

Summer 1982

Opinions of Washington State School Administrators Concerning Federal and State Paperwork Requirements

Jerry Alan Harding
Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harding, Jerry Alan, "Opinions of Washington State School Administrators Concerning Federal and State Paperwork Requirements" (1982). *All Master's Theses*. 1678.
<https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd/1678>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@cwu.edu.

OPINIONS OF WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
CONCERNING FEDERAL AND STATE
PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

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

by
Jerry A. Harding
August, 1982

OPINIONS OF WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
CONCERNING FEDERAL AND STATE
PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS

by

Jerry A. Harding

August, 1982

The opinions of school principals and superintendents were assessed concerning federal and state paperwork requirements. A questionnaire was used to obtain the opinions of eighty school administrators. The results showed that school administrators expend a considerable amount of time completing federal and state paperwork. The cost of completing paperwork was found to represent a large portion of the education budget in Washington State. Related problems are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.	v
Chapter	
<hr/>	
1. INTRODUCTION.	1
THE PROBLEM	1
Statement of the Problem.	1
Importance of the Study	2
Scope and Limitations of Study.	2
Procedures of Study	2
Definitions of Terms	2
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.	3
Introduction.	3
Paperwork Burden to Our Society	3
Paperwork Burden to Schools in the United States	5
Paperwork Burden to Schools in Washington State	8
Summary of Related Literature	12
3. PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY.	16
The Questionnaire	16
Data Gathering.	16
Treatment of Data	17
4. ANALYSIS OF DATA.	18
Introduction.	18
Data Results.	18

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter	Page
Question 1.	18
Question 2.	18
Question 3.	19
Question 4.	19
Summary of the Results of Question 4.	22
Question 5.	23
Summary of the Results of Question 5.	26
Question 6.	26
Question 7.	27
Question 8.	28
Question 9.	28
Question 10	29
Question 11	29
Question 12	30
Comments.	31
Summary of Chapter 4.	33
Major Findings.	33
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	36
Summary	36
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	40
APPENDIX	
A. PAPERWORK QUESTIONNAIRE	43
B. COVER LETTER.	46

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Average Number of Hours Expended per Week in the District Office in Order to Comply With State and Federal Reporting Requirements.	20
II. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the Secondary Principal's Office in Order to Comply With State and Federal Reporting Requirements.	21
III. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the Elementary Principal's Office in Order to Comply With State and Federal Reporting Requirements.	21
IV. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the District and Building Offices in Order to Comply With State and Federal Reporting Requirements.	22
V. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by the Superintendent Personally in Order to Comply With State and Federal Reporting Requirements.	24
VI. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by Secondary Principals in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements .	24
VII. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by Elementary Principals in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements .	25
VIII. Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by Administrators in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements. . . .	26
IX. Percentage of Requested Data that is Duplicate Data Supplied by Other Forms.	27
X. Percentage of Requested Data that Could be Eliminated Without Reducing Accountability. . .	27
XI. Percentage of Forms Designed in Such a Way as to Cause Confusion or Extend Time Required to Complete	28

LIST OF TABLES (continued)

Table	Page
XII. Percentage of Respondents that Indicated Sufficient Time was Allowed to Complete Forms	29

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of school administrators concerning state and federal paperwork requirements.

The list of job responsibilities of a school administrator can be long. If the administrative position is to be understood to its fullest, each administrative responsibility must be understood. One such responsibility is that of completing federal and state paperwork. State and federal governments have become increasingly more involved with education at the local level (2,3). Use of state and federal funds has demanded accountability. Accountability requires paperwork. The impact of paperwork on school district administrators has not been clear. This study sought to obtain a more complete understanding of that aspect of the school administrative position.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of Washington State school administrators concerning state and federal paperwork requirements.

Importance of the Study

It is important that all aspects of an administrative position be understood. Completing paperwork comprises part of the school administrator's work load. Assessing administrator's opinions about paperwork will help provide for a more complete understanding of the administrative position.

Scope and Limitations of Study

This study assessed the opinions of superintendents and principals in thirty public school districts in the State of Washington. Opinions expressed cannot give precise results, but can indicate a general trend.

Procedures of Study

This study employed the descriptive self-report research procedure based upon a questionnaire sent to superintendents and principals in thirty public school districts in Washington State. Districts used in the sample were randomly selected from the 1981-82 edition of the Washington Education Directory.

Definitions of Terms

Opinion. An opinion is the expression of a formal or professional judgement.

Paperwork. Paperwork is written work forming an incidental but necessary part of some work or job.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature concerning federal and state paperwork requirements. This review is comprised of four sections. The first deals with federal paperwork as seen by our society as a whole. The second section reviews literature concerning paperwork requirements for schools across the United States. The third part deals with the impact of federal and state paperwork on Washington State schools. The chapter then concludes with a summary of all related literature.

Paperwork Burden to Our Society

There is no doubt that federal paperwork is costly. In 1977, the annual cost of paperwork was estimated at \$100 billion, or about \$500 for each person in our country (19).

The effect that federal reporting requirements have on businesses can be enormous. The chairman of Eli Lilly and Company, a pharmaceutical manufacturer, states that his firm fills out 27,000 government forms a year at a cost of \$5 million (4). The chairman of Standard Oil estimates that his firm spends \$21 million per year on government forms (4). Harvard University once employed 26 people to fill out

government grants and contracts (4). The manager of a small radio station in New Hampshire required four months filling out a forty-five pound application in order to renew the station's license with the Federal Communications Commission (10). It has been estimated that twenty-five percent of state highway planning costs come from paperwork (17). A Tennessee hospital administrator testified to the Commission on Federal Paperwork that government paperwork adds \$4 to the daily cost of a hospital room (17).

