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Selection Procedure Utilized by Second-class School Districts in Making Appointments to the Principalship in Washington State

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SELECTION PROCEDURE UTILIZED BY SECOND-CLASS
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS TO
THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN WASHINGTON STATE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

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

by
Keith W. Morris
February, 1986

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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One hundred fifty-eight (158) superintendents of second-class school districts in Washington State were surveyed to determine the selection procedures utilized in the appointment to the principalship. A survey questionnaire was developed and divided into five steps of the selection procedure. The results of the survey questionnaire indicate that the selection procedure varies tremendously and no consistent procedures were found among the school district superintendents surveyed.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The selection of a principal is one of the most important problems facing a Board of Education today. Driscoll (1982:2) stated: "Certainly no one can prescribe the perfect way to hire a head of a school." The increased complexity of the role of the principal has made the selection a more difficult task for school districts seeking to hire the "perfect head." Since the ultimate responsibility for the education of the student in a large measure rests with the principal, some researchers suggest that some type of standardization should exist in the selection procedures for appointment to the principalship.

This study surveyed second-class school districts to determine the selection procedures utilized in the appointment of secondary school principals in the State of Washington.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify, through the use of a questionnaire, the procedures, methods, and processes utilized in the State of Washington in the appointment of the principal in second-class school districts, i.e., those with an enrollment of less than 2,000 students.

Rationale for Study

Some authorities believe that school districts could better judge candidates if general guidelines and selected criteria were available, suggesting that the entire selection process should be designed, basically, to assist local school boards in hiring the best individual for the position. General guidelines for the selection to the principalship in Washington State needed to be examined to assist in this development.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited to the one hundred fifty-eight (158) second-class school districts in the State of Washington, i.e., those with an enrollment of less than 2,000 students.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

Second-class school districts. Those districts, in the State of Washington, with a total enrollment of less than 2,000 students.

Selection. The act of selecting or the fact of being selected; choosing; choice.

Procedure. An act composed of steps; course of action.

Utilized. To put to use for a certain purpose.

Appointment. The act of appointing or designating for an office or position.

Principal. One who holds a position of presiding rank; especially, the head of an elementary or high school.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study was to examine the selection procedures utilized by second-class school districts in Washington for appointment to the principalship.

Although a review of literature revealed very little research in Washington State specifically, research paralleling several selection procedures used by other states was located. These studies related to the basic procedures utilized in the selection of secondary school principals. In the review, it was found that the procedures for selection vary tremendously from one state to another and from one school district to another. Some districts have very formal systems that are highly structured, while others seem to be very unsystematic and based partly on myth. Baltzell and Dentler (1983:5-6) stated, for example:

All aspects of the selection of principals are heavily influenced by the local custom, school bureaucracy and the superintendent's need for administrative control. The selection criteria usually focus on some notion of "fit" rather than specified criteria.

However, some generalizations do emerge from the studies concerning the selection procedure. As stated by Newberry (1977:41-44):

It is assumed that those chosen on the basis of the defined criteria are more likely to exhibit

effective administrator performance than those rejected.

This assumption is commonly agreed upon throughout the literature and has proven to be successful in the selection process. The identified criteria most used were: (1) announcement of vacancy, (2) selecting a search committee, (3) listing of job qualifications, (4) screening the applicants, (5) interviewing, (6) final check of the finalists, (7) making the final selection. To better explain the importance of each step in the process of making the final decision in the appointment to the principalship each of these criteria in the selection procedure was examined.

Announcement of Vacancy

An "Announcement of Vacancy" can range from a simple typewritten announcement to an elaborate printed brochure. Regardless of what type of announcement is used, the timing of the listing for the job opening is crucial. First of all, ample time must be given for a thorough search for the best possible candidate available. Driscoll (1982:10-11) explained:

As a practical matter, the school should decide at least two months before graduation who will be sitting in the head's office in September, whether temporarily or permanently. If this deadline cannot be met, the board should issue frequent progress reports to keep morale from deteriorating and rumors at bay.

