

THE EFFECT OF LOCAL APPOINTMENT
ON BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS:
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

by

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THE EFFECT OF LOCAL APPOINTMENT ON BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS: A
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The purpose of the research was to investigate the impact that a recent change from provincial appointment to local appointment of superintendents had on the board-superintendent relationship in two moderate-sized B.C. school districts. It examined the nature and extent of changes in (a) school board involvement in district operations; and (b) the board-superintendent relationship, with respect to their relative power.

A case study approach that involved interviews, a questionnaire, and document analysis was adopted. The interview schedule obtained information in four areas: role definition, communication patterns, the decision making process and community zone of tolerance. The questionnaire provided personal data on the trustees and superintendents, and the documents provided both a check on data collected during the interviews and information necessary to develop an understanding of the board-superintendent relationship.

The study revealed that the two districts varied in their manner of operating and that both boards were very satisfied with the level of their involvement in district operations. The districts differed in the power of the superintendent. The new appointment system changed the situation in one district, but not the other.

The ability of a board to hire their own CEO locally was judged to have an effect on the board-superintendent relationship. Unless superintendents are politically astute and work within the parameters of the community's zone of tolerance, they will not be successful. Clarity and unanimity, by all trustees, as to their expectations when hiring, assist in the achievement of a closer ideological match between board and superintendent. Local appointment does not appear to ensure more control in district operations or policy making by school boards. Rather, community expectations of the role that the board should enact or is permitted to play affects the degree of board control in district operations and policy making.

Factors deemed to be necessary for a good working relationship to exist between a school board and the CEO include: clearly defined responsibilities and adherence to roles by both parties, cognizance of and adherence to the community's zone of tolerance, and openness in communication and skill in use of conflict management techniques by the superintendent.

A large turnover of trustees has a negative impact; it seems to inhibit socialization of new members by the existing board. A change in expectations in roles may occur which will have an effect on the board-superintendent relationship.

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CHAPTER 1

WHY STUDY SCHOOL BOARD - SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS?

Problem Background and Rationale

The formal structure of school district organization suggests that the school board establishes policy and the superintendent administers policy. Regarding Board duties and powers, the B.C. School Act clearly states,

The board of each school district shall determine local policy in conformity with this Act for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the school district. (Section 88. (b))

The board of a school district may make bylaws, not inconsistent with this Act or the regulations, relative to the organization of meetings of the board and to any matter over which power or authority is by this Act expressly vested exclusively in the board. (Section 89. (a))

In contrast, the duties of the district superintendent are to "advise and assist each board having jurisdiction in his superintendency in exercising its powers and duties under this act" (Section 6. (c)). The regulations are even more specific regarding the authority and duties of the district superintendent, stating that,

The district superintendent of schools shall have general supervision and direction over the education staff of the school district, including teachers, principals, vice principals, and district supervisory and other employed teachers, as defined in sections 41 and 55, shall visit schools and classrooms as he considers necessary, and in his visitation, may, in his sole discretion be accompanied by any of the personnel under his direction. (Section 10. {6(1)})

Even so, manuals for school board members have generally suggested that "policy origination and preparation rest with the professional staff" (Bemis, 1967, p. vi). Since superintendents routinely set agendas for board meetings and can also control the flow of information to the school board members, they can effectively limit the role that the board members play in policy making.

The power to decide what will be discussed is important in both a positive and negative sense. It is important in the negative sense because it presumably included the power to decide what will be discussed. In the absence of discussion, the status quo continues, and policy review, evaluation, and change are impossible. It is important in a positive sense because whoever decides what will be discussed also tends to establish the boundaries and the rules of discussion. The power to limit the topics and policy alternatives that will be entertained gives the controller of the agenda considerable power in determining what policies will be adopted. (Zeigler & Tucker, 1980, p. 241)

Zeigler, Tucker, & Wilson (1981) asserted that this is especially true since the board, composed of lay people, must depend almost entirely upon the superintendent for the information and technical expertise necessary to develop educational policy and after to interpret and implement it. They went on to say that,

Problems and policy alternatives are now too complex for the public and its representatives to evaluate. Legislators solicit and follow the recommendations of professional educators. The major source of power is information; the new norm of policy decision making is deference to expertise. (p. 219)

Boyd (1976) has given evidence suggesting that most superintendents attempt to act in accord with what they perceive as the predominant community values and expectations so that even though they overstep their "legal" prerogatives, it is acceptable since they keep within the community's "zone of tolerance" (i.e., the latitude or area of maneuverability granted [or yielded] to the leadership of the schools by the local community). Gross (1958) and Pois (1964) both found that through persuasive and skillful control of the information flow (i.e., gatekeeping), however, the superintendent may be able to alter the "zone of tolerance" thereby shifting the power to himself, even though the board has the authority.

Thus a discrepancy appears to exist between what is mandated by law and what may occur in actuality. A most confusing picture emerges from various research findings as to the true, somewhat complex, relationship that exists between boards of education and their superintendents. Schmidt & Voss (1976) went as far as to assert that even models posited by social and political scientists do not reflect an adequate understanding of the complexities of educational policymaking and the effect that these have on board-superintendent relations. As recently as 1985, Brown, Newman, & Rivers concluded that "research findings do not yet provide an easily predictable pattern to the power

of the relationship between superintendents and school boards" (p. 207).

Until the last decade, British Columbia did not permit school boards to select their own superintendents. The only exception to this policy was Vancouver, which under a section of the Public School Act, was granted special privileges because it was a unique area and also because of its city charter. Most other districts were prohibited from doing so until the legislation was fully changed in 1979 to permit boards of districts with greater than 4000 students to select and hire their own superintendents.

The change to local appointment was a gradual one. During the short NDP era of the 1970's, the School Act was changed to allow those boards with a student population of over 20,000 to select their own superintendent. This factor still prohibited all but a handful of districts (e.g., Burnaby, North Vancouver and Prince George) from doing so. This followed a study conducted for the B.C. Association of School Superintendents, in 1970, which examined the advisability of local employment.

The B.C. School Trustees Association raised the matter of local employment in both May and August, 1976, and finally submitted a brief (see Appendix A) on March 9, 1977, because major problems had developed in the selection and appointment of district superintendents. The trustees felt

strongly that the selection policy was a sham since they were being manipulated by the Ministry of Education in their selection process and that attempts to remove incompetent superintendents were met with considerable opposition by the Ministry. In their brief, the BCSTA asked for a change in the selection process so that they could "advertise and draw the best available candidates for superintendents from the total job market." In subsequent private meetings, the executive director, Dr. Armstrong, continued to lobby the government on behalf of the BCSTA, for a major change in the legislation. It was the trustees' firm belief that boards would be able to be more responsive to the needs and desires of their constituents and have a more active role in policy formation if the superintendents were directly responsible to them and they held the power to hire and also fire him/her.

Gradually there was unanimity among all the groups (the Ministry, ABCSS, BCTF, and BCSTA) consulted by the government about the desirability of local employment for superintendents, even though each group had different motives for its advocacy. Since the government was committed to the idea of decentralization, the change to local appointment occurred, in part, as a result. On August 24, 1979, the School Act was changed and school boards were permitted to hire their superintendents locally, although

many did not do so immediately as they were quite satisfied with their present superintendent.

Although the BCSTA had lobbied for local appointment and their assumptions as to its advisability seemed reasonable, there is evidence that the power to appoint the superintendent locally does not necessarily ensure board control. In the United States, where superintendents have traditionally been appointed locally, two opposing schools of research exist regarding the degree of superintendent power. Even though legally policy making is the responsibility of the board, not the superintendent, it has been found by several researchers that the superintendent is the educational expert who dominates educational policy making by using claims to technical expertise (Boyd, 1976; Coleman, 1974; Goldhammer, 1964; Gross, 1958; Kerr, 1964; Zeigler & Jennings, 1974).

This situation can likely be attributed to the reform movement of the early 1900's when a change was made in the model of educational governance in order to insulate schools from politics. As well, Callahan (1962) claimed it was done to promote efficiency and effectiveness in management through the application of professional administrative expertise. Efficiency was stressed and this required expertise which in turn expected autonomy if the job was to be done in an effective manner.

The reformists' opinion was that the best guarantee of a well-functioning school system was in the free exercise of judgement by highly trained experts. Since school boards were merely part-time amateur bodies, it was easy to persuade them that superintendents, as full-time specialists, were better equipped to make policy. Even today, when over 57% of the school board members in B.C. have some college or university education (Conner, 1985), claims are laid to technical expertise.

A candidate for superintendent nowadays is generally required to have a substantial measure of education, often the master's degree in Canada and the doctorate in the United States and to have served a lengthy apprenticeship as teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. By comparison, it is often astonishingly easy to become an elected trustee. . . . [therefore] the disparity in training levels between administrators and trustees is responsible for at least some of the difficulties trustees have in performing their roles. (Coleman, 1974, p. 57)

Presently, in B.C., 16% of superintendents have doctorates and of the remaining, all 84% have their master's.

This expertise has changed from one of scientific management to a "more generalized commitment to the notion that innovations, created professionally, are preferable to responsive policies based upon the values of local consumers of education" (Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman, 1985, p. 7). The system, as it stands, with government funded research, tends to support this notion. Also, since in most districts, 75%

of agenda items are placed there by the superintendent or his staff and 2/3 of agenda items are supported by executive recommendations (Tucker & Zeigler, 1980), this claim may have some validity.