The amount of paperwork put out by our government can be voluminous. Each year Washington, D. C., generates enough paper to fill Yankee Stadium fifty-one times. It costs taxpayers \$18 billion per year simply to print, sort, and file these two billion pieces of paper. The Internal Revenue Service alone has 13,745 different forms and form letters. A complete set of government guidelines required by general contractors may cost \$6,000, and would reach seventeen feet high if stacked one on top of another (10). Paperwork required to start one federally aided highway project in Illinois reached ten feet high (14). Our government definitely puts out and requires much paperwork.

The amount and cost of federal paperwork is one of the reasons why the federal bureaucracy is held in low regard, and why Congress does poorly in opinion polls, according to Abelson (1).

In response to the public outcry of the paperwork burden, Congress set up the Commission on Federal Paperwork.

This commission was authorized by Public Law 93-556 in 1974, and set up in 1975 under the Ford Administration (1). When the Commission on Federal Paperwork began in 1975, it was given a \$10 million budget and a two year mandate for producing recommendations that would eliminate needless paperwork while assuring that the federal government would still receive needed information. The Commission on Federal Paperwork made 770 recommendations, 50 percent of which were implemented. It was estimated that by 1977, \$3.5 billion was saved (19). The Commission on Federal Paperwork believes that \$30-\$40 billion could be saved with determined effort.

Paperwork Burden to Schools in the United States

There is no doubt that reporting requirements have increased over the years. Federal education programs are now a common component in our public schools. Surveys have shown that between 74 percent and 92 percent of secondary schools participate in federally funded programs (2:72, 3:51).

Federal programs require accountability. In 1973, the Office of Education estimated that it required participants in federal programs to complete 43.4 million separate data items, and to spend 2.2 million staff hours in the task (20).

The responsibility of completing federally required forms is ultimately directed to each individual school district in the United States. Each district may delegate responsibility in its own manner. The Rand Corporation

recently found that school principals average 25 percent of their time, or ten hours per week, on paperwork (6). Rand also found a wide range in time estimates, and attributed this to three factors: (1) the number of state and federal programs the principal must administer; (2) how well the district screens the paperwork from the principal; and (3) whether the principal has other administrative staff to help.

In 1977 Abramowitz and Tenenbaum (2) surveyed 1,399 secondary school principals and found that 42.4 percent of the respondents felt that the federal paperwork problem was either serious or very serious. Another 44.8 percent saw it as a minor problem and 12.7 percent said it was no problem at all.

Federal programs are being utilized by most districts in the United States. To what extent federal services are utilized by an individual school, and ultimately by its students, lies in the hands of the administrators, primarily the principal. The students in a school are affected by the principal's ability to integrate federal requirements into the regular instructional programs (6).

Paperwork requirements have increased over the last twenty years, since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has been in effect. Providing these data requests costs school districts \$230.2 million annually (13), and has changed the principals job by adding new requirements for instructional management, public consultation, and paperwork.

Many other factors have increased the administrator's paperwork requirements. Robison (16) reports that the public's increased insistence on fiscal responsibility has required more paperwork. The schools have taken on certain social responsibilities which require paperwork; feeding, health care, and recreation. Legal implications have shown the need for extensive documentation when working with students, teachers, and parents (16).

The federal government, recognizing the need to reduce the paperwork burden, not only for educators but also for society as a whole, set up the Commission on Federal Paperwork in 1975. The Commission's 1977 report regarding federal paperwork in education (18) suggested that \$190 million could be saved by cutting paperwork in education. The Commission found six basic complaints from states, elementary and secondary schools, and higher education institutions:

1. Late feedback; late, or absence of, feedback on information supplied to federal agencies.
2. Insufficient lead time; absence of sufficient lead time to respond to a survey, form, application, or proposal.
3. Duplication of data collection.
4. Unrealistic data requests; some data not readily available, requests are excessive, or data may not be used.
5. Inconsistent terminology.
6. Cost of data collection.

The 1978 Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act contained a section on paperwork

control. The purpose of the new section was to reduce data requests by mandating federal data coordination and approval procedures. Pogrow (13) found two basic problems in this legislation; Congress excluded itself from the provisions, and it assumes that the problem is the volume of paperwork. Pogrow suggested that volume could be reduced by new technology in information processing. This legislation, however, would only slow the growth of increased data usage according to Pogrow.

It appears that substantial amounts of Federal paperwork requirements will be with school administrators as long as federal programs are utilized. The effect of the paperwork on the administrative position is not entirely clear. More research is needed in this area.

Paperwork Burden to Schools in Washington State

Washington State Legislators have been concerned with the reduction of paperwork requirements in schools. In 1979, RCW 28A.41.165 was amended to read:

Provided further, that the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make every effort to reduce the amount of paperwork required in administration of this chapter; to simplify the application, monitoring and evaluation processes used; to eliminate all duplicative requests for information from local school districts; and to make every effort to integrate and standardize information requests for other state education acts and federal aid to education acts administered by the Superintendent of Public Instruction so as to reduce paperwork requirements and duplicative information requests (15).