The school board should try to minimize the anxiety among faculty, parents, and students and reduce rumors,

speculation, or distortions of information regarding the vacancy. The announcement should be made public as soon as possible to eliminate any problems within the community.

Driscoll (1982:1-2) suggested:

A simultaneous announcement by the Board of Directors and the head of the school is a good way to handle this period. The announcement will generally cause some confusion and talk but will calm down in a few days.

When the announcement for the vacancy is prepared, it should be sent to all the applicants and the agencies who might help in recruiting candidates, i.e., university placement offices, state school boards, employment agencies, professional organizations, etc. Driscoll (1982) believed that, frequently, a shortened version could be sent to newspapers, radio stations, and television stations for further advertising of the vacancy.

The Search Committee

Driscoll (1982:10-11) declared:

Although it is the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Directors for the selection of a new "head" many turn the entire selection process over to a committee.

Driscoll also suggested that the committee should be representative of the various points of view within the Board and community. A common practice is to select a committee consisting of individuals representing an administrator, faculty representative, parent, student, board member, and person at large. Driscoll warned that the committee should not be too large and it should have a

chairperson. This chairperson, for reasons of responsibility and authority, might be a significant member of the board itself. Also, the committee should have a genuinely shared purpose and commitment, above all, to what is the best for the school. The committee should also have the full confidence of the Board of Directors. Driscoll (1982) cautioned that the search committee needs to be reminded that a skimpy search may result in a skimpy candidate. Cornett (1982:60-61) recommended:

The committee interview approximately ten semi-finalists to reduce the number to five finalists for the position. Once the search committee has been established, it is important to develop a clearly written statement of goals and objectives for the school. The school's goals and objectives will help determine the job qualifications of the candidate and the responsibilities of the principal in fulfilling these goals and objectives.

Job Qualifications

The job qualifications statement is an important guide in developing criteria for selection. The search committee, superintendent, and/or the board needs to establish a precise list of the job qualifications necessary to meet eligibility requirements as a candidate. When determining the job qualifications, they should relate directly to the job description itself declared Driscoll (1982). State requirements provide a good beginning basis for developing job qualification statements. These state qualifications will vary from state to state, of course. Additional qualifications can be added to meet the needs of the individual school district.

When establishing job qualifications, the district must also consider district policy related to Affirmative Action Program requirements. In this way, the Board of Directors, if it has not done so, establishes a program of Affirmative Action which insures that all personnel policies relevant to recruitment, employment, and promotion of employees provide equal opportunities for all candidates. In establishing the Affirmative Action Program, the district avoids discrimination suits. Driscoll (1982:8-9) cautioned, however:

Qualifications should not be cast in bronze, for changes may evolve as the search committee works together and encounters interesting candidates who have unexpected strengths and weaknesses.

Basically, the school relays to the search committee the qualities the district needs in the administrator leadership necessary to maintain the mission and goals of the school. Essential qualifications are usually defined by the genuine requirements of the tasks and nature of the job. Driscoll (1982:8-11) added:

Qualities, such as integrity, energy, commitment, courage, humor and ability to communicate and lead diverse groups to common goals goes without further definition. Most heads need all of these most of the time. The job to be done will determine other qualifications: fiscal and plant management skills, powers of persuasion, educational leadership, public relations, and staff development experience.

The Board of Directors should develop its own qualification check list, if necessary, from its statement of the district needs and priorities. Driscoll (1982) pointed out that the search committee should work from a check list in

developing the job description as well as the report sheets to be used in evaluating the candidates on the important criteria selected. She advised that the grading system for the work sheets be simple, with a scale of no more than one to four representing "exceptional," "strong," "adequate," and "weak." These forms would be used in evaluating resumes and interview data.

Screening Committee

The selection of an effective screening committee is another important procedure in the selection process. The screening committee is responsible for screening out the unqualified candidates and choosing through the interview process those most qualified and best suited for the job.

Kittock-Sargent (1982:22-26) declared:

It is critical that in hiring administrative personnel, this committee be representative of a broad range of ideas and points of view. In addition to administrators (principals and central office staff), the committee membership should include representatives of the teaching staff, parents and other community members.

