these relationships. The relationships between a school board and its administrator, like most relationships in men's affairs are first a matter of human relations. In the best interest of the children and the community, it is essential that there be friendly good will and mutual respect between the board and the administrator which encourages frankness, confidence, and understanding concerning school matters. Dykes says:

Every superintendent has a right to expect the full support of his school board so long as he is superintendent. To be sure, there will be many differences of opinion and judgment between the board and superintendent; but these can be resolved so long as the differences are honest and sincere and so long as a feeling of mutual confidence and trust prevails.⁴

There are two facts that should be pointed out now. One side of this relationship is made up of a composite group of

³Charles Everand Reeves, School Boards, p. 265.

⁴Archie Dykes, "What Should a Superintendent Expect of His School Board", Georgia School Boards Bulletin, 9:2, April, 1961.

people who must act as a unit in dealing with the other side which is an individual.

Since the authority of the board of education is broad and significant, the quality of the educational program of any community depends to a great extent upon the quality of the board charged with the responsibility for the school.⁵

School affairs are public business and the board and administrator live in "glass houses", so to speak, with their actions and interactions in full view of the whole community. Dykes emphasizes, "School board-superintendent relationships are too often thought of as a one-way affair."⁶ There must be a team effort and there must be cooperation to have harmony. Whether their relationships are harmonious or not is almost immediately apparent to the public.

Another principle of board-administrator relationships is that they are never static, always changing for better or for worse. The main reason for this is the frequent turnover in school board memberships and superintendents. A board rarely goes more than a year or two without changes in its composition. Williamson reports in a recent study, "The average tenure in the United States for board members is six and seven years."⁷ Tuttle states from his research, "The average turnover in superintendents is about six years in the average community."⁸

⁵H. I. Van Haden, "Selecting V I P's", Ohio School Boards Journal, 5:12, July 1961.

⁶Dykes, op. cit.,

⁷Donald W. Williamson, "A School Board's Basic Obligation", The Boardman, 17:17, June 1963.

⁸Tuttle, op. cit., p. 97.

There is the principle that the board makes the policies and the administrator executes them, which is not simple and must be understood and agreed upon if harmonious relationships exist between the two. Conant says that:

Broadly defined, the function of the school board is to determine policy; the function of the administrative staff is to implement policy; school board members, or other lay groups, should make every effort not to interfere in matters that require professional competence.⁹

The board's policies need to be broad and general.

"The board makes broad general policies and its superintendent is to execute them with rules and regulations he and his staff make. The board should stay away from details."¹⁰

Wide diversity is to be found in the size and character of the job of the appointed school administrator.

The range is from superintendent in small districts of many kinds to city superintendents in centers of population which range in size from 2,500 or fewer up to the great metropolitan centers like New York and Chicago.¹¹

The relationships between a school board and its administrator differ in degree rather than in kind, and most of the observations which follow can adapt to any local situation.

The duties and responsibilities of the superintendent of schools are much the same in all states, but they vary somewhat depending on state laws concerning the functions of the local system, the size of the school system, and the form of organization.¹²

Once the administrator is selected the board should

⁹James B. Conant, "Functions of School Board", Georgia School Boards Bulletin, 10:7, October 1961.

¹⁰Phillip C. Wells, "What Does The Superintendent Expect From The Board?" School Board Notes (New Jersey), 6:6, April 1961.

¹¹Tuttle, op. cit. p. 95.

¹²Reeves, op. cit. p. 267.

proceed to establish friendly and effective working relations with the administrator. The greater the harmony of agreement within the board, the greater the cordiality and strength of its relationship with the administrator. "A major difficulty in superintendent-board relationships has been laxity in defining areas of operation involving the separate groups dealing with education in a local community."¹³

No member of the board has any legal authority to deal with the superintendent on an individual basis, and each member is obligated to abide by and uphold the adopted policies of the board regardless of how he voted.

As an individual, the board member has no legal status. He has no right to commit the other members of his board or the administration to any request made directly to him. He is a board member, in the strictest sense of the word, only when he is in a regular or special-called meeting."¹⁴

Tuttle points out from his study that from an official standpoint the board looks to its administrator for such things as:

1. Attendance at all board meetings except on occasions when his own status may be under consideration.
2. Preparation in advance of the agenda for board meetings.
3. Keeping the board minutes and their proper dissemination to the board and others.
4. Keeping of all financial records and other records of the district.
5. Advising the board as to the adoption or modification of policy.
6. Promulgation of the rules and regulations designed to carry out policy.