In direct contrast to the view of policy making being dominated by the superintendent are the findings of others who claim that the superintendent is the beleaguered public official, attacked from all sides, constantly facing conflictual situations (Blumberg, 1985; Iannacone & Lutz, 1970; Maeroff, 1974). This group of researchers goes on to assert that although many of these "attacks" are from outside forces, much of the pressure comes from the fact that "such experts are hired by the community and as such can be and are readily removable" (Vidich & Benseman, 1960, p. 38). Iannacone & Lutz (1970) maintain "too often good superintendents are fired by narrowly oriented and vindictive school boards" (p. 202). Blumberg (1985) found that, at times, "the firing of the superintendents occurs less because of his inadequacies than because of the community's need to find a scapegoat for its own inability to resolve its problems" (p. 144). The empirical data from West Virginia has shown that "in West Virginia, over 90% of the superintendents who left their positions within 6 years of appointment were fired" (Martin & Zichefoose, 1980, p. 3). In British Columbia, 42 superintendents left their

positions between 1984 to 1986--however, these figures do include "voluntary" resignations due to retirement and other factors (source: Ministry of Education).

There have been attempts to explain these conflicting findings on the school board-superintendent relationship and control of power and as Boyd (1976) has written "the fact that the opposing camps can each point to research which seems to support their position suggests that more is involved here than simply the biases of observers and participants" (p. 541). It becomes very clear by examining such research that the whole issue of the ability of a board to appoint their own superintendent locally and whether this in turn makes the board more active in policy formation is a most difficult one to assess.

The preceding conclusions not only demonstrate an assortment of conflicting opinions, but also illustrate the varied and complex nature of board-superintendent relationships--a relationship not confined to the issue of local appointment. The attempts to explain these conflicting findings include such noted studies as that of McCarty and Ramsey (1971). Their extensive study documents the diversity of power structures found between communities which in turn influences the scope and function of the school board and ultimately determines the role of the school superintendent. Boyd (1976) noted that those in

administration should pay attention to McCarty and Ramsey's findings and if they choose to ignore the possibilities suggested, they do so at their own peril. Therefore, if one is to do any research in the area of locally appointed superintendents, it is necessary to delve into the power structure of the board to note the nature of the effect upon the superintendent's role and consequently the involvement of the board in policy development.

Descriptive statements are found in the literature but often there is no solid data base upon which to account for the differences in the relationship between boards and superintendents. There are disparate claims as to the average length of tenure of superintendents and the precarious positions they are put into because their status is at the "whim" of the board.

In addition, there is a history of research on school board-superintendent relationships in the U.S.A. where superintendents have been traditionally appointed by their respective boards. Little research, however, has been done in British Columbia on the ramifications of locally appointed superintendents and the effect that this has on the role of the school board and that of the superintendent. In 1982, a joint committee of the BCSTA and the ABCSS examined what factors were necessary if there was to be a harmonious and mutually advantageous relationship between

trustees and superintendents. This study, however, did not examine whether these factors actually do exist between boards and their superintendents. Although a study has been commissioned by the Association of B.C. School Superintendents, no other research has been completed in British Columbia that assesses whether the change to locally appointed from provincially appointed superintendents was an effective one and if it had a significant effect on the control of policy making or on school board-superintendent relations.

At this time, in North America, there is a lack of detailed research which investigates the relationship existing between school boards and their superintendents. This question appears crucial with respect to B.C., since between 1984 and 1986, 56% of the superintendents have resigned or were fired.

Problem Statement

This thesis investigates the impact on board-superintendent relations of the legal change which allowed B.C. school districts, with over 4000 students, to appoint their superintendent locally. Two suburban districts of similar socio-economic status were examined. Both fit into the "moderate-sized" category of school districts and encompass several diverse "communities" into

their district. Both hired their own superintendents after having had provincially appointed ones, and a consulting firm aided in screening applicants according to criteria established by the local school board. Interestingly enough, both individuals were, at that time, assistant superintendents in large urban districts which traditionally had locally appointed superintendents.

More specifically, this thesis examines:

1. the extent and nature of any changes in school board involvement in district operations, and
2. the extent and nature of any changes in the board-superintendent relationship, with particular respect to their relative influence.

In addition, the study seeks to discover what factors went into making for an effective board-superintendent relationship in these two districts.

Research Design

The research method chosen is the case study which compares two relatively heterogeneous school districts of similar socio-economic status. The board members that were involved in the changeover to local appointment and the superintendents appointed as a result were interviewed in order to examine their perceptions of various situations. In addition, legal, economic and political information from minutes of meetings and other public records were examined.

The records provided a check on the data collected during the interview and also provided additional information necessary to develop an understanding of the relationship.

The perceptions that board members and the superintendent had of their respective roles were examined. It is necessary to determine whether or not these roles have been clearly defined and were strictly adhered to by both parties. In order to determine the extent and nature of any changes that have occurred, the community's "zone of tolerance", as interpreted by the board, was examined as well, for Boyd (1976) found that in most communities school officials were free to run the school system according to their professional desires and beliefs providing they did not exceed the boundaries set by the community.

The preceding factors could have a profound effect on whether, in fact, there were any changes in board involvement or in the relationship that the new superintendent developed with the board. Also, the methods used by the superintendent to forestall conflict or to modify the community "zone of tolerance" are examined by looking at communication patterns. Thus, a broader picture of school board-superintendent relationships emerges from the findings.

Limitations of Study

Although there are many outside forces (e.g. teacher's unions, government legislation, interest groups) that have an effect on how both school boards and superintendents act, this study is limited to an examination of the ways in which the school board and superintendent interact with each other within the latitude left for local discretion by the provincial government.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Search for Supporting Literature

Until 1979, the majority of school districts in B.C. were not authorized to select their own superintendents. However, the legislation was changed in 1979 and most boards are now permitted to hire their own superintendents independently.

Although the change was supported by all the parties involved (the Ministry, ABCSS, BCTF, and BCSTA), no research has been completed in British Columbia to determine the ramifications of this change of policy and the resulting effect, if any, on school board-superintendent relations.

An examination of Canadian literature revealed that most articles dealt only with how and why the legislation was changed in their respective provinces and little information was available on the role of the superintendent as an employee of the board, rather than an employee of an outside party. Consequently, it was necessary to search the U.S. literature, which has revealed that the boards in most states have traditionally hired their own superintendents. Even there, however, although allegations were made about the role that the superintendent must play if he/she wishes to preserve his/her job, there was little empirical evidence

as to the consequences of the personnel practice of having the chief executive officer being an employee of the board.

In the search for the qualities that make for good board-superintendent relations, researchers have studied a wide variety of factors. These have included community influences, board practices, complexity of school districts, political acumen and educational levels of the players, together with outside influences--to name just a few of the areas that have been investigated. The realization that most of the factors are interrelated simply adds to the complexity of the relationship that exists between boards and superintendents and makes the researcher's task a most difficult one.

The nature of the factors examined by researchers have also changed over time. In the 1960's and 1970's the research centered mainly on the effect of socio-economic status and community power structure on board-superintendent relations. In the last decade, research has primarily focused on the concept of "political culture" (i.e., subjective beliefs, ideas about social reality, group attitudes, social norms) controlling behavior.

Another disturbing factor became apparent when scrutinizing the literature: speculation was used in many cases rather than concrete data and the processes employed to determine the conclusions were not described in detail.

As a result, it was necessary to examine the topic from a different perspective and group factors according to forces that may have an influence on board-superintendent relations.

Factors Affecting Board-Superintendent Relations

Community factors. McCarty and Ramsey's extensive study (1971) of 51 communities concluded that the type of community tends to reflect in its school board and in the role the superintendent can engage in with the board and the community. There are four basic community power structures: dominated, factional, pluralistic, inert (see Table 1).

Table 1

Types of Community Power

Community Power Structure	School Board	Role of the Superintendent
Dominated	Dominated	Functionary
Factional	Factional	Political strategist
Pluralistic	Status congruent	Professional advisor
Inert	Sanctioning	Decision-maker

The "dominated" power structure is found in a community where the decision-making group is likely the economic

elite. The type of board usually found in such a community is the "dominated". Here the board members share the ideology of the dominant group and readily take advice from them. In most instances, the superintendent in such an area serves a "functionary," that is, he/she carries out policy rather than develops it and is not a true decision-maker.

In a community with the "factional" power structure, durable factions are evident and compete for control over important matters. The "factional" board in such areas is one in which the majority always wins and voting follows set patterns regarding ideologies. A "political strategist" superintendent is necessary in such a situation for if he/she seems to show preferential treatment to the group in power, when the power balance shifts, he/she could be removed.

However, with the "pluralistic" power structure, that is one with no single power group evident, the "status congruent" board is usual. There is no dominant group, with members being equal in status. When this occurs, a "professional advisor" type of administrator emerges, gives advice, which includes alternatives, based on the best educational research and theory and not on the ideologies of the group.