They also suggested that an Affirmative Action representative be included on this committee whenever possible. A balance of men, women, and minorities was also recommended. The authors further suggested that a committee made up of individuals with diverse backgrounds and philosophies would allow for greater diversity among possible candidates. According to Kittock-Sargent (1982:22-26): "The screening committee's first task is to make sure it has a clear

understanding of the job description and of all the selection criteria."

Screening

After the screening committee has been appointed, the actual screening of the applicants can commence. Baltzell and Dentler (1983:15-16) claimed that this involves three steps, which increase steadily in importance:

First, a paper screening of the resumes and applications, which is usually conducted to determine that minimal certification and experience standards have been met. Secondly, a formalized screening interview of the eligible candidates, that is, those who have passed the paper screening is undertaken. The last step involves selecting a determined number of finalists to be chosen for the more extensive final interviews with the superintendent.

According to Driscoll, in today's market a school district can expect 50 to 100 responses to an advertising. As a result, the screening process can be very time consuming and even more important. The author suggested that rather than each member reviewing each file, it is easier to divide the file readings into teams who report to the committee as a whole on their ratings of candidates. Driscoll (1982: 16-17) stated:

Unanimity of the committee as a whole is usually required either for rejecting a candidate or for promoting a candidate to the more select group of semi-finalists.

The author also cautioned that the screening committee must have trust and unanimity concerning the school's needs and goals. Newberry (1977) addressed the issue with the "in-house" candidates in the screening process. He believed

if there is a strong candidate within the school, a screening of that candidate must still be made in comparison with other qualified men and women from outside the district. He stated (1977:41-44): "If he is ultimately chosen, both he and the Board will feel assured by the fact that he met and mastered the competition."

The Interview

The basic purpose of interviewing candidates is to enable the committee to learn as much as possible about the candidate, particularly in regard to those aspects of one's qualifications most difficult to discover from the resume, i.e., ideas, personality, character, and strengths and weaknesses. A nationwide sample of public school employees surveyed by Bryant and colleagues (1980) indicated that the most important characteristic of applicants in personal interviews, according to 80 percent of the superintendents surveyed, was the ability to respond to questions concerning school administration. The selection of the interview committee is an important step, therefore. It is most commonly practiced that the search committee itself be involved in the interviewing process. Since the committee has been involved in the paper screening and knows something about the candidates, the committee is more familiar with the candidates' background information. Individual and/or group interviews are conducted by the committee.

Clearly, individual interviews appear to be the most popular interview procedure. Moreover, according to Driscoll the interview can take a number of different forms. Some schools, for example, invited the semifinalists to their district for a close look at the school. Others sent interviewers to visit the candidates in action on their home turf.

Driscoll went on to recommend that the interview committee members receive training on specific and helpful interview technique. This would, hopefully, enable them to be better prepared for examining the candidates. She stated (1982:24-25): "The more skilled the interviewer is in seeing through charm or drawing out a reticent person, the more telling the results will be."

Once the committee has been selected and it is prepared for the interview, the number of semifinalists to be interviewed can be established. Since this can be a costly item for the district and the candidate, only the very best candidates are invited for the interview. In most cases it ranges from three to five candidates. Although in some cases this number is established by the committee, any number can be interviewed depending on the attitude of each individual school district. To be really effective an interview must be carefully planned and organized. The committee should carefully consider the arrangements they want to make to enhance their opportunities to know as much as possible about the candidate. Seeley (1979:31-34) stated:

The interviewers should try to elicit spontaneous information without having to ask so many questions that the candidate feels he is being cross-examined. Broadly stated questions which introduce major areas will often serve the purpose. Follow up questions should also be phrased in broad terms which do not permit a "yes" or "no" answer.

Seeley (1979) offered an excellent model for the interview agenda. He suggested the development of standard questions to be asked of every candidate for the purpose of comparison as well as some questions that can be developed from the committee's study of the written material submitted by the candidate. He believed that the interview provides an excellent opportunity to resolve conflicting information from references, clarifying any ambiguities in the candidate's own written statements and gain a better understanding of the candidate's ideas. He viewed the interview as a time for exchanging information and views.