¹³Wells, op. cit. p. 5.

¹⁴Harry Gross, "Take Time To Listen", Ohio School Boards Journal, 5:16, May 1961.

7. Informing the Board as to how the instructional program in the schools is being carried out and a continuous evaluation of its success.

8. Preparation of a budget designed to support the educational program of the schools.

9. Recommendations to the board concerning all school personnel appointments, promotions, transfers, terminations, rewards and etc.

10. Working cooperatively with the board in the handling of all other regular and special activities and concerns of school operation.

11. Assisting the board in preparation of a annual report of the school district.

12. Assuming joint responsibility with the board for establishing and maintaining good public relations between school and community.¹⁵

The administrator expects the board to recognize him as a human being with all the strengths and weaknesses that are common to all. In the field of education his motives are for services that are sound and worthy. Tuttle states from his study that the superintendent may rightfully expect from the board:

1. Proper recognition of his importance as a professional educator heading up the school system of the community.

2. Acknowledgment of the "team" relationship between himself and the board with its resulting sense of belonging, sharing of responsibility, opportunities for growth and achievement, and credit for accomplishment.

3. Reasonable guarantees of his and his family's acceptance by the community.

4. Whole-hearted support of his application of the policies, rules, and regulations agreed on by him and the board.

5. Expectation that his function will include all items under the board's expectations of the administrator.

6. Sufficient administrative and clerical assistance.

7. Regard for the channeling of communications and complaints through the line of authority.

8. Condonement of some inevitable mistakes as long as they aren't repeated.

9. Freedom from approaches by board members seeking special privileges.

¹⁵Tuttle, op. cit., p. 97.

10. Provision for his attendance at important educational meetings.¹⁶

We say the most important elements in effective working relationship between a school board and its administrator are unity and harmony within the board itself. It is necessary that there be a clear agreement as to the respective functions of the board and the administrator. All policies, rules, and regulations must be written.

This is one of the most important projects that any board of education can undertake and requires good leadership on the part of the superintendent, teamwork by everybody involved (affected), and a considerable period of time for doing a good job.¹⁷

There needs to be a continuous growth in understanding by the board, superintendent, staff, and community of educational programs and potentialities in their local application and state-side and nationwide significance. "Developing written school board policies is a continuous process in that each policy must be periodically reviewed and made applicable to current conditions and circumstances."¹⁸

The superintendent must keep the board informed at all times. Some devices that are used are written periodic reports, newsletters, school visits, informal meetings, board participation on committees, memoranda, formal minutes, mimeographed letters and bulletins. "The board should require the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁷Mrs. M. B. Jones (ed.), "New Board Members Clinic", Georgia School Boards Bulletin, 11:3, March 1963.

¹⁸Ibid.

superintendent and his staff to make periodic reports."¹⁹

"The board will require such periodic reports as the board deems necessary to keep it properly advised."²⁰

Typical of the findings revealed by the study of the Louisiana Education Research Association are: Most of the 67 school boards in Louisiana regularly schedule meetings on a monthly basis. However, 7 boards had more than 24 meetings in the preceding year. One board had 30. Sixty-four boards make regular use of newspaper as a means of informing the public. Some boards also use radio programs, brochures, television, and personal appearances regularly as a means of explaining school programs to the public.²¹

"The free flow of communication between the board and the school administrator is a must to insure a harmonious school program."²²

A genuine liking and respect on the part of the board and the administrator each for the other is most important in an effective working relationship.

The superintendent feverently hopes that the board makes a sincere effort to understand its proper role in the cooperative enterprise of public education, and after the role is defined to stay continuously and consistently in that role."²³

Both must reflect integrity, sincerity, and devotion to the goal of the best possible education for all the

¹⁹John A. Hunter, "Duties and Responsibilities of a School Board Member", The Boardman, 17:4, April 1963.

²⁰Illinois Association of School Boards, "Statement of Principles and Procedures for Effective Cooperation Between a Board of Education and Its Chief Administrator", The Boardman, 15:18-20, June 1961.

²¹Donald E. Shipp, "School Board Policies Study", The Boardman, 15:14, April 1961.

²²Williamson, op. cit., p. 18.