The "inert" power structure displays no active power groups and the board merely "sanctions" what the "decision-making" superintendent suggests without examining

the appropriateness of a policy in terms of community needs or desires (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

Some variations to the norm were found, but generally communities, boards and superintendents adhered to the patterns shown above. The inert community had more variations of board and superintendent types than others since there was no community pressure to impose any form of relationship within a board or on the superintendent. From this study, it was implied that superintendents "whose role playing does not fit the expected pattern. . . have but brief tenure" (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971, p. 204). This is consistent with the findings of Blumberg (1985), Boyd (1975), Gross (1958), Iannaccone & Lutz (1970), and James (1969).

Although Boyd (1976), in his analysis of McCarty and Ramsey's findings, questions their description of "pluralistic" districts, this does not alter the fact that there are definite power structures within communities and these have a distinct effect on board-superintendent relations. Peterson (1974), in his review of literature on American educational politics, found that most findings were inconsistent with McCarty and Ramsey's thesis and that instead of being dominated by a powerful elite or being influenced by shifting coalitions, "local educational policy making is generally dominated by the influence of the top school administrators" (p. 350). The only exceptions to

this were those issues in which superintendents could claim little specialized expertise to bolster their influence.

In spite of the conflicting views expressed above, Boyd (1976) went as far as to assert that "school administrators who ignore the possibilities suggested by McCarty and Ramsey's study do so at their peril" (p. 548). When one looks at board superintendent interactions, therefore, one must remain cognizant of the community power structure as a significant factor affecting such relations.

Although socio-economic status, size, and heterogeneity are given as the factors that affect school board-superintendent relations and the superintendent's power, or lack of it, Gross (1958) found that "size, richness or the political structure of a community are not predictors of school board behavior, nor is relatively high occupational status, average income. . . ." (p. 97, 98).

The more recent research of Zeigler & Jennings (1974) found that size of district is a significant factor for smaller, less urban communities use informal networks to communicate political information, and the board, using these networks, can dominate its superintendent when it needs to. Larger, more urban communities, require formal channels and therefore the superintendent who has the expertise and privileged information that can be exploited in a formalistic setting, can more effectively thwart board control. Concurring with Zeigler & Jennings, Boyd (1976)

found that size alone has an effect on the responsiveness of officials to a community for the larger the community, the more isolated they become from group demands.

Boyd (1975) also concurs with the findings of Minar (1966) that the role of the superintendent is heavily influenced by the socio-economic status of the community. The greater the possession of management resources by the higher than by the lower status districts promoted deference to the expertise of the professional educator. Conversely, the less available management resources in the lower status districts reduced deference to the expertise of the professional educator and increased school board and citizen interference in administrative matters.

As a result of this conflicting evidence, care must be taken when engaged in research to compare communities that do have similar factors in these areas. A researcher must also realize that factors other than these (socio-economic, size, and heterogeneity) are necessary to examine as well in order to account for variations in board-superintendent relations.

Iannaccone & Lutz (1970) sought to understand the causes, processes, and difficulties in local school district politics which need to be taken into account by school officials and concerned laymen if they are to influence future developments in the governing of local school

districts. As a result of their study, two significant factors pertaining to board-superintendent relations became evident. They found that "suburban school districts, especially those not contiguous with a single community, tend to display considerable control of the school district leadership by the educational specialists, particularly the superintendent" (p. 29). This is consistent with the findings of Lyke (1970) who found that school authorities in heterogenous communities are inclined to encapsulate themselves and become unresponsive to public demands in general.

In addition, Iannaccone & Lutz (1970) found that communities undergoing substantial social and economic change ultimately tend to experience a significant shift in the balance of community power which decisively affects educational policymaking. A significant socioeconomic change in a community usually leads, in a few years, to electoral conflict, then to the defeat of an incumbent school board member, and finally to a change in the control of the board. This is generally followed by the involuntary departure of the superintendent, and his/her replacement by a new superintendent whose values are in accord with the values of the new board. The implications of this, for a superintendent who is unable or unwilling to change, are self-evident.

Board factors. Although board factors may not have as profound an effect on board-superintendent relations as those factors which emanate from the community, they too must be considered.

Conner (1985) found that the "average B.C. trustee is forty-five years old, with an education, family income and an occupational peer group higher than the average for the general B.C. population" (p. 59), and therefore, one must be aware of the status level of any boards studied. Since board members are not representative in terms of socio-economic status of the total populace (Cistone, 1975; Coleman, 1974; NSBA survey, 1974), and Goldhammer (1979) found that "although school board members felt that they represented a 'community', [they] were anchored in the interests, values and perspectives of groups in which their own socioeconomic concepts provided common acceptance" (p. 98), one is led to speculate that minority groups have little influence. In turn, status level affects the board-superintendent relationship for those boards with lower than average status among their members "tend to view their district superintendent as an 'employee' rather than as a 'professional'" (Zeigler, Jennings, & Peak, 1974, p. 187), whereas "deference to expertise is more characteristic of middle-to-upper-class professionals than of less affluent classes" (Zeigler, Kehoe & Reisman, 1985, p. 16).

The male-female balance on a board has been found to affect board-superintendent relationships substantially. O'Reilly (1985) determined that women board members felt much more responsive to community and individual complaints and grievances. Where there were at least two woman members, the boards had more internal conflicts since the women demanded open discussions and were not afraid to reveal their differences. They also held the expectation of effective and efficient leadership from the superintendent. Unlike trustees in other parts of North America, Conner (1985) found that B.C. trustees, as a group, are not predominantly male. Thus, from the findings of O'Reilly and Conner, one would expect that boards within British Columbia would not operate as smoothly as boards did a decade ago when they were predominantly male.

Generally school boards are composed of individuals who represent a fairly predictable range of backgrounds, experiences, skills and orientations. The manner in which board members are recruited, that is, the selection of individuals for specific political roles, is of importance. Cistone (1975) maintained that

political recruitment is a central function of the system; for if the political community is to persist over time, there must exist institutionalized means to ensure a steady flow of personnel into governing positions to replace those who die, retire, resign, or fail to retain office. Without the constant renewal of these governing elites, the system would lose its capacity to perform its essential functions. (p.48)

Once recruited and subsequently elected, the new board member must become "socialized" if he/she is to work effectively with the other trustees (Socialization is defined as the process by which individuals selectively acquire the values and attitudes, interests and dispositions, skills and knowledge--that is, the culture--current in the group of which they are, or seek to become a member (Merton, 1957)). Kerr (1964) found that novice school board members were receptive to pressures for conformity that stemmed from both incumbent trustees and from the administration. Since most board members were unfamiliar with the district's activities and programs, their reliance on the administrator and his/her definition of the situation was reinforced.

Coleman (1974) concurs with this by maintaining

that elected representatives are rapidly co-opted by the educational bureaucracy, that they are effectively socialized into their roles by educators, and that their function is seen in legitimizing professional decisions. . . . The influence of professionals on the school trustee is certainly strengthened by the absence of mechanisms for feedback to the elected person from his constituents. (p.55)

One must be cautioned however, with the realization that although this occurs,

in homogenous communities, where administrators, their school boards, and the vast majority of the public tend to be like-minded, it becomes difficult to distinguish 'cooperation' from 'co-optation' in board-staff relations. Why should the community oppose, and the school board not "rubber stamp," the proposals of the educators when these proposals are synonymous with predominant community desires? (Boyd, 1975, p. 120)

The number of years an individual has served as a board member is a factor for "board members who have served for longer periods of time are more inclined to allow the superintendent to control internal decisions" (Hentges, 1986, p. 28). It has been determined that, generally, a trust relationship becomes established between the board and its superintendent and stability develops. As a result, increasingly, the board turns to its administrator for leadership and policy initiation.

Although one of the most important tasks of a school board is the selection of a superintendent of schools, this is all too often done in a haphazard manner. Many school boards, in order to be successful when selecting a compatible chief executive officer, hire consultants since they neither have the time nor generally they are not competent to judge individuals applying for the position (Gross, 1958; Rebore, 1984). Lieberman (1978) determined when a consulting firm is used, that if the criteria for selection are not clearly defined, a consultant's (especially a moonlighting professor acting as a consultant for the firm) favored candidate may be manipulated into the position rather than the best suited one. Rebore (1984) maintained that if "this process [hiring a superintendent] is not handled properly, an individual who does not meet the needs of a specific school system could inadvertently be

selected" (p. 54). The steps suggested to accomplish a satisfactory match are:

1. Appoint a selection committee whose duty it is to monitor the process and be truly representative of the community
2. Establish a budget for the selection process
3. Establish a time frame (6 - 12 months is considered the best as any less time is not adequate)
4. Identify qualifications for the Superintendency and a selection criteria in order to ensure objectivity
5. Develop a recruitment brochure and application form
6. Advertise the position vacancy
7. Screen applicants (usually done by consultants using the criteria previously established) and get the top 5 - 10 candidates
8. Interview the candidates
9. Hire the best candidate

(Rebore, 1984). If the selection process has been done in such an organized manner, the belief is that the screening process produces an ideological match (Boyd, 1975; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

There has been general speculation that prospective administrators tend to seek compatible school systems rather than going to areas where confrontation is likely to occur due to differing ideologies, entrenched forces, or contrasting styles of operation (Boyd, 1975; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). If a board hires from within their system, it tends to prefer the status-quo and the candidate selected rarely will be change-oriented as opposed to a candidate from outside who likely is interested in his professional achievement and who is likely to initiate changes in order to achieve visibility (Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970).