In addition, Howes (1978:100-106) stated:

All interviews for administrative positions are in theory, unbiased and honest. There are no "favorite sons" or strong candidates. Everybody starts with an equal opportunity, gets measured by the same yardstick and the best person wins. Unfortunately, in seven out of ten cases there are "hidden agendas" at work.

This means that the superintendent or board may have already made up their minds prior to the actual interview. Howes suggested that, too often, finalists end up being the victims of a "charade" staged by the school district for public relation purposes. The terms "charade" and "hidden agenda" are referenced often in follow-up studies of the interview process according to many unsuccessful candidates.

The review of literature pointed out that the interview process itself has a great deal of impact on the selection of the finalists. A study done by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in March, 1978 indicated the interview was one of the top two criteria utilized in making the final selection to the principalship.

Final Selection Procedures

After all preliminary interviews are completed, the finalists are selected. Driscoll (1982:32-35) declared:

At this point, all written data/resumes and applications, references, statement essays--and all the oral data--telephone calls and interviews, both followed by careful memorandums will have been reviewed, checked and thoroughly discussed by the committee. Any questions arriving from this information should be clarified. Any references that were previously unavailable out of the candidate's desire for confidentiality need to be checked.

Once all of this information has been gathered, the committee may make visits to the finalists if necessary. The final visits or calls give both parties the opportunity to consider all the serious questions that are involved in trying to find the most suitable person for the position. Driscoll also recommended that the candidate's family be included in the visit to acquaint them with the school and community. At this time, a final interview is conducted. After the interviews with the finalists, the committee gathers all the information generated from all the interviews and paperwork and prepares for a final selection. Baltzell and Dentler (1983:19-20) advised:

The screening committee summarize their responses to the candidates for the final decision maker, the superintendent. The committee representative should then go to those individuals and inform them that they are the first choice for the position. The superintendent, in many cases, will have a final interview with the candidate, and, if he agrees with the committee, he will make a recommendation to the board.

Once the board has agreed on the recommendation of the screening committee and superintendent, the final details of the position should be finalized. Driscoll (1982:35-36) concluded:

In drawing up the offer, the board shall put in writing all details of the term of appointment. What may have been generalities about salary, benefits, leaves and vacations, performance review and termination procedures should now become specifics mutually understood by the board and new head.

At this point, a contract should be offered by telephone and then in writing. When the offer is accepted in writing, the other finalists should be notified as soon as possible of the selection.

An announcement of the selection of the new principal can then be made to the school and community.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to determine the selection procedures utilized by second-class school districts in making appointments to the principalship in Washington State.

Several processes were used in this study. Following an ERIC search and review of literature, a survey questionnaire was developed. The survey questionnaire included a paragraph explaining the purpose of the study, followed by questions grouped into seven steps in the selection procedure identified in the literature. These steps were: (1) announcement of vacancy, (2) the search committee, (3) job qualification, (4) screening committee, (5) screening, (6) the interview, and (7) final selection procedure. A list of second-class school districts was obtained from the Superintendent of Public Instruction Office in Olympia, Washington. The survey questionnaire, cover letter, and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope were mailed to one hundred fifty-eight (158) second-class school district superintendents so identified in Washington State. One hundred seven, or 68 percent, were returned. The 107 returned questionnaires were tabulated according to each

of the seven steps in the questionnaire to determine the most common criteria used for the selection to the principalship in each section of the survey as compared to those found in the literature. The data were then analyzed and reported in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR
Analysis of Data

Results

One hundred fifty-eight school district superintendents were surveyed and 107 (68 percent) of the survey questionnaires were returned. See Appendix B for the survey form used in the study. The responses to the survey questions are reported below.

Initial Steps

The Initial Steps portion of the survey included nine questions pertaining to Affirmative Action Programs and the Search Committee.

Question 1. Do you have an approved Affirmative Action Program?