²³Wells, op. cit., p. 7.

children of all the people, and for the people themselves whenever they seek added enlightenment"²⁴

In order to have an effective working relationship between the superintendent and the school board there must be a free flow of communication between them so each will be adequately informed. Some of these means of communication previously mentioned were selected and each superintendent was asked to rank his use and the degree of use in his system. Although optional, he was also encouraged to give other related information.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Superintendent- "The chief executive and advisory officer charged with the direction of schools in a local school administration unit."²⁵

School Board- "The school district agency created by the state, but generally popularly elected on which the statutes of the state place the responsibility for conducting the public education systems."²⁶

Relationship- "An association or connection in some known and definite manner, thereby providing a basis for transfer of training."²⁷

²⁴Tuttle, op. cit., p. 99.

²⁵Carter V. Good, Dictionary of Education, p. 538.

²⁶Ibid., p. 482.

²⁷Ibid., p. 457.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

Books, periodicals, and journals were searched to see what had been written in the area under study. The material obtained from the readings and research was used to formulate a questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to selected superintendents of Kansas schools. Data were secured from superintendents as to size of system; type of school board; tenure and experience of the school board members; number of school board meetings; experience of the superintendent; and the relationships and avenues of communication between superintendents and school boards. Data obtained were analyzed, organized, and reported.

The superintendents who composed the sample were selected from the 1963-64 Kansas Educational Directory. Persons listed in the directory that had the title or part title of superintendent were listed alphabetically as they appeared in the directory. This proved to be 339 persons. Because of the large number this list was divided into three alphabetized categories according to the size of the faculty. The size categories chosen were: under 30, 30-80, and over 80 members on the faculty. The categories contained 198 school systems with faculties under 30, 97 systems with 30-80 faculty members, and 44 systems with more than 80 on the faculty.

In order to limit the size of the sample one superintendent out of every five was selected. To obtain a starting point for the interval in each category, numbers from one to five were

placed on slips of paper and drawn for each category. The resulting beginning numbers were: the number two in the "under 30" category; the number one in the "30-80" category; and the number five in the "over 80" category.

The names were then selected from each alphabetized category starting with the number drawn in each category and every fifth superintendent was selected. For example in the small category, superintendents who were in school systems with thirty or fewer faculty members, the numbers 2, 7, 12, 17, etc. were selected.

All questionnaires were placed in the mail on January 6, 1964. Returns started coming in on January 8.

A portion of the study required value judgments on the part of each respondent. This was accomplished by asking respondents to rank some specific responses. For purposes of comparison, analysis of item responses in such areas was handled as follows: a value was assigned to each superintendent's rank. A value of one was assigned to the rank of 1; two was assigned to the rank of 2; three was assigned to the rank of 3, and etc. Each item of communication was given an arithmetically computed value according to rank, was then divided by the number of superintendents who ranked it. This allowed for the fact that not all superintendents ranked each item. The lowest value indicated the greatest importance.

THE STUDY

The study was based on results received from the questionnaires returned. Fifty-seven or 84 per cent of the superintendents selected to participate returned completed or partially completed questionnaires.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF SUPERINTENDENTS REPORTING

Faculty size	Number sent out	Number returned	Per cent of return*
less than 30	40	30	75
30-80	20	19	95
over 80	8	8	100
total	68	57	84

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table I shows the number of questionnaires sent out in each size category and the number and per cent who returned questionnaires.

A total of 68 questionnaires were sent to superintendents of Kansas schools. Of this total, fifty-seven or a little less than eighty-four per cent responded. Nearly all the replies were received within a few days after they were mailed. The respondents answered all the questions adequately in most cases.

Superintendents in Kansas School Systems

Enrollment of the school systems surveyed. The results of the survey indicated that the enrollments, of the systems which were surveyed, covered a large range.

TABLE II
ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS SURVEYED

Enrollment	Number of systems	Per cent*
less than 100	11	19
100-400	17	30
400-700	5	9
700-1000	8	14
over 1000	16	28
totals	57	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table II shows that 30 per cent of the superintendents answering were in school systems which enrolled between 100 and 400 students; 28 per cent provided leadership in school systems which enrolled more than 1,000 students; almost 20 per cent were superintending in systems which had a student population of less than 100 and nearly 15 per cent worked in schools which enrolled between 700 and 1,000 students. It should be noted, however, that less than 10 per cent of the

sample was made up of superintendents who administered to schools that enrolled between 400 and 700 students. No conclusion was evident between size of student enrollment and response to the study as both ends of the continuum was represented in the relatively high response range.