Necessary however, in the success of any superintendent, no matter how he/she is hired, is the fact that his/her responsibilities are precisely laid out, for unless the individual demands this, and the board will adhere to this, he/she will encounter insurmountable difficulty (Reeves, 1969).

The partisan or non-partisan nature of a board and its resulting effect on board-superintendent relations is a contentious issue among reseachers. Zeigler & Jennings (1974) found that competitive partisan politics promotes democracy by making boards more responsive to the public and less likely to be dominated by their superintendent. If a board is partisan in nature, it is less likely to be co-opted by the superintendent and more likely to challenge the superintendent and to formulate and carry out a program based on issues the electorate feels relevant (Jennings, 1975). Boyd (1976), however, disputes the fact that the non-partisan nature of school governance tends to lead to the domination of school policy-making by the superintendent. He feels that because the vast majority of school districts are predominantly middle class in population and school board membership that the values espoused are highly convergent with the professional values of school administrators. Another view is that with non-partisan boards, the member's individual positions are not usually threatened and the board is able to shelter

itself and disclaim any personal responsibility for unpopular decisions (Hansen, 1983). This could present a situation that would be tenuous for a superintendent and have a profound effect on board-superintendent relationships.

More recently, Hentges (1985) disclaims the notion that partisan boards are more responsive for he has found that "the more factionalized the board is and the more frequently it engages in bloc voting, the greater the probability that the superintendent will dominate the policy process" (p.17). His rationale for this fact is that factional boards exist in a confrontational atmosphere and reflect conflict and heterogeneity at the community level. Decisions attempted in such a highly political environment fail to materialize due to the ideologically divided board. Out of frustration, and often for no other reason, board members turn to their superintendent for advice and leadership. Thus, the superintendent's initiatives dominate.

Committees, or lack of such, have been determined to be significant in affecting board-superintendent relationships. School boards do not normally use committees, but those that do are more likely to resist the superintendent. Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman (1985) stated that "when standing committees exist, they can be more readily influenced by interest groups, etc., therefore, less than 1/2 of boards

have such committees" (p. 46). Rather, if the need for a committee arises, ad hoc committees are formed using selected interest groups and individuals. Since those selected become part of the actual committee, they are not forced to serve as protagonists and their cooperation is guaranteed. Also, opinions can be more readily changed if care has been taken to weigh the committee slightly (Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman, 1985).

Clabaugh (1966) when advising school superintendents went as far as to say,

Practically every authority on school administration or school board procedure strongly recommends that boards NOT be organized with standing committees. They point out that there cannot be a proper differentiation between policy making and administration if the board conveys to portions of its membership the responsibility for various phases of the operation of the school system. It seems logical tht anything important enough for board consideration should receive the complete attention of all the board. (p. 33)

Superintendent factors. There are several factors that emanate from the superintendent and his/her position that affect school board-superintendent relations.

Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman (1985) found that both level of education and length of time in a position can have an adverse affect. Level of education can cause problems for a superintendent since it is difficult for him/her to refrain from imposing judgement upon the deliberations of the amateur policy makers. In turn, superintendents with doctoral degrees and little experience tend to be the most

ideologically committed and are less skillful in managing conflicts that occur. However, on the job experience has been found to mediate the negative influence of education (Boss, Zeigler, Tucker, & Wilson, 1976).

It is interesting to note that the higher the level of education the more of a deterrent it is. One would expect that post graduate studies would enable the individual to gain additional knowledge of how to deal effectively with other individuals, to forestall conflict, manage financial and to develop communication techniques. Travers (1978) found that superintendents face the following problems in their positions and must be equipped to deal with the following if they are to be successful in their position:

1. Board members who want to run the show and that do not allow the superintendent to use his specialized training to handle administrative tasks effectively and efficiently
2. Budget cuts
3. Coordinating information
4. Coping with dissent among board members
5. Declining enrollments but increased expenditures due to new programs mandated by law or public fancy
6. Taxpayers
7. Teacher unions and militancy
8. Very vocal special-interest groups
9. Changes in family patterns and attitudes
10. New media
11. Processing regulations from above.

But superintendents, in general, felt that their training had not provided them with a realistic picture of the problems that would occur nor effective techniques for dealing with them (Gross, 1958; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Rebores, 1984).

Other factors can significantly affect relations, for example: the length of time a superintendent spends in a position, his age, and the more experience he has as an administrator. It has not been determined, however, whether this is because there has been a decline in the superintendent's level of hope and idealism or from other conditions.

Success and survival of a superintendent depends

on their political acumen--their ability to sense the character of the competing interests in a situation and to behave in ways that keep these interests and themselves in balance. (Blumberg, 1985, p. 67)

Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman (1985) maintain that if superintendents are really professionally ambitious, they have to be politically astute as well. In addition, it is important not to cause or accelerate splits on boards because as an employee of the board, the superintendent's welfare and professional reputation is dependent on them (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Of special importance to superintendent-board relationships is the manner in which the superintendent handles factional boards (Burlingame, 1981; Reeves, 1969) for if there is even a hint of preferential treatment and the group changes, the superintendent will be removed. If a superintendent is able to manage conflict and factional boards skillfully, he/she can assure themselves long tenure in his position if he/she desires (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Superintendents must strive to build up trust and credibility with their board. Blumberg & Blumberg (1985) found that if a

superintendent behaves in ways that indicates his trust in the board, he will be trusted in return. He gains his credibility as a person who can be trusted, therefore he extends his sphere of influence with the board. (p. 80)

Sometimes a long standing board member will assume a position of authority and if the superintendent acknowledges this (that is, in effect the board member is the lay superintendent above the professional and regularly appointed one), it causes problems. Since board members change, new members may question this authority and the superintendent may find it impossible to extricate themselves from their record of compliance (Reeves, 1969).

In most large school districts the bureaucracy is quite complex. The operations of such a complicated system can be confusing enough for the board but a superintendent may go so far as to make school matters appear, to the lay board, more involved than they really are. As a result, the trustees may come to depend on the superintendent for both proposing policies and implementing them (Schmidt & Voss, 1976). In addition, the bureaucracy may insulate the superintendent from censure by the board for an unpopular proposal as blame for such may be shifted to other administrative individuals.

The superintendent can cause problems, as well, if his/her values are in conflict with those of the board or he/she has not been able to keep disputes within the district under control (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985). In agreement with this are the findings of Hentges (1985) who maintained that "superintendents who are careful to avoid taking stands the majority of the public disagreed with are more apt to control the decision process" (p. 19).

Although it can be difficult for a superintendent to carry out a policy since it is a statement of intended action, it can also be a source of real power. If the policies are not clearly defined, a superintendent is able to control exactly what happens within the district by interpreting policies in such a manner that reflects his/her beliefs (Gross, 1958).

Contracts between school boards and the superintendents vary greatly as to the protection that they offer to the superintendent. If school boards wish to attract or hold individuals with leadership ability, they must guarantee them reasonable freedom to operate away from the unseemly demands produced by the vicissitudes of community conflict. In the 1960's the average tenure of superintendents was 3.7 years (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Reeves, 1969), a relatively short time in which to develop policy and show leadership on controversial issues. The latest AASA figures (1982) show that this has changed to just under 8 years in the U.S.

The report of the BCSTA/ABCSS Joint Committee on Board-Superintendent Relations (1982) recommended a number of formal steps be taken "to ensure the health of the relationship" (p. 6) between boards and superintendents (see Appendix B). They also published Guidelines to the Development of Employment Contracts for Superintendents of Schools. However, boards are not bound to follow such procedures and as a result, contract protection and/or termination procedures may be a source of conflict.

Evaluation procedures, the lack of them or adherence to such are significant factors. Gross (1958) felt that boards were not competent to judge their superintendents since they are laymen. Other researchers feel, rather, the board can, with careful guidance from the superintendent, set up a process whereby evaluation is ongoing and that the community has the kind of necessary leadership to meet any educational challenges. If mistakes are made, providing the zone of tolerance has not been blatantly disregarded, these should be viewed as a lesson and notice of the inadequacies should be given before it is too late for him/her to modify his/her behavior (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Reeves, 1969). A time limit on when improvement is expected and suggestions as to how to improve performance should be inherent in any administrative evaluation (Rebore, 1984). Another effective manner suggested for evaluation by Rebore (1984) is to

permit the superintendent to develop the process as follows:

1. Prepare a list of objectives (5 - 10) to be accomplished during the school year and submit it to the board for consideration
2. Develop a plan of action to carry out these objectives
3. Prepare an interim report for the board
4. Prepare a self-evaluation report on how effectively he/she has met the objectives and submit supporting documentation to the board

The board can then assess the result and prepare a written evaluation along with suggestions on how the superintendent could improve his/her performance.

This procedure is somewhat similar to the BCSTA/ABCSS (1982) recommendations on evaluation (see Appendix C) which stress the importance of careful and effective assessment. Where these procedures have not been followed, it is interesting to note that when evaluations were done, if a superintendent was older or had been in his/her present job for a while, his/her rating is lower than that of a younger man/woman who had been in the field of education for a relatively short period of time. The possible explanation for this occurrence, given by Gross (1958), is that a younger individual has the physical capacity and ambition to work harder.