Even though the law does require all school districts to have an Affirmative Action Program, a large majority (83 percent) indicated they have an Affirmative Action Program. Seventeen percent are not in compliance.

Question 2. Do you explicitly follow Affirmative Action guidelines?

The majority (70 percent) do explicitly follow an Affirmative Action Program.

Question 3. Does the district have general guidelines for the selection procedure for the appointment to the principalship?

The responses indicated a near split (40 percent) having general guidelines for the selection procedure and 51 percent having none.

Question 4. Do you establish a search committee when a vacancy occurs?

Less than half (48 percent) indicated they established a search committee.

Question 5. Does your search committee identify the necessary qualifications?

Of the 48 percent that indicated they had a search committee, 44 percent indicated the search committee identified the necessary job qualifications.

Question 6. Does your search committee develop the job description?

A very low percentage (25 percent) of the search committees developed a job description.

Question 7. Does your search committee manage the selection procedure, i.e., publicizing, screening, final recommendation, etc.?

A low percentage (26 percent) of the search committees managed the selection procedure.

Question 8. What is the make-up of your search committee?

The make-up of the search committee varied considerably although some positions were more commonly listed. See Table 1.

Question 9. How are they selected?

The selection of the members of the search committee varied from district to district. See Table 1.

Announcement

The Announcement portion of the survey consisted of five questions pertaining to the opening for the principalship.

Question 1. Is it district policy, insofar as possible, to promote within?

A large majority (72 percent) indicated it was not district policy to hire within.

Question 2. Do you announce the position opening within the district prior to notifying the placement services?

A slight majority (55 percent) announce a position opening within the district prior to notifying the placement services.

Question 3. Do you advertise the position opening through university and private services?

A large majority (82 percent) advertised the open position through university and private services.

Question 4. Do you include a job description when announcing the vacancy?

Table 1

Initial Steps of Selection Procedures,
Summary of Responses and Percentages

Question	No. of Responses		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Do you have an approved Affirmative Action Program?	89	18	83	17
2. Do you explicitly follow Affirmative Action guidelines?	73	32	70	30
3. Does the district have general guidelines for the selection procedure for the appointment to the principalship?	54	53	50	50
4. Do you establish a search committee when a vacancy occurs?	51	56	48	52
5. Does your search committee identify the necessary qualifications?	47	60	44	56
6. Does your search committee develop the job description?	27	80	25	75
7. Does your search committee manage the selection procedure, i.e., publicizing, screening, final recommendation, etc.?	28	79	26	74

Table 1 (continued)

8. What is the make-up of your search committee?

<u>Member of Search Committee</u>	<u>Frequency of Responses</u>
Superintendent	44
Board member	40
Teacher	36
Principal	28
Citizen	22
P.S.E.	5
Not applicable	4
Vice Principal	3
Assistant Superintendent	2
Student	2
Business Manager	2
Curriculum Director	1
Counselor	1
E.S.D. Person	1
Educational Association	1

Table 1 (continued)

9. How are they selected?

<u>Selection Procedure Used</u>	<u>Frequency of Responses</u>
Superintendent selected	17
Board member selected	10
Appointed position	5
Volunteered	2
Interested	2
Referred	1
Union member	1
Chairperson	1
Job description	1
Position	1
Not applicable	1
Follow-up member	1

Only 38 percent included a job description with the announcement.

Question 5. Do you include the necessary qualifications when announcing the vacancy?

A large majority (81 percent) include the necessary qualifications when announcing the vacancy. See Table 2.

Initial Screening

The Initial Screening portion of the survey consisted of four questions pertaining to the screening committee and its responsibilities.

Question 1. Does the screening committee conduct initial and final interviews?

The screening committee did conduct initial and final interviews in a majority of the districts (68 percent).

Question 2. Do you have a paper screening of applications and resumes to determine if the candidate possesses the minimum job qualifications?

An overwhelming majority (91 percent) had a paper screening of applications and used resumes to determine minimum job qualifications.

Question 3. Does the screening committee select the finalists?

A large majority (79 percent) of the selection committee did select the finalists for the position.