In December, 1979, State Representatives Richard "Doc" Hastings and Dan McDonald began a survey on paperwork

requirements of administrators in Washington State public schools. On June 23, 1980, Representatives Hastings and McDonald issued a press release concerning a summary of their findings. This author contacted Hastings and McDonald, and was subsequently provided with the preliminary results of the survey.

Representatives Hasting and McDonald listed eleven pertinent findings in the preliminary results of the survey (5).

1. The survey contacted the superintendents of 14 school districts in Washington State.
2. The 11 responding superintendents represented a total student enrollment of 134,891, or approximately 18 percent of the total K-12 enrollment in Washington State.
3. The questionnaire focused on paperwork requirements imposed by federal and state government on certificated and classified staff.
4. The average hours per week spent by administrative staff on paperwork was 5.9 hours, or 14 percent of the work week. This computed to \$16.47 million per biennium. Federal paperwork required 1.8 hours per week at a cost of \$4.7 million per biennium. State and federal paperwork completion by administrative staff required about .8 percent of the 1979-81 biennial budget for K-12.
5. Non-administrative certificated staff, including teachers, spent a total of 6 percent of the work week on state and federal paperwork, at an estimated cost of \$82.56 million for the 1979-81 budget.
6. Classified staff spend an average of 24 percent of the work week on state and federal paperwork.
7. Almost 10 percent of the state's biennial K-12 budget is spent on the completion of state and federal paperwork.

8. School districts named the Basic Education Program and ESEA Title I as the biggest generators of paperwork, followed by the Vocational Education Program, Food Services, and Special Education.
9. Nine of the 11 responding superintendents stated that no reduction of paperwork had been noticed since the 1979 legislative mandate.
10. An informal survey indicated that private school administrators spend less than two hours per week on paperwork, or 5 percent of the work week.
11. It was stressed that the survey results were estimates, but it could be assumed that about 10 percent of a school district's total budget is spent on the completion of state and federal paperwork.

Representatives Hastings and McDonald (5) found that the cost of paperwork to schools in Washington was \$250 million during the 1971-81 budget period. Based on 1979 figures, the total dollars spent on state and federal paperwork works out to \$338.33 per pupil (\$258,489,230 divided by 763,997).

Representative Hastings, along with Representatives Taylor, Valle, Maxie, Ehlers, and Pruit, later sponsored House Bill 153 (7), first read January 26, 1981. It directed the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to implement a program of paperwork reduction. Although this bill did not become law, it would have required Senate and House committees to provide a paperwork impact statement for all legislation affecting education. House Bill 153 would also have required the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify the least amount of information required for school district

reporting of:

...pertinent state and federal legislation affecting education and shall, upon passage of any new legislation relating to the common schools, establish minimum reporting requirements consistent with the policy set forth...(17).

The State Legislature is not the only organization that has worked to reduce the paperwork burden. The Washington Association of School Administrators appointed the Paperwork Reduction Committee that began deliberations in March 1979. In 1980, committee chairman, Gene Hertzke (21) offered four recommendations to Dr. Frank Brouillet:

1. OSPI should develop policy statements governing paperwork and forms management under its control.
2. OSPI and WASA should jointly initiate a meeting with legislative leadership to inform them of the extent of the burden associated with each law and to sensitize them toward the need to control the rule and regulation writing stages where extensive reporting requirements are imposed.
3. OSPI in consultation with WASA should develop a model program through which the local district could examine its own paperwork problems.
4. OSPI and other state agencies should require a "Paperwork Impact Statement" from its personnel whenever a new request for information or data is proposed.

One year later, in March 1981, the WASA Paperwork Reduction Committee issued a memo (23) to school district superintendents. The memo stated that significant progress was taking place at the state level.

With the help of Dr. Frank Brouillet and his staff at the Office of Public Instruction, hundreds of forms have either been consolidated or eliminated and a monitoring system for initiating new forms has been installed at the State Department.

In the Annual Form Schedule (12) for 1980-81, 231 separate forms were listed. The following year, 1981-82, 187 individual forms were included in the Annual Form Schedule. This is a reduction of 44 forms in one year. Clearly, the paperwork burden is being reduced through the efforts of our legislators, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Association of School Administrators, and others.

This study concerned itself with state and federal paperwork requirements, but it must be understood that individual districts generate paperwork for their own use. The WASA Committee on Paperwork Reduction recognized this and has guidelines (22) available to assist districts in dealing with self-inflicted paperwork,.

Hastings and McDonald found that paperwork is costly. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has reduced the number of forms, hoping to reduce the amount of time required to complete paperwork. Hasting and McDonald's research (5) indicated that administrators had not noticed a reduction in paperwork since 1979 when RCW 28A.41.170 mandated a reduction, however, this survey was conducted only a year later. More research is needed in order to determine current trends of administrative paperwork requirements in Washington State.

Summary of Related Literature

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of Washington State school administrators concerning federal

and state paperwork requirements. This chapter has reviewed literature related to government paperwork requirements of United States citizens as a whole, paperwork requirements of United States schools generally, and finally, the paperwork burden to Washington State school administrators.

Many Americans are aware of paperwork required by the federal government. Most individuals must file a tax return each year. Small and large businesses are held closely accountable for their affairs. Local development projects must contend with an abundance of paperwork. No one is immune from the paperwork burden.