Employers. Responses from the questionnaires revealed that the superintendents were employed in school systems which were operated by boards which Kansas statutes designate as boards of education, school boards, and boards of school trustees.

TABLE III
TYPE OF EMPLOYER

Type of employer	Number employed by each	Per cent*
School Board	27	47
Board of Education	29	51
Board of School Trustees	1	2

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table III indicates the type of board by which the superintendent was employed. The largest number of superintendents were employed by a board of education which was found to be twenty-nine or 51 per cent. Almost as many were employed by a school board, twenty-seven or 47 per cent. Only one superintendent was employed by a board of school trustees.

Number of school board members. The results of the survey indentified a rather wide range in number of members on a school board. The range found was from a low of three members on 14 of the reporting boards to a high of six members on 24 of the boards.

TABLE IV
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

Number of board members	Number of each size	Per cent*
3	14	25
5	19	33
6	24	42
7	0	0
12	0	0
totals	57	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

The fact that 42 per cent of the superintendents were employed by six member boards correlates with the fact shown in Table III that twenty-nine or 51 per cent were employed by boards of education. Only fourteen or 25 per cent reported as few as three members on the school board. Five member boards in about one-third of the districts indicated that superintendents were employed in the larger Common School Districts.

School board member experience. Superintendents reported that more than one-third of school board members had three or fewer years experience, while only one-fifth had more than nine to twelve years.

TABLE V
NUMBER OF TERMS BOARD MEMBERS HAD SERVED

Number of terms	Number of members	Per cent*
1	86	34
2	74	29
3	44	17
more than 3	52	20
totals	256	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table V points out that of the 256 school board members, studied, eighty-six or 34 per cent were in their first term of office. Only fifty-two or 20 per cent had more than three terms experience. This revealed the fact that a large number of the school board members had only a small amount of experience on their job--eighty per cent were in their first three terms of office.

Number of years administrative experience. Average tenure of superintendents in the school systems studied was found to be seven and one-half years. Almost one-third had

been in their positions for three years or less while more than one-fourth had been in the same position eleven or more years.

TABLE VI
NUMBER OF YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION

Number of years in position	Number of superintendents	Per cent*
1	5	9
2	8	14
3	5	9
Total 3 yr. or less	18	32
4	2	3.5
5	9	16
Total 5 yr. or less	29	51.5
6	2	3.5
7	7	12
8	3	5
9	0	0
10	1	2
Total 10 yr. or less	42	74
11 to 39 yr.	15	26
Average for all 7½ yrs.	57	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest one half per cent.

Table VI denotes that five superintendents were in their first term in the school systems surveyed. This represents nine per cent of the superintendents questioned. There were eighteen or 32 per cent of the superintendents in the first three years in their present position. Over one half of the superintendents, twenty-nine or 51.5 per cent, had five years

or less experience in their present position. Only fifteen or 26 per cent had been in their respective position over ten years.

The study findings indicated the average number of years of previous administrative experience prior to present position was a little over six years. When added, an average tenure in administration of schools of more than thirteen years was indicated.

TABLE VII
NUMBER OF YEARS OF PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

No. of years in past position	Number of superintendents	Per cent*
Started in present position	13	23
Five years or less	6	11
From six to ten years	11	19
From eleven to twenty years	12	21
More than twenty years	15	26
Average 6 yr.		

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table VII shows that there were fifteen or 26 per cent of the superintendents with more than twenty years administrative experience before accepting their present position. Almost as many, thirteen or 23 per cent, began their

administrative experience in their present positions. Almost two-thirds of the responding superintendents came to their present position with six or more years of administrative experience.

Number of school board meetings. Responses from the questionnaires revealed the fact that the monthly board meeting was the most common practice. Reason for this finding could be logically found in the legal requirement for first and second class cities and the leadership role of these districts in the state. The districts studied indicated that the school boards in these districts met in regular and special session more than seventeen times a year.

TABLE VIII
NUMBER OF REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Frequency of regular meetings	Number	Per cent*
Once a week	0	0
Every two weeks	2	4
Monthly	55	96
Quarterly	0	0
totals	57	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table VIII reveals that fifty-five or 96 per cent of the superintendents reported that their boards met monthly. Only

two or 4 per cent met every two weeks.

Table IX points out that thirty-three or 60 per cent of the school boards had from one to five special meetings per year.