If so, how many finalists were selected?

Five finalists was the most popular response with 32 percent indicating that number of finalists. See Table 3.

Question 4. Does the screening committee make the final decision?

A large majority (76 percent) indicated that the screening committee did not make the final decision.

If no, who does?

Since 76 percent indicated the screening committee did not make the final decision, nearly all districts reported that either the superintendent with 50 percent and the school board with 46 percent did make the final decision for appointment to the principalship. See Table 3.

Interview Steps

The Interview Steps portion of the survey consisted of six questions pertaining to the interview process.

Question 1. Do you ask the same interview questions to all interviewees?

The majority (72 percent) indicated that all interviewees were asked the same questions.

Question 2. What is the make-up of your interview committee?

The make-up of the interview committee varied greatly from district to district. In most cases, the superintendent, a school board member, teacher, and principal were included in the interview committee.

Question 3. What procedure do you utilize for the interview?

Table 3

Initial Screening Step of Selection Procedures,
Summary of Responses and Percentages

Question	No. of Responses		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Does the screening committee conduct initial and final interviews?	73	34	68	32
2. Do you have a paper screening of applications and resumes to determine if the candidate possesses the minimum job qualifications?	102	5	95	5
3. Does the screening committee select the finalists?	84	23	79	21
If so, how many finalists were selected?	<u>No. of Finalists</u>		<u>No. of Responses</u>	
	5		32	
	Varies		15	
	3		11	
	6		9	
	4		3	
	8		2	
	10		2	
	9		1	

Table 3 (continued)

Question	No. of Responses		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
4. Does the screening committee make the final decision?	26	81	24	76
If no, who does?	<u>No. of Responses</u>		<u>Percentage</u>	
Superintendent	37		50	
School Board	33		46	
Search Committee	1		2	
Administration	1		2	

The oral interview was the most popular response with 87 percent indicating they used an oral interview. Only 24 percent indicated they used a written interview.

Question 4. How many finalists do you interview?

Five (5) finalists was the most popular response with 39 percent. A few (19 percent) of the respondents indicated that it varied depending on the total number of candidates and by the number of candidates selected by the screening committee who were most qualified.

Question 5. How many members of the selection committee are involved in the interview of the finalists?

Forty-two of the respondents (47 percent) indicated that all the members of the search committee were involved in the interview of the finalists. Again, there was a great deal of difference from district to district in selecting a committee for the final interview.

Question 6. Is the criteria for the selection the same for all of the applicants?

A substantial majority (78 percent) indicated the selection procedure was the same for all applicants.

See Table 4.

Table 4

Interview Step of Selection Procedures,
Summary of Responses and Percentages

Question	No. of Responses		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Do you ask the same interview questions to all interviewees?	77	30	72	28
2. What is the make-up of your interview committee?	<u>Make-up of Committee Members</u>		<u>No. of Responses</u>	
			57	
			56	
			40	
			11	
			4	
			3	
			2	
			2	
3. What procedure do you utilize for the interview?				
a. oral	93	14	87	13
b. written	26	81	24	76
c. tape recording	2	105	2	98
d. video	0	107	0	100
e. other	23	84	21	79

Table 4 (continued)

Question	No. of Finalists	No. of Responses	Percentage
4. How many finalists do you interview?	5	34	39
	Varied	17	19
	3	12	14
	6	9	10
	4	9	10
	10	2	2
	2	1	1
	7	1	1
	8	1	1
	10%	1	1
	All	1	1

Table 4 (continued)

Question	Selection Committee Members Involved in Finalists' Interview	No. of Responses		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
5. How many members of the selection committee are involved in the interview of the finalists?	All	42		49	
	5	9		10	
	1	5		6	
	None	5		6	
	Board	5		6	
	2	4		5	
	Superintendent	4		5	
	Varies	4		5	
	4	4		5	
3	3		3		
6. Is the criteria for the selection the same for all of the applicants?		<u>No. of Responses</u>		<u>Percentage</u>	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
		83	24	78	22

Final Selection Procedure

The Final Selection Procedure portion of the survey consisted of five questions pertaining to the final recommendations and appointment to the principalship. It also included recommendations for possible changes in the selection procedure within various school districts.