The Commission on Federal Paperwork was charged with reducing paperwork. The CFP estimated the annual cost of federal paperwork at \$100 billion. The CFP made about 770 recommendations, one-half of which were implemented (19), saving \$3.5 billion annually. It was hoped that another \$10 billion could be saved (1).

The federal government recognizes that a problem exists concerning its reporting requirements, and through the work of the Commission on Federal Paperwork progress is being made in this area.

The federal government has become increasingly more involved in education (2:72, 3:51). With the use of federal funds has come a demand for accountability. Increased accountability has resulted in increased paperwork. The Commission on Federal Paperwork recognized this growth in paperwork and suggested that \$190 million could be saved by

improving reporting procedures.

In Washington State the cost of meeting federal and state paperwork requirements amounts to nearly 10 percent of the state's biennial K-12 budget. School administrative staff spend 14 percent of their work week on state paperwork and another 4 percent on federal paperwork. Although these figures are from only 11 superintendents representing 18 percent of the K-12 enrollment, it should be recognized that a significant portion of the school budget is affected by reporting procedures.

Washington State school administrators have recognized the paperwork problem as evidenced by the involvement of the Washington Association of School Administrators' Paperwork Reduction Committee with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The State Legislature has involved itself with the paperwork issue. In 1979, it passed an amendment to RCW 28A.41.165, mandating a reduction in paperwork. Representatives Hastings and McDonald followed this up with a survey in 1979-80, the results of which indicated a need for continued effort.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has worked very diligently in reducing paperwork. An actual reduction in the number of required forms has taken place since the legislative mandate in 1979. It appears, however, that school administrators have not noticed a real decrease in paperwork demands. Continued efforts by

administrators, the legislature, OSPI, and researchers are desirable if more progress is to be expected.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

The Questionnaire

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of public school administrators concerning state and federal paperwork requirements.

This study employed the descriptive, self-report research procedure. A questionnaire was used to obtain the desired data (See Appendix A, page 43).

Data Gathering

The questionnaire was sent to the superintendents and principals of 30 districts in the State of Washington. The districts were selected randomly from the 1981-82 Washington Education Directory.

Questionnaires were sent out to the 111 superintendents and principals in the selected districts on March 19, 1982. Received from this first mailing were 60 responses. The follow-up letter was sent out on June 18, 1982, resulting in 20 additional questionnaires being returned.

A total of 80 questionnaires were returned, representing a 72 percent return rate. Of the 80 respondents, 32 were elementary principals, 28 were secondary principals and 20 were school superintendents.

Treatment of Data

The respondents to the questionnaire were divided into three main groups; elementary principals, secondary principals, and superintendents. Each of these three groups was again divided into two sub-groups; those administrators in districts with an enrollment under 1,000 FTE students, and those administrators in districts with enrollment over 1,000 FTE. The responses of each group and sub-group are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The questionnaire contained twelve questions plus a section reserved for comments. In this chapter, each question is discussed and the responses of the three main groups were analyzed and compared.

Data Results

Question 1. The first question asked the respondent to indicate his or her position. Twenty of the respondents were superintendents, 28 were secondary principals, and 32 were elementary principals.

Question 2. The second question asked each respondent to cite the total student FTE in his or her district. The purpose of this question was to determine the relative size of the districts responding.

All twenty superintendents answered this question. These districts ranged in size from 8 to 5,200 students. Fourteen of the districts enrolled fewer than 1,000 students. There were 6 superintendents reporting from districts with more than 1,000 students. The total K-12 enrollment in all twenty school districts was 19,556.

The 28 secondary principals responded to this

question. The secondary principals were divided into two groups; those in a district with a total student FTE under 1,000, and those with more than 1,000 students. Of the 28 respondents, 20 held a position in a district with 1,000 or more students, while 8 worked in a district with fewer than 1,000.

The 32 responding elementary principals were also divided into two groups. Principals with more than 1,000 students in the district numbered 26, while 6 were from smaller districts.

Question 3. Question 3 asked each administrator to report the student FTE in his or her building. This question did not pertain to superintendents.

The 28 secondary principals reported a total enrollment of 16,290 students, with a range of 87 to 1,650 students per secondary building.

All 32 elementary principals answered this question. A total of 12,801 students were represented, with a range of 26 to 621 FTE per building.

The combined elementary/secondary FTE enrollment was 25,091 students.

Question 4. This question asked the administrator to estimate the total number of hours per week that all employees in the district office (building office if principal) spent in complying with state and federal reporting requirements. The administrator was asked to

include himself/herself in that total.

Table I summarized the responses of the superintendents.

Table I

Average Number of Hours Expended per Week in the District Office in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	11	24 hrs.	6	48 hrs.	17	32 hrs.
Federal	10	9 hrs.	6	12 hrs.	16	10 hrs.
Total		33 hrs.		60 hrs.		42 hrs.

The number of hours per week required to complete state and federal paperwork in district offices averaged 42 hours. The superintendents estimated that state paperwork required more time to complete than federal paperwork by a ratio of 3 to 1. It is worth noting that larger districts estimated nearly double the time required to complete state and federal paperwork than did the smaller districts.

Secondary principals responded with considerably fewer hours. The average number of hours expended per week in the secondary principals' offices totaled 15 hours. It was estimated that state paperwork required double the time that federal paperwork did. Those principals in the larger districts estimated five hours per week less than the principals in smaller districts. Table II gives more

complete information.