TABLE IX
NUMBER OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS HELD LAST YEAR

Number of meetings	Number	Per cent*
0	4	7
1-5	33	60
6-10	8	15
11-30	10	18
Average $5\frac{1}{2}$ meetings		

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

There were only four or 7 per cent of the school boards that had no special meetings. The average number of special board meetings held last year in the systems surveyed was five and one half meetings. Superintendents indicated that the business of the average Kansas school district required more than seventeen meetings per year. A significant majority of such meetings were regular and were scheduled monthly.

Superintendent School Board Communication

Means of communication with the school boards. Information to this point indicates need for communication between

superintendents and school boards. The following tables indicate the importance of the selected means of communication used by the superintendents. The section of the study which follows attempts to identify and evaluate described communications media and techniques in relation to the problem of superintendent school board relationships.

Superintendents identified the board meeting agenda to be the most used means of communication between the superintendent and school board. All of the selected means of communication were used to some extent by a number of the superintendents.

Table X shows the number of superintendents who ranked each means of communications and how each one ranked it. In addition to those ranking their use of means of communication, there were twelve superintendents who did not rank choices but indicated the ones used. For example: there were thirty-six superintendents who ranked board meeting agenda as used and an additional seven superintendents who checked it as used but gave no number rank. This gave a total of forty-three indicating they made use of board meeting agenda.

The superintendents indicating board meeting agenda as used, consistently ranked formal minutes, annual reports, informal meetings, personal appearances, administrative bulletins, and written periodic reports as much used.

No conclusion was evident between the size of school, superintendent's experience, or size and type of the school

TABLE X

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total no. of supt. ranking	No. marking without ranking
Means of communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
Administrative bulletins	4	4	4	2	4	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	20	2
Written periodic reports	2	2	6	3	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	4
Newsletters	1	3	2	5	2	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	18	1
Annual reports	0	2	7	4	6	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	26	5
Memorandums	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	13	2
School visits	0	5	3	4	2	1	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	22	1
Informal meetings	6	6	4	2	0	1	1	3	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	28	8
Board participation on committees	0	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	12	0
Formal minutes	3	5	7	4	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	28	6
Mimeographed letters	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	17	2
Brochures	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	10	2
Radio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	2	0	8	0
Television	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	8	0
Personal appearances	9	5	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	23	3
Board meeting agenda	1	9	9	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	7

board and the extent of use or number used of various media of communication.

There were two superintendents who did not indicate use of any of the selected means of communication.

TABLE XI
NUMBER INDICATING USE OF SELECTED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Number of media used	Number of supt. indicating use	Per cent*
0	2	3
1-5	35	61
6-10	10	18
11-15	10	18
total	57	100

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table XI reveals that over sixty per cent indicated use of one to five selected media of communication between the superintendent and school board. More than one-third of the superintendents indicated use of six to all of the selected media of communication.

In table XII, a value was assigned to each rank, number one was assigned to 1, number two assigned 2, number three assigned 3, and etc. The total rank value was arithmetically computed and divided by the number of superintendents who ranked the item. In table XII the smaller the number, the more important the means of communication.

TABLE XII
 VALUE OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL BOARDS

Means of communication	Computed value
Administrative bulletins	4
Written periodic reports	4
Newsletters	5
Annual reports	5
Memorandums	7
School visits	5
Informal meetings	5
Board participation on committees	8
Formal minutes	4
Mimeographed letters	7
Brochures	11
Radio	10
Television	13
Personal appearances	3
Board meeting agenda	2

Table XII shows that superintendents considered board meeting agenda as the most valuable and most used means of communication. The computed value for board meeting agenda being two. This was followed rather closely by personal appearances, with a computed value of three. Others that were ranked with some importance were administrative bulletins, written periodic reports, and formal minutes. The means of communication

identified to be least important in rank value were television, radio, and brochures.

Extent of use of means of communications. Table XIII supports the facts brought out in table XII. Responses showed a range from about one-half of those reporting "seldom using" television to about two-thirds of those reporting board meeting agenda as "much used".

Table XIII shows that of the fifty-three responding on board meeting agenda, thirty-eight or 72 per cent indicated it as "much used" as a means of communication between the superintendent and the school board. Others that were ranked often as "much used," were personal appearances, formal minutes, and superintendents annual reports.

Those that received often the designation of "seldom used" were television, radio programs, and brochures. This again parallels the indicated facts in table XII.