Question 1. Do you call all the references provided by the finalists?

Forty-three percent of the responses indicated that calls were made to all the references. Eleven percent stated that most of the references were called.

Question 2. Do you make visits to the communities of the finalists?

Only 21 percent of the responses indicated they visited the communities of the finalists.

Question 3. Who makes the final recommendation for the appointment to the Board of Directors?

Sixty-five percent indicated the superintendent made the final recommendation to the Board of Directors and 17 percent indicated the screening committee made the final recommendation.

Question 4. Please number from 1 to 4 the importance in the final selection of the principal. (Number 1 being the most important.)

The personal interview was the number one choice (46 percent) indicating it was the most important step in the final selection. The references, including phone calls

was the number two choice with 32 percent. The 49 percent that chose personal interview as being most important selected references as their second choice in order of importance. Likewise, the 34 percent that chose references as the number one choice selected the personal interview as their second most important criteria. See Table 5.

Question 5. If you could change your selection procedure in the future, please describe what you would change.

The following are the comments describing what the respondents would change in their selection procedure:

1. Develop more uniform interview system.
2. Visitation to community.
3. More contacts with references.
4. Review applicants' backgrounds more effectively, experience and references.
5. Include a more comprehensive writing process.
6. Establish definite guidelines for the selection process.
7. Better questioning techniques--perhaps inservice.
8. Provide the time to do intensive simulated decision making and other typical administrative responsibilities.
9. Shorten length of advertising period.
10. Involve teachers and board in determining the selection criteria.
11. Add a writing sample (time on a topic that we specify).

Table 5

Steps of the Final Selection Procedure,
Summary of Responses and Percentages

Question	No. of Responses			Percentage		
	Yes	No	Most	Yes	No	Most
1. Do you call all the references provided by the finalists?	47	49	11	43	46	11
2. Do you make visits to the communities of the finalists?	23	84		21	79	
3. Who makes the final recommendation for the appointment to the Board of Directors?						
a. Screening Committee	18			17		
b. Search Committee	1			1		
c. Assistant Superintendent	0			0		
d. Superintendent	70			65		
e. Personnel Director	1			1		
f. Other	17			16		

Table 5 (continued)

Question	Order of Choice				No Response
	1	2	3	4	
4. Please number from 1 to 4 the importance in the final selection of the principal. (Number 1 being the most important.)					
a. Letter of application					
No. of responses	1	2	16	62	26
Percentage	1	2	15	58	24
b. References, including calls to them					
No. of responses	34	39	12	5	17
Percentage	32	36	11	5	16
c. Resume					
No. of responses	3	15	50	19	20
Percentage	2	14	47	18	19
d. Personal interview					
No. of responses	49	30	6	3	19
Percentage	46	28	6	2	18

Question. Would you like a summary of the results?

Fifty-two of the respondents requested a summary of the results of the study. However, twenty-two of the fifty-two requesting a copy of the results of the study listed no return mailing address.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the selection procedure utilized by second-class school districts in making appointments to the principalship in the State of Washington. It was found that one half of the school districts do not have general guidelines for their selection procedures. Even by dividing the entire selection procedure into the seven steps identified in the literature, it was found that each step had many variations in local selection process. Furthermore, very few of the selection procedures appeared to be consistent in the overall selection process in the school districts surveyed. In addition, a large majority of the school districts indicated they do hire within the district whenever possible but advertise the position opening to university and private services.

Conclusions

It is clear that the selection procedures utilized by second-class school districts in the State of Washington vary tremendously from one district to another.

1. A large majority of the school districts indicated they hire within the district whenever possible, although

82 percent advertised the position opening to university and private services.

2. A large majority involved the screening committee in selecting the finalists. However, in most cases the screening committee was not involved in the final decision.