Other factors. Between the superintendent and school board there often is a lot of dissention as to their respective authority. Although clearly defined by law in

most States, individual boards have policies which further delineate their respective duties. However, in essence, this is not always adhered to and consequently many school systems experience trouble (Gross, 1958). The chief source of contention between boards and their superintendents is the inequality of their relationship--the board controls (by law) and is clearly the dominant partner. They are able to select their executive, prescribe the work functions and also fire him/her. Often they do not provide him/her with the time or personnel to perform the job effectively (Gross, 1958; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

If the board interferes with the execution of policies, or does not support such policies, and interferes with the functioning of the administration, or prevents investigation of matters through proper channels, it should not hold its superintendent responsible for results -- but it usually does anyway (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Reeves, 1969).

In order to shift the balance of power to one that is more favorable to themselves, superintendents will employ diverse tactics, the favorite of which is the power of expertise (Blumberg, 1985; Boss & Zeigler, 1977; Burlingame, 1981; Coleman, 1974; Goldhammer, 1964; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Zeigler, Kehoe, & Reisman, 1985). The superintendent is often able to change the situation by giving rational arguments for opinions given, so that the board will rely

heavily upon his/her knowledge and will rarely vote against him/her when his/her preferences are shown (Brown, Newman, & Rivers, 1985; Reeves, 1969; Zeigler & Jennings, 1974). In addition, by building the reputation of being knowledgeable, he/she is also looked upon as a person who can be depended upon in time of crisis (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Since individual board members have no authority and the board must act as a whole (Gross, 1958; Hentges, 1985; Reeves, 1969), it is possible for a superintendent to browbeat individual board members over to his/her way of thinking by his/her superior ability to use manipulative methods (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971).

When one examines the effectiveness of using the power of expertise, it has been determined that most boards are only prepared to allow this when internal policy issues (matters mostly confined to the school system itself such as educational programs and personnel policies) are involved. With external policy issues (matters such as fiscal issues, school closings, superintendent-board roles) public opinion is seen as carrying as least as much weight as the technical expertise of the superintendent (Boyd, 1976; Hentges, 1986). In addition, Hentges (1986) determined the following variables were related to the board's ability to assert itself, especially on internal policy issues:

1. board interaction with representatives of business and industry
2. board members' past political activity

3. local power groups as sources of information
4. spirited levels of competition for board membership
5. incumbent defeat in the most recent board election
6. involuntary turnover of the superintendent in the past three years.

There are constraints that community values and attitudes place on superintendents. Boyd (1975) believes that,

educators cannot obtain approval (or legitimization) for just any policies or practices they favor, but in fact generally must confine their recommendations and activities to things which are consonant with predominant community values and expectations concerning the schools. (p. 118)

Superintendents must observe the community's "zone of tolerance" if they wish to have decision-making powers (Hentges, 1986). Otherwise they will face the likelihood of controversy and opposition.

If the public is poorly informed or indifferent about educational services, "the vagueness of what the community wants may contribute to the breadth of the zone of tolerance" (Boyd, 1976, p. 552). Moreover, the question of what is "wanted" will vary according to the cultural background and social diversity of a community's population. In more homogeneous and generally smaller districts, it is easier for superintendents to anticipate community preferences since they generally have been hired by the board because their policy preferences and values are in accord with those of the community. In addition, superintendents are threatened by citizen participation and

have seen other educators removed and consciously frame policies and programs that are acceptable to the potentially active and vocal group. In larger urban, and generally more heterogeneous districts, superintendents are able to ignore community opinion and desires more easily since they tend to be quite diversified. The superintendents in such areas are more inclined to encapsulate themselves and become unresponsive to groups in general. If there is "ensuing community controversy" the superintendent is usually able to "ride it out" because demands are diverse and often in competition (Tyke, 1970).

Boyd (1976) maintains that,

to the extent that educators are persuasive and skillful in the use of public relations techniques, they may be able to modify the community zone of tolerance to some degree and reduce the extent to which it constrains them. (p. 552)

There has been an abundance of research on the importance of communication in fostering positive board-superintendent relations. Burlingame (1981) alleged that superintendents must be less than honest and maintain control of information in order to retain their status of experts. He contended that "retention of power by superintendents depends heavily on mystification and cover-up" since honesty can only work well if there is total agreement between the board and the superintendent on goals sought, means used, role definition, and historical precedents--"but superintendents know well that

schools as organizations lack these characteristics" (p. 429-433).

Blumberg & Blumberg (1985) refute Burlingame's allegations by suggesting that he is not a superintendent but rather a student of educational organizations. They feel that Burlingame was not advocating lying or deliberately falsifying the facts but rather was suggesting that the superintendent should not tell all that he/she knows in the sense that he/she provides honest responses only to those questions that are asked.

A board member should be informed on matters of which they would have little knowledge if it were not for the training of the superintendent. Therefore, the superintendent must be frank and honest in presenting both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the recommendations so that sound informed decisions can be made to the betterment of education in the community (Gross, 1958; Reeves, 1969).

Fultz (1976), Isherwood (1984), Rebore (1984), Vidich & Bensman (1960), and the IEL study on school boards (1986), all claim that openness in communication is of primary importance if a superintendent is to retain his/her position. Blumberg & Blumberg (1985) even go as far as to suggest that by providing the board with information, even if it was not asked for, keeps the board informed but also lets the board know that the superintendent is interested in

keeping them informed and is not threatened by criticism. In addition, the superintendent communicates the message that the board is entitled to the information as the policy making body and its members are intelligent people who will use the information to make appropriate decisions.

The 1986 IEL study came to similar conclusions but viewed it as a ploy by the superintendent.

Board access to information is critical to informed decision making. . . . Indeed, superintendents spend a great deal of time "servicing" information needs--in some instances almost to the point of overwhelming the board with information. Some observers, indeed, have expressed the suspicion that this is a deliberate administration strategy. (p. 23)

"Processors of information wield tremendous power and influence in defining issues, controlling the flow of information to the board, and establishing the formal agenda" (Hentges, 1985, p. 10). Zeigler & Tucker (1980) found that 75% of items are placed on the agenda by the superintendent or a member of the central office staff. Most superintendents feel they should develop agendas and proposals for their school boards, because the policy process begins with the development of a proposal.

By purposeful scheduling of both the type and sequence of items to be considered and at what date an item is brought forward, the outcome of votes can be influenced effectively (Awender, 1985). Pois (1964) found that the board's activities could be effectively curtailed "by the practice of having the agenda for board meetings consist

almost exclusively of reports" (p. 429). The board may make minor amendments to a report but in only very rare circumstances would they change it totally.

In addition, the time frame in which agendas are available prior to board meetings can be critical. Communications can be written with so much jargon that unless the trustee has the time and patience to translate it or muster enough courage to question what it says in a board meeting, he/she is at a loss. If the trustee does not have sufficient opportunity to examine all aspects of a proposal and to prepare arguments for or against such agenda items, they become more dependent upon the superintendent and his/her recommendations.

Outside factors. Many of the forces that affect board-superintendent relations emanate from outside the community.

It has been argued that the influence of teacher's groups/union, special interest groups, provincial legislation and minority language legislation (Coleman, 1977; Downey, 1977; Isherwood, 1984) have an effect on the manner in which a superintendent can effectively work with a board. Hentges (1985) found that if there is an excessive amount of pressure from various interest groups, boards may acquiesce to dominance by their chief executive. However,

if a board is particularly responsive to the demands of its constituents or teachers, an effect may occur on the degree of control that they exercise in policy making. This may in turn put the locally appointed superintendent at a disadvantage if the board decides not to accede to outside influences but needs a scapegoat if they are to maintain their own positions (Blumberg, 1985).

Techniques Used by Successful Superintendents

Circumstances arise when superintendents must act at variance with some of their own values. They must be able to handle a wide variety of tasks simultaneously or stress, and thus conflicts, will occur. They may even have to initiate conflict to achieve goals which ultimately improve how the schools are operating (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Methods of conflict management vary greatly with superintendents. In order to survive as a superintendent, one must continually take the pulse of the community and be alert for potential sources of conflict. A superintendent must be adept at anticipating, confronting, containing, individualizing and diminishing the three types of conflict situations--subordinate, superordinate, and lateral--if he/she wishes to assure him/herself tenure.

Blumberg & Blumberg (1985) suggest that superintendents answer the following questions when deciding whether to get

involved in a conflict or not:

- what is at stake?
- is it worth it?
- chances of winning or losing?
- costs for winning or losing?

In general, if boards must be treated with "kid gloves" in order for superintendents to keep their positions as implied in Blumberg & Blumberg (1985), Burlingame (1981), Iannaccone & Lutz (1970) and McCarty & Ramsey (1971) it is necessary to examine what this entails. It has been suggested that superintendents must appear "learned", "judicious", "honest", and "reasonable" in situations (Burlingame, 1981, p. 439) or that they quietly build up a power base within local lay groups (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970).

Burlingame (1981) goes against other researchers when he suggests the following "Hierarchy of Tactical Rules" in order to retain power:

1. Act like a superintendent so that others can know how to act
2. Anticipate that ignorance will produce more positive than negative outcomes
3. Stifle conflict by denial, bolstering, and differentiation
4. Provide simple solutions for human problems, complex solutions for technical problems
5. Don't decide -- help or hinder others to decide
6. If you must decide, make the second best answer.

Once again there is no agreement as to the precise role a superintendent must enact to be successful. However,

McCarty & Ramsey's conclusion must be noted.