The information from which tables X, XI, XII, and XIII, were developed described the average superintendent's communication with his board as follows: His most important and most used means of communication with his board was the board meeting agenda. The other means important and much used by him were formal minutes, superintendent's annual reports, personal appearances, and informal meetings. There were several means of communication which were used occasionally and had some importance. These were written periodic reports, administrative bulletins, school visits, newsletters, superintendent's memorandums, board participation on committees, and mimeographed letters. Those

TABLE XIII
USE OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

Means of communication	Much used	Used some	Seldom used	Total response
Administrative bulletins	11	19	19	49
Written periodic reports	14	21	17	52
Superintendent's newsletters	9	14	24	47
Superintendent's annual reports	27	14	10	51
Superintendent's memorandums	12	21	16	49
School visits	5	23	19	47
Informal meetings	23	18	11	52
Board participation on committees	3	20	18	41
Formal minutes	37	14	3	54
Mimeographed letters	11	17	20	48
Brochures	3	8	28	39
Radio programs	1	2	26	29
Television	0	0	27	27
Personal appearances	23	13	9	45
Board meeting agenda	38	14	1	53

having very little use or importance as means of communication were shown to be brochures, television, and radio programs.

Functions the superintendent expects from the board. The

above tables show that there is a considerable amount of communication between the superintendent and school boards. This team, the superintendent and the school board, have certain responsibilities to carry out the job. The following table indicates some of the functions that the superintendents expected from their boards. Approval of the budget and electing and rejecting employees were found to be common expectations mentioned.

TABLE XIV
ACTIONS THE SUPERINTENDENT EXPECTS FROM THE BOARD

Action	Number indicating	Per cent*
Making the policies	47	82
Planning of school service	15	26
Evaluation of the quality of educational service rendered by the schools	12	21
Adopting salary schedules	51	88
Electing or rejecting employees upon recommendation	52	91
Approval of courses to be offered	24	42
Approval of methods used in the educational program	9	16
Approval and adoption of the annual budget	52	91
Selection of textbooks	4	7
Approval of outside use of school facilities	38	67
Purchasing of operating supplies	7	12
Major purchases and improvements	45	79

*The per cents in the above table were rounded to the nearest whole number.

It was found that in the area of curriculum; that is, approval of courses to be offered, approval of methods used in the educational program, selection of textbooks, and evaluation of the quality of educational service rendered by the schools there was a varying degree of expectation by the superintendent of the board. Forty-two per cent of the superintendents expected the boards approval of courses offered, while just sixteen per cent expected any approval of methods used in the educational program, only seven per cent expected boards to select textbooks, and twenty-one per cent expected evaluation of the quality of educational service rendered by the schools.

In the area of finance there was much expected from the boards. Ninety-one per cent of the superintendents expected approval and adoption of the annual budget and eighty-eight per cent expected the board to adopt salary schedules. Seventy-nine per cent expected board action for major purchases and improvements, while just twelve per cent expected any action on requests for operating supplies. Most superintendents relied on the board action in employee selection, ninety-one per cent indicated this expectation. Eighty-eight per cent of the superintendents expected the boards to make the policies, while just twenty-six per cent expected the board to plan school service. As for approval of outside use of school facilities there were sixty-seven per cent who expected this from their boards.

The fact that sixty-seven per cent of the superintendents expected the boards to approve outside use of school facilities might indicate that there was some passing of responsibility.

Suggestions for improved communication. In naming one action which would most improve communications between superintendent and board members, a variety of answers were received. Some of the more often suggested actions were one extra board meeting a month, training and education of board members, more newsletters, written policies, a good board meeting agenda, and personal appearances. The one action mentioned the most as an improvement was an extra board meeting each month.

In general the results of this study indicated that the average Kansas superintendent had six years of previous administrative experience prior to the present position in which he has served seven and one half years. Tuttle reported the average turnover in superintendents to be about six years. The average tenure for the Kansas superintendents surveyed was somewhat higher. His system's enrollment ranged from 100 to 400 pupils. The superintendent was employed by a board of education with six members of which five had had three terms or less experience on the board. Williamson reported the average tenure for board members in the United States to be six and seven years. The superintendent and school board held about eighteen meetings last year with about one-third of them being special board meetings. Findings by the Louisiana Education Association revealed most of the boards in Louisiana held regular monthly meetings with several systems holding additional special meetings.