Table II

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the
Secondary Principal's Office in Order
to Comply With State and
Federal Reporting
Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	8	12 hrs.	19	9 hrs.	27	10 hrs.
Federal	7	6 hrs.	19	4 hrs.	26	5 hrs.
Total		18 hrs.		13 hrs.		15 hrs.

The average number of hours expended per week in elementary school offices totaled 22. The elementary principals estimated that state paperwork required considerably more office time than did federal paperwork. The principals of the smaller districts reported nearly double the total time requirements than those in larger districts. Please refer to Table III.

Table III

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the
Elementary Principal's Office in Order
to Comply With State and
Federal Reporting
Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	5	22 hrs.	21	12 hrs.	26	14 hrs.
Federal	5	12 hrs.	18	7 hrs.	23	8 hrs.
Total		34 hrs.		19 hrs.		22 hrs.

Table IV shows that the superintendent spent the most time on paperwork, 42 hours per week, of any group. The secondary principal averaged 15 hours and the elementary principal 22 hours.

Table IV

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended in the District and Building Offices in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	26	14 hrs.	27	10 hrs.	17	32 hrs.
Federal	23	8 hrs.	26	5 hrs.	16	10 hrs.
Total		22 hrs.		15 hrs.		42 hrs.

Summary of the Results of Question 4. Question 4 asked each respondent for an estimation of time. It must be recognized that these were only estimates, and thus represented a general trend.

According to the results, superintendents' offices in districts with an FTE over 1,000 spent considerably more time (60 hours per week) than did the superintendents' offices in districts with fewer than 1,000 FTE (33 hours per week). One possible reason for this difference is that larger districts may have more personnel in the district office, and therefore, handle paperwork that smaller districts delegate to the building principal. The average

time spent by all superintendents' offices was 42 hours per week.

The offices of the secondary principals averaged 15 hours per week on federal and state paperwork. Those principals in larger districts averaged less time than did those in smaller districts (13 hours compared to 18 hours). Again, the reason for this difference may be that the larger districts are able to handle more paperwork at the district level rather than the building level.

The survey results of Question 4 show that elementary principal offices averaged 22 hours of state and federal paperwork per week. Those principals in larger districts estimated considerably less time (19 hours) than did those in smaller districts (34 hours). As stated above, the reason for this difference may be the paperwork screening ability of the larger district offices.

Question 5. The fifth question asked each administrator to estimate the total number of hours per week he/she personally spends to comply with state and federal paperwork requirements.

The superintendents who responded to this question averaged 13 hours per week in completing state and federal paperwork. Those superintendents in districts with fewer than 1,000 students spent nearly twice the time on paperwork than did superintendents in larger districts. Superintendents felt that they spent much more time meeting state reporting requirements than federal reporting

requirements. See Table V.

Table V

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by the
Superintendent Personally in Order to
Comply with State and Federal
Reporting Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	12	10 hrs.	5	6 hrs.	17	9 hrs.
Federal	11	5 hrs.	5	2 hrs.	16	4 hrs.
Total		15 hrs.		8 hrs.		13 hrs.

Secondary principals spent very little of the work week personally completing federal and state paperwork. Secondary principals averaged 3 hours per week, 2 hours of that on state paperwork and only 1 on federal paperwork. Table VI gives more details.

Table VI

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by
Secondary Principals in Order to Comply
with State and Federal Reporting
Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	8	2 hrs.	19	3 hrs.	27	2 hrs.
Federal	8	1 hr.	17	1 hr.	25	1 hr.
Total		3 hrs.		4 hrs.		3 hrs.

Elementary principals spent relatively little of the work week completing federal and state paperwork. Although Table VII shows that principals in smaller districts spent 3 hours per week more than principals in larger districts, only four principals are represented in the first column.

Table VII

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by Elementary Principals in Order to Comply with State and Federal Reporting Requirements

	N	Less than 1,000 FTE	N	More than 1,000 FTE	N	Combined
State	4	5 hrs.	21	3 hrs.	25	3 hrs.
Federal	4	3 hrs.	19	2 hrs.	23	2 hrs.
Total		8 hrs.		5 hrs.		5 hrs.

Table VIII shows that superintendents averaged 13 hours per week on state and federal paperwork, considerably more time than secondary principals (3 hours) or elementary principals (5 hours).

Table VIII

Average Number of Hours per Week Expended by
Administrators in Order to Comply with
State and Federal Reporting
Requirements

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	25	3 hrs.	27	2 hrs.	17	9 hrs.
Federal	23	2 hrs.	25	1 hr.	16	4 hrs.
Total		5 hrs.		3 hrs.		13 hrs.

Summary of the Results of Question 5. It appears as though the size of a district has little to do with the time that individual principals spend on paperwork. However, district size may play some role in the case of the superintendent's workload. In districts with less than 1,000 students, the superintendent averaged 15 hours per week on state and federal paperwork, while superintendents in larger districts averaged 8 hours.

Question 6. The sixth question asked each respondent to estimate the percentage of requested data (if any) that was duplicate data supplied by other forms. It should be understood that the responses were only estimates, and can only represent a trend in the opinions of school administrators.

Table IX shares the responses to Question 6. Elementary principals found 15 to 16 percent of the data

requested to be data supplied by other forms. Secondary principals cited 28 to 33 percent and superintendents 21 to 26 percent. According to all of the administrators that responded to this question 15 to 33 percent of the data requested is data that can be found on other forms.