Conventional wisdom precribes that the board superintendent relationship must be based not only on external forms but also on the inner spirit of democratic principle; in essence, both parties must be mutually respectful of each other's positions. It logically follows that an educational program will flourish only when it is led by both an effective board and an effective executive who are able to work together cooperatively. (1971, p. 218)

Mutual respect and cooperation are vital if a district is to progress and have a minimum of disruptions. The quality of the relationship that exists between the board and the superintendent directly affects the quality of education received by children in the district (Rebore, 1984).

Implications for this Study

From the literature studied, it is clear that there are a wide variety of factors that affect superintendent-board relations and these must be examined closely if one is to determine:

1. the extent and nature of changes in school board involvement in district operations,
2. the extent and nature of any changes in the board-superintendent relationship, with particular respect to their relative influence

that occurred when school boards started to appoint their superintendents locally.

The relationship that exists is a very complex one and many factors are inter-related. Both the superintendent and the board can be to blame for the success or failure of a superintendent--and both must bear the responsibility for the relationship.

The socio-economic status and community power structure factors studied and determined to have an effect on board-superintendent relations by the early researchers are easy to control and examine when doing a comparative case study. Of more importance to a thorough understanding of the very complex relationship that exists are the cultural beliefs. Mitchell (1980) explains this by saying

an adequate understanding of school governance and management must involve a theoretical framework which brings ideological beliefs into proper focus. Only after the ideological belief systems of district citizens, school board members, and professional educators have been effectively mapped can we expect to understand and predict how governance decisions will be made or educational programs enacted in the schools. (p. 443)

Thus, an individual could control or limit the capacity of school boards. Conversely, school boards having a shared "ideology" could hire a superintendent to carry it out and he would become the "beleaguered" official.

Research on board-superintendent relations therefore must examine not only the very evident factors but also delve into such areas if it is to come to any significant conclusions.

Due to the fact that there is conflict between researchers as to the effect of certain variables, care must be taken to ensure that these factors are not the main cause of the differences between the two districts studied. To avoid this, the following critical factors have been controlled as follows (see Table 2).

Other factors, though not as critical when examining board-superintendent relations, have still been determined to have an effect. Although it is not possible to control these, they must be examined carefully to see if they cause differences between the boards. By use of a questionnaire the following factors will be noted.

Board Factors

- status level of trustees
- male-female balance
- how members were recruited
- years as a board member
- education level of individual members

Superintendent Factors

- level of education
- length of experience
- age

The above will then be looked at in relationship to other data obtained by interviewing since they must not be used in isolation as the only determinants of how boards and their superintendents react to each other.

Data from school board minutes, policy manuals and other school board records will be used to determine whether the responsibilities of the board and the superintendent

Table 2

Factors Controlled in Study

Variable	How Controlled
<u>Community Factors</u>	
Size of district	Both considered moderate
Not contiguous with a single community	Each district made up of several communities, each of which elects trustees from their area only to serve on the district board
Not undergoing substantial social and economic change	This occurred several years earlier in both districts
<u>Board Factors</u>	
Consulting firm used in the hiring process	Board established clear guidelines for criteria and interviewed and made the final selection from the firm's short-list of candidates
Superintendent hired from outside district	Both candidates came from very large districts, outside the area they were hired
Non-partisan boards	All trustees ran as independents
<u>Superintendent Factors</u>	
Level of experience	Both had never been superintendents prior to their present appointment
Where they came from	Both came from districts that traditionally had locally-appointed superintendents
<u>Other Factors</u>	
Provincial Government Restraint Program	Both hired as restraint program was in effect

were clearly defined and if any changes in these definitions occurred during the following two years. Evaluation procedures of the superintendent's performance, where they originated from and their effect on contract negotiations are of interest also.

Committee structure--the use of or lack of--must be examined as well and can be accomplished by comparing any changes in routine prior to the superintendent's arrival with proceedings after. Data from school board records, interviews of the board members and the superintendent should be analysed and triangulated to give a complete picture of the effect of this factor.

Because so much of the previous research has focussed on how the superintendent "manipulates" the board by use of various techniques such as

- controlling the agenda
- controlling communication flow
- power of expertise
- altering the zone of tolerance
- conflict management techniques

these must be examined thoroughly.

Since agenda making is a most critical factor, several sources of data must be used to determine who controls this. If the structure of the agenda changed and its format altered (as seen in the school board records), one must determine how and why this was done by interviewing both parties [trustees and superintendent]. Where most of the

items were initiated from is of prime importance as it clearly shows who is controlling the policy making in the district--the board or the superintendent.

Communication flow and whether the power of expertise has been used to prevent control by the trustees must be determined in this study. This can be accomplished by asking such questions of the trustees as:

- how often do you meet with the superintendent individually?
- who initiates the contacts and for what purpose?
- when the superintendent makes recommendations, how many alternatives are given?
- does the board ever take a stance that goes against the preferred position of the superintendent?
- on what issues has the board disagreed with the superintendent?

This also allows the researcher to break contentious issues into whether they are internal or external policy decisions and to determine if the board exerts its influence on less educational matters (e.g. school closings, site locations) or is influenced by the superintendent in all areas.

The "zone of tolerance," although referred to by many researchers and thought to be a critical factor, is much more difficult to research. However, since it presents another important variable, it must be considered also.

The determination of the community's zone of tolerance was accomplished by previous researchers through examination of what community networks exist to communicate information to the politicians and also through examination of the selection process for trustees. Although it is not

possible, in this study, to establish precisely what networks exist in the communities studied, by means of questioning the trustees as to how they keep in touch with community wishes should help to answer this question. In turn, the superintendent must be asked about his sources of information regarding the attitudes and preferences of the community and how this affects his proposals to the board.

Recent researchers have made much of the political acumen of superintendents. Conflict management techniques used in handling board disputes, keeping the community abreast of changes, and so forth, are important to examine. By determining the extent of and how conflicts have been avoided, contained or controlled, it will be possible to see how this factor effects board-superintendent relations.

The factors in such a relationship are numerous and care must be taken in analysing the data obtained. It cannot be collected by the traditional methods of researchers and it is not possible to analyse the results quantitatively.

Since it is such a complex task and the implications of this research are far-reaching, particular attention must be paid to interviewing procedures. Analysis of qualitative data has been a contentious issue for over a decade, but it has its purpose in such studies. When done with deliberation and the data analysed objectively, it is as valid as the traditional forms of research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Rationale

This study is primarily one which deals with people's perceptions, motives and values and the effect that they have on determining school board-superintendent interactions. A very complex relationship exists between school boards and their superintendents. Although legally, school boards have the authority by law for the district, its policies, its budget, and its programs, while the superintendent is classified as the board's chief executive officer who receives his/her authority and responsibility from the board, this does not explain how boards and superintendents, in actuality, work together. Also, one cannot understand the role that the superintendent enacts in a community unless one understands the conflicts that must be anticipated, confronted, and diminished. However, one must be cautioned when doing this type of research not to focus exclusively on those instances where conflict was episodic. Therefore, a different mode of inquiry, the "naturalistic," must be employed. This form of inquiry has been found to be more suitable than the scientific when dealing with how people define situations, their motives and perceptions and where there is a

possibility of different perspectives on the subject in question. In addition, it may be valuable when there are a number of interacting variables such as there are in a board-superintendent relationship rather than a few independently important variables.

Since the survey research method is limited in scope, in-depth interviews which are carefully designed to bring out information on beliefs, perceptions and behavior must be used. Yin (1981, p.5) has found that case studies are good where there are "too many 'variables' for the number of observations to be made, thus making standard experimental and survey designs irrelevant." He stated also that "these designs [standard experimental and survey designs] may be used for some subportions of a case study" and therefore a questionnaire will be used to obtain statistical data only. It is possible for such an investigation of board-superintendent relationships to use a varied approach, but as this investigation deals with only 2 out of 75 districts in British Columbia, it was conducted as a case study.

Research Design

This thesis is a comparative case study, contrasting relatively heterogeneous school districts of similar socio-economic status. In order to examine the question of

board-superintendent relations, the research design is a case study type that examined both the board members' and superintendent's perceptions of various situations. Since each of the boards under study originally hired their present superintendent several years ago, the board members who were involved in the change are the ones surveyed, rather than the present ones, in an attempt to determine the change in relationship brought about by the 1979 legislation.

It was the intent of the researcher to interview the total board since the interest was in studying the internal politics of the board as a whole decision making unit rather than as individuals. This is especially important for "when one's object of inquiry is a collective decision-making body, there are irreducible properties of that body which cannot be analysed by focusing upon the behavior of the individuals who compose it" (Eulau, 1969, p. 874). However, for each district, it was not possible to interview the total board. With Board A, one trustee had moved to a remote community and consequently a personal interview with her was not feasible. In order to obtain the participation of District B in the study, the researcher was not permitted to interview one former trustee who had caused difficulties while on the board. Since the cooperation of this district was vital in order to control certain variables, the researcher had no choice but to comply.

Only two districts were examined in this study, but care was taken to ensure that they were very similar in the following ways:

- both classified as "moderate sized" school districts
- length of tenure of present superintendent
- area similarity (not too much industrial base, suburban with some rural)
- rich diversity of socio-economic conditions

Also, neither of these suburban school districts is contiguous with a single community, a factor which according to Iannaccone & Lutz (1970) presents another major variable in superintendent-board relations.