The board meeting agenda was found to be the most used of the selected means of communication. There was good use being made of several of the selected means of communication but there was a desire on the part of the superintendents to improve the means of communication between himself and the school board in the school systems surveyed. Kennen indicates superintendent-board friction as one major reason for superintendent dismissals in recent years. As revealed by the study, superintendents relied to the greatest extent on the school boards for approval and adoption of the annual budget and the electing and rejecting of employees upon recommendation. Tuttle points out that from an official standpoint the board looks to its administrator for preparation of board meeting agendas, assistance in preparation of the annual budget and recommendations concerning electing and rejecting of employees. As pointed out in the study the desire for a better informed board was an important need, and could best be accomplished by an extra board meeting a month and better board meeting agendas.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was: (1) to obtain information about the organization of Kansas school systems employing a school board and superintendent; (2) to find out what avenues of communication are being used in 1964 between the school boards and superintendents in Kansas; (3) to determine to what extent and for what the superintendent relies on the board; and (4) to obtain suggestions for improving the avenues of

communication between Kansas school boards and superintendents.

Results of the study revealed the average school system's enrollment to be from 100 to 400 pupils. It had a board of education with six members of which five had had three terms or less of experience on the board. The superintendent had had about thirteen years of administrative experience with about one-half of it in present position. The superintendent and school board held about eighteen meetings during the last year with about one-third of them being special board meetings.

It was found that the most used of the selected avenues of communication between the superintendent and the school board was board meeting agenda. Others that were indicated by the superintendents to be "much used" were formal minutes, superintendent's annual reports, informal meetings, personal appearances, administrative bulletins, and written periodic reports.

It was established that the superintendents relied to the greatest extent on the school boards for approval and adoption of the annual budget and the electing and rejecting of employees upon recommendation, with ninety-one per cent reporting that they relied on their board for each of these. Other important functions expected from the board were adopting salary schedules, making policies, approving major purchases and improvements, and giving approval for outside use of school facilities.

Generally, results of this study indicated that there

are several "much used" avenues of communication between superintendents and school boards, but there is need of better informed boards. A factor mentioned by several was the need of additional board meetings.

This study identifies the need for superintendents and school boards to study the means of communication used and ones that could be utilized for improved communication. Such study could provide actions that would improve and increase communications between this team and thereby improve school systems.

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APPENDIX

421 West Vine
Junction City, Kansas
January 6, 1964

Mr. _____
Superintendent of Schools
_____, Kansas

Dear Mr. _____:

I am attempting to find what avenues of communication are used between school boards and school superintendents in Kansas schools. I am planning to use this material to complete my master's study at Kansas State University. This study is under the direction of Dr. O. K. O'Fallon, Professor, School of Education.

Those of us in education realize the vital importance of communication between the school boards and school superintendents. Your help is needed in finding out what avenues of communication are most used in Kansas schools today. Will you cooperate in the investigation by completing the attached questionnaire at your earliest convenience? Please return it in the stamped addressed envelope.

No names or school districts will be identified with the results of the study.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Macy

A SURVEY OF SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL BOARD
AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION

1. What is the enrollment in the school system which you serve as administrator?
 - a. less than 100..... _____
 - b. 100 - 400..... _____
 - c. 400 - 700..... _____
 - d. over 1,000..... _____

2. By which of the following are you employed?
 - a. School Board..... _____
 - b. Board of Education..... _____
 - c. Board of School Trustees..... _____

3. How many members are there on the school board where you are administrator?
 - a. 3..... _____
 - b. 5..... _____
 - c. 6..... _____
 - d. 7..... _____
 - e. 12..... _____

4. Identify the board members in the system you serve according to number of terms they have served on the board. (How many in each.)
 - a. 1st..... _____
 - b. 2nd..... _____
 - c. 3rd..... _____
 - d. more than 3..... _____

5. How long have you been executive officer of the school board in this school district?..... _____

6. How long had you been an administrator prior to your present position?..... _____

7. How often are regular school board meetings held?
 - a. once a week..... _____
 - b. every 2 weeks..... _____
 - c. monthly..... _____
 - d. quarterly..... _____

8. How many special school board meetings were held last year?..... _____

9. Which of the following do you feel is the most effective means of communication with the school board you serve as administrator? (Rank in order of importance)

- a. Administrative bulletins..... _____
- b. Written periodic reports..... _____
- c. Newsletters..... _____
- d. Annual reports..... _____
- e. Memorandums..... _____
- f. School visits..... _____
- g. Informal meetings..... _____
- h. Board participation on committees... _____
- i. Formal minutes..... _____
- j. Mimeographed letters..... _____
- k. Brochures..... _____
- l. Radio..... _____
- m. Television..... _____
- n. Personal appearances..... _____
- o. Board meeting agenda..... _____
- p. Other (pleast list) _____

_____ : _____
 _____ : _____

10. What one action could be taken that you feel could most improve communications between the superintendent and the school board?....