3. A large majority of the districts used the same selection procedures for all applicants.

4. The personal interview appeared to be the most important step in the entire interview process.

5. A few districts still do not use Affirmative Action guidelines in their hiring practices.

6. The superintendent of the school district appears to be the final authority in recommending most of the principals and is in general control throughout the selection process.

Recommendations

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are offered to enhance selection procedures:

The school districts not in compliance with Affirmative Action rules and regulations should bring themselves into compliance.

School districts which have not done so, should adopt specific policies and guidelines in the selection procedure for appointment to the principalship.

A statewide procedure for selecting principals should be considered by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Procedures utilized in all school districts in Washington State should be examined.

The development of assessment centers in the State of Washington could enhance selection procedures.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A
Cover Letter

July 29, 1985

Dear Superintendent:

I am currently enrolled at Central Washington University completing my Master's degree in School Administration.

My thesis project is an examination of the procedures used by second-class school districts in the State of Washington in the selection of secondary school principals.

Enclosed please find a survey questionnaire which addresses the topic. It will be sincerely appreciated if you would complete and return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope, at your earliest convenience.

If you would like a summary of the results, please indicate it on the second page of the questionnaire and include your name and address at the bottom of the page.

The respondent and all responses on this questionnaire will be held confidential by the writer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Keith W. Morris

Enclosure

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

This study will identify the selection procedures utilized by one hundred fifty-eight high school districts in Washington to select their secondary principals. The questions which follow are addressed to secondary school selection procedures only.

Please respond to the following questions by circling YES - NO or by a written statement.

INITIAL STEPS

- 1. Do you have an approved Affirmative Action Program? YES - NO
- 2. Do you explicitly follow Affirmative Action Guidelines? YES - NO
- 3. Does the district have general guidelines for the selection procedure for the appointment to the principalship? YES - NO
- 4. Do you establish a search committee when a vacancy occurs? YES - NO
- 5. Does your search committee identify the necessary qualifications? YES - NO
- 6. Does your search committee develop the job descriptions? YES - NO
- 7. Does your search committee manage the selection process, i.e., publicizing, screening, final recommendations, etc.? YES - NO
- 8. What is the make-up of your search committee?

9. How are they selected?

ANNOUNCEMENT

- 1. Is it district policy, insofar as possible, to promote from within? YES - NO
- 2. Do you announce the position opening within the district prior to notifying the placement services? YES - NO
- 3. Do you advertise the open position through university and private services? YES - NO
- 4. Do you include a job description when announcing the vacancy? YES - NO
- 5. Do you include the necessary qualifications when announcing the vacancy? YES - NO

INITIAL SCREENING

- 1. Does the screening committee conduct initial and final interviews? YES - NO
- 2. Do you have a paper screening of applications and resumes to determine if the candidate possesses the minimum job qualifications? . . . YES - NO
- 3. Does the screening committee select the finalists? YES - NO

If so, how many finalists are selected?

- 4. Does the screening committee make the final selection? YES - NO
- If no, who does?
-
-

INTERVIEW STEPS

- 1. Do you ask the same interview questions to all interviewees? YES - NO
- 2. What is the make-up of your interview committee?

- 3. What procedure do you utilize for the interview? Please circle: (a) oral, (b) written, (c) tape recording, (d) video, (e) other _____

- 4. How many finalists do you interview? _____
- 5. How many members of the selection committee are involved in the interview of the finalists?

- 6. Is the criteria for selection the same for all of the applicants? YES - NO

FINAL SELECTION PROCEDURE

- 1. Do you call all the references provided by the finalists? YES - NO
- 2. Do you make visits to the communities of the finalists? YES - NO
- 3. Who makes the final recommendation for the appointment to the Board of Directors? Please circle:
 (a) Screening Committee, (b) Search Committee,
 (c) Assistant Superintendent, (d) Superintendent,
 (e) Personnel Director, (f) Other _____

4. Please number from 1 to 4 the importance in the final selection of the principal. (Number 1 being the most important.)

() Letter of Application

() References, including calls to them

() Resume

() Personal Interview

5. If you could change your selection procedure in the future, please describe what you would change.

Would you like a summary of the results of this study?

YES - NO