Table IX

Percentage of Requested Data that is Duplicate
Data Supplied by Other Forms

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	21	15%	22	33%	16	26%
Federal	21	16%	18	28%	14	21%

Question 7. This question asked what percentage of requested data (if any) could be eliminated without reducing accountability. Table X demonstrates that administrators felt that 30 to 41 percent of the data requested could be eliminated.

Table X

Percentage of Requested Data that Could be Eliminated
Without Reducing Accountability

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	22	38%	21	38%	17	40%
Federal	22	30%	17	40%	16	41%

Question 8. The eighth question asked what percentage of forms (if any) were designed in such a way as to cause confusion or extend time required to complete. This question was poorly written according to one respondent: "I doubt if any are designed that way. They just happen." The other responses to this question were fairly consistent, however. The superintendents and principals estimated that 32 to 46 percent of the forms were designed in such a manner as to cause confusion or extend time required to complete. Table XI explains.

Table XI
Percentage of Forms Designed in Such a Way
as to Cause Confusion or Extend
Time Required to Complete

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	22	42%	23	32%	15	40%
Federal	20	46%	21	40%	15	42%

Question 9. Question 9 asked whether or not sufficient time was allowed to complete forms. Respondents had a choice of circling yes or no. Two respondents replied "generally," and this was recorded as a yes for the purpose of the survey.

In response to this question, about 80 percent of the superintendents felt that lead time was sufficient. Approximately 70 percent of the secondary principals replied that there was sufficient lead time. About 60 percent of

the elementary principals felt that sufficient time was allowed to complete forms. It is possible that many forms first arrive at the superintendent's office and then are channeled to the building offices. This could account for the range in average responses of the principals and superintendents. Please refer to Table XII.

Table XII

Percentage of Respondents that Indicated Sufficient Time was Allowed to Complete Forms

	N	Elem. Prin.	N	Sec. Prin.	N	Supt.
State	28	61%	26	73%	19	84%
Federal	26	58%	25	68%	18	83%

Question 10. In 1979 our legislature mandated that the Superintendent of Public Instruction reduce paperwork requirements. Question 10 asked if any reduction had been noticed.

Twenty-seven elementary principals responded to this question: 37 percent replied yes; and 63 percent replied no. A higher percentage of the 27 responding secondary principals, 52 percent, indicated a noticeable reduction since 1979. Eighteen superintendents responded, 22 percent of whom had noticed a reduction.

Question 11. This question asked whether efforts should continue in the area of reducing paperwork requirements. Both elementary and secondary principals responded

with 96 percent yes, while 89 percent of the superintendents answered yes. A total of 74 administrators responded to this question, including 26 elementary principals, 25 secondary principals, and 19 superintendents.

Question 12. Question 12 asked each administrator to determine which categorical programs demanded the most time in terms of paperwork. Respondents were asked to rank the programs 1, 2, and 3. Since several respondents ranked more than three programs, it is possible that this question was ambiguous, therefore, the results were not tabulated. A couple of principals did not respond with a ranking, stating that this type of work was handled primarily in the district office.

Superintendents were clear in responding to this question. The responses of 16 superintendents indicated that budget and accounting required the most time, followed by transportation and basic education. Special education and vocational education ranked fourth and fifth respectively.

The responses of 23 secondary principals identified two categorical programs demanding the most time in terms of paperwork; basic education and vocational education.

The responses of 23 elementary principals clearly indicated that special education was a major concern in terms of time required to complete the required paperwork. Other areas of concern were food services, basic education, and Title I.

Comments

The last section of the questionnaire allowed for comments. Some comments have already been incorporated into discussions of responses to previous questions. However, the following are comments that are of special interest.

Secondary principal: "I do not think we do too much paperwork."

Elementary principal: "The individual buildings handle very little of the above (paperwork), most of this is done through the district office or our special services department." This was a comment shared by several elementary and secondary principals.

Elementary principal: "I don't personally feel that it (paperwork) is excessive at this time."

Elementary principal: "The issue is not how much paperwork we do, but rather to what use it is put, by whom, and for whom."

Elementary principal: "I have not found state or federal paperwork to be a burden. I feel they have responded very nicely to our request for a reduction in paperwork."

Four administrators stated that it was not possible to obtain accurate information with opinions.

Elementary principal: "The time required by staff to complete the paperwork adds greatly to the cost (of education)."

Elementary principal: "The grants management

section under Rich Boyd has done a great job of reducing paperwork."

Elementary principal: "The most ridiculous paperwork this year was spent in making a map to turn into state for each student (transportation). None of this assists the instruction of our students."

Secondary principal: "I really appreciate the efforts of the legislature to reduce paperwork."

A secondary principal felt that district generated paperwork should be more of a concern than state or federal paperwork.

Secondary principal: "Much of the accountability paperwork required is insulting to one's integrity. It had also built a huge bureaucracy. Someone to spy on the spy who is spying on a spy."

Secondary principal: "Federal funding of Vocational Education should cease. The benefits are far outweighed by the nonsense, harassing paperwork, and auditing. Who cares about 'Unduplicated Male and Female'? That's the kind of stuff we must report."

Secondary principal: "...completing a questionnaire on paperwork excess is about like the kettle calling the pot black!"

Superintendent: "Applications for grant money are ridiculous. Also, one office (federal) doesn't seem to know what the other is doing."

Superintendent: "Since 1979 legislation, paperwork

has increased substantially. Paperwork is very costly and does not bring about accountability. It is a total waste. Please send the results of this survey to the State Legislature."