(If you have any material concerning this action would you please send it with the completed questionnaire?)

11. For which of the following do you, as executive officer of the school board, rely on the school board?

(Mark as many as apply. Comment on any you desire on an attached sheet of paper.)

- a. Making the policies..... _____
- b. Planning of school service..... _____
- c. Evaluation of the quality of educational service rendered by the schools..... _____
- d. Adopting salary schedules..... _____
- e. Electing or rejecting employees upon your recommendation..... _____
- f. Approval of courses to be offered..... _____
- g. Approval of methods used in the educational program..... _____
- h. Approval and adoption of the annual budget..... _____
- i. Selection of textbooks..... _____
- j. Approval of outside use of school facilities..... _____
- k. Purchasing of operating supplies..... _____
- l. Major purchases and improvements..... _____
- m. Other (please list) _____

_____ : _____
 _____ : _____

12. Rank these avenues of communication between the superintendent and board as to degree of use in your situation:

1. - much used
2. - used some
3. - seldom used

(circle one applying)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Administrative bulletins | 1 2 3 |
| b. Written periodic reports by superintendent | 1 2 3 |
| c. Superintendent newsletters | 1 2 3 |
| d. Superintendent annual reports | 1 2 3 |
| e. Superintendent memorandums | 1 2 3 |
| f. School visits | 1 2 3 |
| g. Informal meetings | 1 2 3 |
| h. Board participation on committees | 1 2 3 |
| i. Formal minutes | 1 2 3 |
| j. Mimeographed letters | 1 2 3 |
| k. Brochures | 1 2 3 |
| l. Radio programs | 1 2 3 |
| m. Television | 1 2 3 |
| n. Personal appearances | 1 2 3 |
| o. Board meeting agenda | 1 2 3 |
| p. Other (please list) | |
| _____ | 1 2 3 |
| _____ | 1 2 3 |
| _____ | 1 2 3 |

Check here if you desire summary results of the study.

(_____)

A STUDY OF SELECTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
SUPERINTENDENTS AND SCHOOL BOARDS IN KANSAS

by

ROBERT E. MACY

A. B., Kansas Wesleyan University, 1958
Salina, Kansas

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1964

The superintendent and school board are charged with the responsibility of managing and caring for the business of a school system. This requires a good working relationship that gets things accomplished between the superintendent and school board. It is necessary to use several means of communication to carry out the operation of a school system properly.

The purposes of this study were: (1) to obtain information about the organization of Kansas school systems employing a school board and superintendent; (2) to find out what avenues of communication are being used in 1964 between the school boards and superintendents in Kansas; (3) to determine to what extent and for what the superintendent relies on the board; and (4) to obtain suggestions for improving the avenues of communication between Kansas school boards and superintendents.

A questionnaire was sent to sixty-eight superintendents representing all sizes of school systems in Kansas. Replies were received from fifty-seven or 84 per cent of the total number.

Results of the study revealed the average school system's enrollment to be from 100 to 400 pupils. The typical school district had a board of education with six members of which five had had three terms or less of experience on the board. The superintendent had had about thirteen years of administrative experience with about one-half of it in present position. The superintendent and school board held about eighteen meetings during the last year with about one-third of them being

special board meetings.

It was found that the most used of the selected avenues of communication between the superintendent and the school board was board meeting agenda. Others that were indicated by the superintendents to be "much used" were formal minutes, superintendent's annual reports, informal meetings, personal appearances, administrative bulletins, and written periodic reports.

It was established that the superintendents relied to the greatest extent on the school boards for approval and adoption of the annual budget and the electing and rejecting of employees upon recommendation, with ninety-one per cent reporting that they relied on their board for each of these. Other important functions expected from the board were adopting salary schedules, making policies, approving major purchases and improvements, and giving approval for outside use of school facilities.

Generally, results of this study indicated that there are several "much used" avenues of communication between superintendents and school boards, but there is need of better informed boards. A factor mentioned by several was the need of additional board meetings.

This study identifies the need for superintendents and school boards to study the means of communication used and ones that could be utilized for improved communication. Such study could provide actions that would improve and increase communications between this team and thereby improve school systems.