Data Sources

The data used in this study was collected from three different sources:

1. trustees from both districts that were involved in the change-over
2. locally-appointed school superintendents of both districts
3. document analysis (legal, economic, and political information from district documents and local newspapers).

Interviews were conducted with all available board members involved in the change (Board A--8 members, Board B--6 members) along with the superintendents. Although

the purpose of the interview was to really determine beliefs, expectations and the quality of the relationship with the superintendent, a brief oral questionnaire was included at the end of each school board member's interview in order to determine the composition of the board (average age, male/female ratio, educational level, occupation, etc.), and other variables in board-superintendent relations.

Interviews were conducted with each superintendent and they also completed a brief questionnaire to determine certain information that could have a bearing on the board-superintendent relationship.

Although a good deal of the necessary information is identical for both superintendents and their boards, specific data pertinent to each role was needed as well. Therefore, separate questionnaires were developed for the two groups of respondents.

At the two sites, legal, economic, and political information from minutes of meetings and other public records was examined. Communication patterns were of particular interest in the written records. The records provided a check on the data collected through the interviews and provided further insight into board-superintendent relations.

Data Collection

Prior to any data collection, letters (see Appendix D) were sent to the two superintendents asking permission to conduct research regarding how their respective districts adapted to the change of appointing superintendents and if this indeed resulted in further school board involvement in district operations. Although many individuals were no longer school trustees, by obtaining the cooperation and participation of the superintendents and having them act as the key informants (defined by Gorden, 1969, p. 106, as one who supplies information on the local field situation, assists in obtaining information, locates or contacts respondents, and relays information during the progress of the study to help meet its objectives), facilitated cooperation for the interview process.

Once permission and cooperation was obtained, the board members were contacted by a letter (see Appendix E) which introduced the researcher, assured them of the school district's permission, provided a brief description of the research project, asked for their participation and ensured them confidentiality. The letter informed them that they would be contacted during the following week to arrange an interview time and location.

The superintendents were also contacted for appropriate interview times.

Documents. School district agendas and minutes were examined for the year immediately preceding the change and the two years after the change to determine if there was a difference in involvement by the board of school trustees in policy formation after the appointment of a locally selected superintendent. The data obtained was categorized into internal (such matters as the school curriculum and personnel policy) and external (such matters as decisions on school construction, facilities, and finance) policy decisions since both Boyd (1976) and Hentges (1985) found that there is a significant difference between the involvement of the school board in these two issues. Also, other pertinent information on the workings of the board, (e.g. committee structure, agenda structure and making, recommendations for action) was analysed. Reports of committees, related newspaper articles, and the policy book were examined as well.

The interview process. The interviews were scheduled ahead of time, with the location of the interview selected by the special respondents (defined by Gorden, 1969, p. 107, as one who gives information directly relevant to the objectives of the study; is selected because they occupy a unique position in the community, group or institution being studied; their unique position qualifies them to give special information, either on their own thoughts and actions as they function in that particular

position, or on their observation of others' feelings, thoughts, and actions from their special vantage point; and give information on the structural aspects of the group, institution or community). The scheduling was done by telephone, after the respondents received their letters. The purpose of the study was carefully reiterated, where necessary, and the respondents were given the opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of the study. Once again, the anonymity of both the district and individuals was ensured so that the participants would be open with their responses.

The interview was of the scheduled type because this allows for "high topic control, is more efficient and effective in obtaining uniform coverage, precision and reliability of measurement" (Gorden, 1969, p. 48).

Prior to interviewing any of the respondents, the interview schedule was pretested with an assistant superintendent in order to determine the clarity of the questions and to see if they obtained the data necessary for the study. Also, this pretesting enabled the interviewer to analyse her interviewing techniques and improve her interviewing skills. Appropriate revisions were made prior to interviewing the respondents and no changes were made after the interviews commenced in order that valid comparisons could be made between the two boards.

The interview consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendices F and G) and predetermined probes were used when it was necessary to obtain more information than the respondent had freely given or remembered. The interviewer only spoke during the interview to encourage responses and followed the pre-set schedule with very little deviation.

The interview for both the boards and the superintendents sought information in four main categories:

1. Role definition
2. Communication patterns
3. Decision making process
4. Zone of tolerance

with the rationale for these selections as follows.

It was necessary to determine the perception that board members and the superintendent have of their respective roles and the extent to which they are complementary. In turn, communication patterns and the decision making process must be examined if one is to understand how much and what kind of change there has been in the board's policy making. Since the zone of tolerance can have a marked affect on exactly how a superintendent acts, one has to determine how much latitude the superintendent is allowed by the board members as representatives of the community.

These categories combined give an overall picture of board-superintendent relations and help one understand fully what is now occurring within these school districts that contrasts with previous patterns when superintendents were

provincially appointed. In addition, these areas permitted the researcher to determine the degree of influence exerted by both board and superintendent as well as changes that have occurred with respect to their relative power.

Interviews were planned to be one session of approximately one hour in length for each of the trustees and slightly longer for the superintendents. Generally this was the average time required, although one interview was only 45 minutes in length while another required 95 minutes. In spite of the time difference, all trustees received exactly the same questions. Interviews for Board A took place between April 6, 1988, and May 11, 1988, while Board B took place between June 14, 1988 and July 9, 1988.

All interviews were tape recorded and notes were taken. Each tape was then transcribed, verbatim, shortly after the interview. At the completion and approval of the project, tapes and their transcriptions were destroyed. A summary of the findings was sent to each superintendent and trustee and a copy of the completed thesis was presented to each district.

Questionnaires. The questionnaire (see Appendix H) for the school trustees gathered information relating to their

1. age
2. sex
3. marital and family status
4. level of education
5. career
6. reason for running for office
7. length of time as a school trustee

at the time when the superintendent change occurred. The questionnaires for each of the districts were identical and were examined in order to help account for possible variations in the data results between the districts.

The questionnaire (see Appendix I) for the superintendents asked for the following information (at the time they were appointed):

1. age
2. marital and family status
3. level of education, majors, and when completed
4. length of time at the board office level (supervisor, director, assistant superintendent, etc.)
5. size of district previously worked in.

Data asked for in the questionnaire have been found, in previous research, to be important variables in the relationship that a superintendent develops with the board.

Data Reliability

Although only 8 of 9 Board A members and 6 of 7 Board B members were interviewed, it was still possible for the researcher to examine the internal politics of the board as a whole decision making unit rather than as the behavior of individuals. Several of the interview questions were designed with the chance of not being able to talk to the entire board. These questions looked at the board as a corporate body and delved into how it operated. Information obtained from the individual trustees on these questions was

found to be in agreement in all aspects, thus showing that the omission of interviewing one trustee from each board does not alter the findings in this study.

Since much of the literature on board-superintendent relations has been drawn from research in the United States, the results contained in this thesis are much more applicable to the Canadian situation than that data even though this is only a tiny sample of school districts in British Columbia (2 of 75) and generalizations drawn therefore are somewhat limited. As Greenhill (1977, p.91) expressed, "There is clear line of research and commentary on the erosion of local governance in the United States which needs to be tempered before it is drawn upon by analysts and practitioners in Canada."

Using the technique of triangulation, (defined by Stake, 1979, as trying to arrive at the same meaning by three independent approaches) the interviews of both parties, questionnaires, and document analysis provided an excellent means of increasing the validity of the findings.

One factor that may have been an inhibitor in receiving relevant information is that often respondents may forget exact details since the events occurred several years ago. However, the knowledge that a length of time had occurred since the changeover, warned the interviewer that special techniques and tactics were necessary to help refresh the

respondent's memory. By having thoroughly researched the written records prior to the interview, the researcher was able to guide/refresh the sequence of events in the trustee's memory when necessary.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires. Data from the questionnaire was collated for each board and then the results from the respective categories were compared to determine if there was any significant difference in the board's composition. The results were tabulated in Table 8 for clarity.

Data received on the questionnaire for the superintendent was examined to give a summative profile of the CEO's personal background. The information obtained was compared to determine if there were any meaningful disparities that might account for variations in the manner in which superintendents work with their respective boards.

Interview data. Although it was very time-consuming to transcribe every audio-tape, it provided the researcher with a thorough understanding of how the board worked as a whole, rather than as a group of individuals.

Information obtained from each interview was examined separately at first, then compiled by district. The responses to the open-ended questions were analysed and due to the enormous amount of data that resulted from each

interview, mainly those broad categories of variables which had emerged as most important, in review of the literature, were used.

The predetermined categories for examination were:

1. role definition
2. communication patterns
3. decision making process
4. zone of tolerance

Through examination of the individual responses, certain subcategories were evident and determined to have an effect on the board superintendent relations under study. In addition, previous research has shown that some of these factors may be the cause of variations in the manner a superintendent is able to work effectively with his board. The information was broken down into subsections as follows:

Role definition

- unanimity and clarity of ideals when hiring
- understanding and adherence to roles
- evaluation procedures

Communication Patterns

- information giving/receiving
- channels
- recommendations
- internal and external issues

The Decision Making Process

- committee structure
- agenda making
- involvement of
 - trustees in process
 - superintendent in process

Zone of Tolerance

- community networks used
 - by trustees
 - by superintendent
- trustee recruitment
- expectations of community
- conflict management
- information distribution to community

Other pertinent factors

- district situation in past
- role of the consultant
- socialization of board members
- political acumen of superintendent

In addition, where other data that could have a bearing on the relationship emerged, it was noted for further study.