Superintendent: "Help! Help!"

Summary of Chapter 4

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of public school administrators concerning state and federal paperwork requirements. A questionnaire was used to obtain the desired data.

The questionnaire was sent to 111 superintendents and principals in 30 districts in the State of Washington. A total of 80 responses were received, representing a 72 percent return rate. Of the 80 respondents, 32 were elementary principals, 28 were secondary principals, and 20 were superintendents.

Major Findings

1. Superintendents responding to this study represented a total enrollment of 19,556 FTE students. Elementary and secondary principals reported a total of 25,091 FTE students in building enrollment.

2. Superintendents' offices averaged 42 hours per week expended in completing state and federal paperwork requirements. District offices in larger districts spent considerably more time on paperwork than did those in smaller districts.

3. The offices of secondary principals averaged 15 hours per week on state and federal paperwork. Secondary principals' offices in smaller districts averaged more time than did those in larger districts.

4. Elementary principals' offices averaged 22 hours per week on state and federal paperwork. The offices in smaller districts averaged considerably more time than did those in larger districts.

5. Superintendents averaged 13 hours per week personally completing paperwork requirements. Superintendents in smaller districts averaged nearly twice as much time as those in larger districts.

6. Elementary principals averaged 5 hours per week completing paperwork requirements, while secondary principals averaged 3 hours per week. Little difference was noticed between size of districts responding.

7. Administrators responding stated that between 15 and 33 percent of the requested data is duplicate data supplied by other forms.

8. Administrators felt that 30 to 41 percent of the data requested could be eliminated without reducing accountability.

9. Principals and superintendents estimated that 32 to 46 percent of state and federal forms are designed in such a way as to cause confusion or extend time required to complete.

10. The majority of administrators surveyed felt that sufficient time was allowed to complete forms.

11. Most administrators have not noticed a reduction in paperwork since the 1979 legislative mandate.

12. A strong majority of administrators stated that efforts should continue in the area of reducing paperwork.

13. Several categorical programs were identified as demanding the most time in terms of paperwork. Superintendents indicated that budget and accounting required the most time. Secondary principals identified basic education and vocational education as the most demanding. Elementary principals indicated that special education was a major concern in terms of paperwork.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions of Washington State school administrators concerning federal and state paperwork requirements.

A review of related literature demonstrated that most Americans are aware of government paperwork to some degree. Individuals file tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service. Businesses, small and large, must contend with a considerable amount of paperwork. No one is immune from paperwork.

The Commission on Federal Paperwork was charged with making recommendations to reduce paperwork requirements. As a result of its efforts, \$3.5 billion were saved annually. The Commission hoped that another \$10 billion could be saved with additional effort.

Federal aid to schools has resulted in increased paperwork requirements in education. The CFP recognized this and suggested improved reporting procedures that might save \$190 million annually.

In Washington State the cost of completing federal and state paperwork amounts to nearly 10 percent of the state K-12 budget for education. Hastings and McDonald (5)

found that each administrative employee spent 5.9 hours per week on federal and state paperwork. In response to this paperwork demand, the legislature, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Association of School Administrators, and others, have been working together to solve the problem. Many forms have been eliminated or improved, and procedures have been implemented to keep paperwork to a minimum.

The survey conducted in connection with this thesis has produced some interesting results. The remainder of this section deals with those survey results.

It was found that school district offices averaged 42 hours per week in completing federal and state paperwork. Superintendents personally spend an average of 13 hours per week completing paperwork.

Principals' offices in elementary buildings expend 22 hours per week on paperwork requirements, while the principal completes about 5 hours of that personally.

Secondary school offices spend an estimated 15 hours per week on paperwork. The secondary principal will personally spend 3 hours.

Administrators estimated that between 15 and 33 percent of requested data is data that can be found on other forms. It was estimated that 30 to 40 percent of all data requested could be eliminated without reducing accountability. Administrators felt that 32 to 46 percent of required forms were designed in such a way as to cause confusion or extend time

required to complete. Most administrators thought that there was sufficient lead time allowed in order to complete required forms.

The majority of administrators surveyed had not noticed a reduction in paperwork since the 1979 legislative mandate. Most respondents stated that efforts should continue in the area of reducing paperwork.

Conclusions

1. Administrators in Washington State public schools spend a considerable amount of time completing federal and state paperwork.
2. The cost of completing federal and state paperwork represents a large portion of the education budget in Washington State.
3. District offices in larger districts screen more paperwork from building principals than do those in smaller districts.
4. Some data requests could be reduced or eliminated without reducing accountability.
5. The state allows sufficient time to complete required paperwork.
6. Many forms are poorly designed.
7. Few administrators have noticed a reduction in paperwork since the 1979 legislative mandate.
8. Some administrators felt very strongly that paperwork requirements are a burden, while others felt just as strongly that no problem exists. The majority of

respondents indicated that a continued effort was needed in the area of reducing paperwork demands.

Recommendations

1. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Legislature, and others, must continue working on reducing paperwork requirements.

2. Administrators should make the OSPI aware of forms that pose a problem, either due to design or actual data requests.

3. Research should continue in order to determine when, or if, a paperwork reduction is felt at the district and building level.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abelson, Philip H. "Commission on Federal Paperwork," Science, September 23, 1977, p. 1237.
2. Abramowitz, Susan, and Ellen Tenenbaum. High School '77: A Survey of Public Secondary School Principals, Washington, D.C.: The National Institute of Education, December 1978, p. 72.
3. Byrne, Hines, and McCleary. The Senior High School Principalship, Volume I, The National Survey, National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978, pp. 19-20, 51, 55.
4. "The Drive to Cut Paper," U.S. News and World Report, April 18, 1977, pp. 51-53.
5. Hastings, State Representative Richard "Doc," and State Representative Dan McDonald. "Preliminary Results of Survey on Paperwork in Washington Public Schools," A News Release, Olympia, June 23, 1980.
6. Hill, Paul, and others. "The Effects of Federal Education Programs on School Principals. A Rand Note," Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, February, 1980. ERIC Document ED 191 178.
7. House Bill 153, State of Washington, 47th Legislature, 1981 Regular Session.
8. Levin, Dan. "Little Freddie is a Federal Form; Watch Him Grow Fat and Squash School," The American School Board Journal, October 1979, pp. 23-29.
9. Levitan, Sar A. "Has Paper-Pushing Buried the Great Society?" Voc Ed, January/February 1981, pp. 25-28.
10. McIntyre, Senator Thomas. "The Growing Tyranny of Government Paperwork," Readers Digest, April 1974, pp. 156-159.
11. "Message from Home; Curb the Bureaucrats," U.S. News and World Report, November 10, 1975, pp. 39-41.
12. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Forms Schedule, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82.

13. Pogrow, Stanley. "Controlling the Paperwork Burden," Phi Delta Kappan, January 1980, pp. 345-346.
14. "Red Tape Jungle: Spreading, Costing Billions," U.S. News and World Report, July 19, 1971.
15. Revised Code of Washington 28A.41.170, (1979, 1973, 1972, 1969, 1965), formerly 28.41.170.
16. Robison, Wendall A. "Paperwork: The Educators Nightmare," The Clearing House, November 1980, pp. 125-126.
17. Seegers, Kathleen. "Slaying the Paperwork Monster," Readers Digest, December 1977, pp. 162-165.
18. United States Congress, Commission on Federal Paperwork. A Report of the Commission on Federal Paperwork. Education. Washington, D.C., April 29, 1977, 108 pages, ERIC Document ED 144 203.
19. United States Congress, Commission on Federal Paperwork. A Report of the Commission on Federal Paperwork. Final Summary Report. Washington, D.C., October 3, 1977, 85 pages, ERIC Document ED 149 426.
20. United States Congress, House Sub Committee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor. Part 2: Paperwork Problems in Elementary and Secondary Education. Washington, D.C., May 24, 1977, ERIC Document ED 168 126.
21. Washington Association of School Administrators. "Paperwork Burden Reviewed," Hotline, September 29, 1980.
22. Washington Association of School Administrators Paperwork Reduction Committee. Paperwork Reduction Committee Report. An unpublished report, June 19, 1980.
23. Washington Association of School Administrators/Washington Association of School Board Officers. The Paperwork Problem. An unpublished memo, April 27, 1981.

Appendix A
PAPERWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

PAPERWORK QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your position.

Superintendent___Secondary Principal___

Elementary Principal___

2. Student FTE in your district. _____

3. Student FTE in your buidling. _____

4. Estimate the total number of man-hours per week expended by all employees in the district office (building office if principal) in order to comply with state and federal reporting requirements. Include yourself in this total.

State paperwork required by the state _____hrs/wk.

Federal paperwork required by the state _____hrs/wk.

5. Estimate the total number of hours per week that you personally spend to comply with state and federal paperwork requirements.

State paperwork required by the state _____hrs/wk.

Federal paperwork required by the state _____hrs/wk.

6. What percentage of requested data (if any) is duplicate data supplied by other forms?

State paperwork required by the state _____%

Federal paperwork required by the state _____%

7. What percentage of requested data (if any) could be eliminated without reducing accountability?

State paperwork required by the state _____%

Federal paperwork required by the state _____%

8. What percentage of forms (if any) are designed in such a way as to cause confusion or extend time required to complete?

State paperwork required by the state _____%

Federal paperwork required by the state _____%

9. Is sufficient time allowed to complete forms?
(Please circle)

State paperwork required by the state yes/no

Federal paperwork required by the state yes/no

10. In 1979 our legislature mandated that SPI reduce
paperwork requirements. Have you noticed any
reduction? yes/no

11. Should efforts continue to reduce paperwork
requirements? yes/no

12. Of the following categorical programs, which demands
the most time in terms of paperwork? Please rank 1, 2, and 3.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget and Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Title IV, Part C |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> JOM Indian Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title I, ESEA | _____ |

COMMENTS Please express any additional comments. _____

Please return this questionnaire using the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Thank you.

Appendix B
COVER LETTER

Paperwork!!! This year the OSPI maintains 234 forms that your district may be asked to complete. Working under the auspices of the Educational Administration Department at Central Washington University, I am studying the opinions of school administrators concerning state and federal paperwork requirements. Your district has been selected to participate in this study. It may seem ironic that I must ask you to complete paperwork about paperwork. However, the few minutes required to answer the enclosed questionnaire will provide us with much more definitive information than is presently available.

Confidentiality of responses is assured. The return envelopes are coded only to provide a means of follow-up. I will be glad to forward a summary of the study upon its completion. If you wish a summary please include your return address in the enclosed envelope.

I invite your additional comments. Your prompt response will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jerry Harding

Enclosure