Once data were categorized for individual trustees (see Appendix J for description of categorization methodology), the information was collated for each district, using the categories and subsections above, in order to give a total picture of how the board operated as a corporate body. Only items either mentioned by at least 1/3 of the trustees in a district, collaborated by the superintendent, or reinforced by document research, are included as being reliable information.

Information received from the superintendent was also broken down into the forementioned sections and subsections. The material obtained was compared to that given by the board members individually and as a whole in order to determine the similarity of board-superintendent responses.

Document analysis. Upon completion of the analysis of interview data, documents were examined, in detail, to provide a check on data received in the interviews. It was possible to substantiate the material in the following manner:

Role definition

- policy book

Communication patterns

- examination of agenda
- board meeting minutes

Decision making process

- examination of agenda prior to /and at the end of the first 2 years
- board meeting minutes

Zone of tolerance

- questionnaire
- public records (newspaper, policy statements, published reports)
- board meeting minutes

This triangulation method allowed the researcher to obtain collaboration for all the findings. The findings thus became more plausible when the data was similar. Also, the triangulation of data provided a safeguard against any bias or error caused by distortion of perceptions over time.

Summary comparisons. Each board was examined separately and a report of the findings for each as to

1. the extent and nature of any changes in school board involvement in district operations, and
2. the extent and nature of any changes in the board-superintendent relationship, with particular respect to their relative influence

is given in the succeeding chapters. In addition, since this is a comparative case study of two school districts, the information obtained from each district was compared in order to determine what variations occurred between the boards in their relations with their superintendent.

Conclusions were drawn as to if those variations were relevant factors in determining a successful relationship.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Outline of Findings

Even before any analyses and comparisons of the individual trustee and superintendent interviews were performed, the impressions obtained during the interview process made it clear that both boards were very satisfied with the manner in which they worked with their superintendent. Although each superintendent employed a different style of operation, many techniques that they used to work successfully in their respective districts were similar.

Since this is a comparative case study of two school districts, this and the next chapter are therefore organized in the following manner. The data obtained from each board are presented separately, using the following categories and subcategories:

Role definition

- unanimity and clarity of ideals when hiring
- understanding and adherence to roles
- evaluation procedures

Communication patterns

- information giving/receiving
- channels
- recommendations
- internal and external issues

The decision making process

- committee structure
- agenda making
- involvement in the process by
 - a) trustees
 - b) superintendent

Zone of Tolerance

- community networks used by
 - a) trustees
 - b) superintendent
- trustee recruitment
- expectations of the community and the responsiveness of the board
- conflict management by the superintendent
- information distribution to the community

Other pertinent information

- district situation in past
- the role of the consultant
- socialization of board members
- political acumen of superintendent

This was done in order to obtain a complete profile for each district and to report on the:

1. extent and nature of any changes in school board involvement in district operations, and
2. the extent and nature of any changes in the board-superintendent relationship, with particular respect to their relative influence.

The final chapter compares the composition and the operations of the two districts. The aspects of each operation that were similar are noted firstly and then those factors that were different are compared.

Board A

Role Definition

Unanimity and clarity of ideals when hiring. Board A set about hiring a new superintendent when their acting superintendent expressed his intention to retire. Following the usual procedure, they outlined their expectations and employed a consulting firm to come up with a list of possible candidates. Prior to meeting with any of the individuals, they discussed criteria that they felt were desirable and in the interviews questioned the candidates to determine which, if any, the candidates possessed.

During the interviews with the researcher, the trustees were asked specific questions regarding the criteria that they had established as being important when they hired their superintendent. All eight respondents felt that openness and the ability to communicate well with individuals at all levels was of paramount importance. Although they had had an excellent relationship with their previous administrator, they felt that "he held things back from us and we didn't want that" (A-6). With the future superintendent, the trustees wanted their questions answered fully in order that they would be able to gain the knowledge that would enable the board to make sound educational decisions. Over 75% of the board members stated that they were used to playing an active role in the policy formation and decision making in the district and emphasized that they

did not wish this aspect to change. One trustee stated, "A clear majority of trustees felt that it was inappropriate for the school superintendent, either by default or by assertiveness, to lead the school district political decisions" (A-4).

Effective communication was the other criterion that all trustees agreed upon. This involved not only the superintendent's dealing with the trustees, but other individuals as well, be they those in the education area (fellow administrators, principals, teachers), the unions (CUPE and the Teachers' Association), the community (parents, non-parents, business and community leaders) or the ministry of education.

According to 6 of the 8 trustees, the ability to involve others in the decision making process was the third main area of expertise desired. They "didn't want somebody who saw his role as managing everybody to some preconceived idea" (A-1). Rather more of a team management style was deemed necessary if the district was going to carry on in the same vein. An individual who had the ability to receive and accept input from staff that was contrary to what he/she might have thought in the beginning would allow for this.

Age was mentioned by 38% of the respondents as being a factor that helped them decide between the candidates after the interview process was completed. These trustees stated that they did not want a young hotshot who would come in

and shake up the district while trying to make his/her mark. Rather, a mature but enthusiastic individual with a well rounded background and with a maximum of 10 years before retirement was desired. It was felt that such an individual would have time enough to put their ideas into effect, monitor them and make any necessary changes, but would not be prone to negativity or to stagnate and let the district operations slide slowly down.

Understanding and adherence to roles. The major role that all the trustees perceived they had was one of making policy, which is in accord with the B.C. School Act. They were not concerned that the administration gave some input into the formation of policies, providing that the administration carried out said policies in accord with the board's wishes, professionally and properly. There was a realization by half of the trustees that the input by the CEO was, at times, necessary since he has the responsibility to make sure that the School Act is followed and that "all the policies and things that are in place are following the law" (A-1).

There was a strong feeling on the part of the respondents that the job of a school trustee was a political one and that the board handled the political aspects of a school district's operations. These included:

- assessing what is needed to allow for the best education for students,
- assessing what the community is prepared to support,
- interacting with the community to gain support,
- and determining school closures.

One trustee aptly summed up the feeling of consensus by the board.

You don't become a trustee to have the superintendent tell you what to do. You become a trustee to try to bring to the district what you feel the people of the district want. Because otherwise you might as well not have trustees. You might as well just let the superintendent run it. (A-2)

The trustee's role is in contrast to the role of the administrator whose job, all parties expressed, was to make the administrative decisions and to be unbiased with the information given on political issues. The feelings, as revealed by the board members, are in accord with the district policy on the duties of the Superintendent of Schools where the majority of items deal with staffing practices and administrative decisions on night school classes, distribution of non-commercial literature and lunch hours. The other duties clearly stated in the policy are:

- assist the Board in determining...
- offer advice to the Board on...
- advise and assist...

which permit the CEO to perform such duties as the board requests.

In addition, 3 of the 8 individuals felt that the board's role was to hire good people at the administrative level and then to monitor the administrative process in the district. A policy allowing for an annual assessment of the superintendent's performance was established when the board hired their present superintendent. In addition, a provision covering such evaluation is in the superintendent's employment contract and is strictly adhered to by both parties.

The respondents mentioned a number of matters which are not listed as duties, as such, in the policy book but on which there seemed to be an unwritten agreement between the board and the superintendent. The board and superintendent were in complete agreement that one of the administrator's main responsibilities was to keep the trustees informed at all times. The CEO was also to set goals for the district in conjunction with the board and to ensure that there was complete fairness and equity within the district and between schools. The board and superintendent share the responsibility of representing the school district to the community.

Evaluation. The necessity of evaluation procedures was expressed by the trustees as well as the superintendent. Yearly evaluations of the superintendent, assistant superintendents and the secretary treasurer are required by both policy and contract.

The system, itself, was evaluated shortly after the arrival of the superintendent in order to determine concerns or needs that had to be addressed. The trustees felt that it was desirable to continue a periodic review of the philosophy and aims of the board and so have included this in policy along with an assessment of the superintendent's goals and objectives. This has led to the establishment of yearly goals which assist in a continuous monitoring of the district. "The superintendent then knows what he has to do. What he is supposed to accomplish. What direction he's heading in so that he's heading in the same direction as the board" (A-7). After six months, the superintendent reports to the board as to how the district is progressing in meeting those objectives. At the end of the year, a complete evaluation is given to the board. The board, as a whole, felt that this was a significant change, or as one trustee summed it up,

Really important to him [the superintendent] was that the district had a set of goals and be working toward those goals. We had had them in the past but they weren't up front the same way he wanted to see them and he felt that they should be more visible. That there should be more ownership of them and that we should make more of a point of judging how we are doing according to these goals.
(A-1)

Evaluation of this nature was not in policy until after the present superintendent's arrival and now is an integral part of the district operations.

Communication Patterns

Information giving and receiving. There was a consensus by all parties that it was extremely important for trustees to know and understand as much as possible about matters so they could perform their duties well. To that end it was the responsibility of the superintendent to see that they were well informed. The entire board felt that the superintendent endeavored to keep the board informed on all matters. These included, "Where there are problems, things that we are dealing with that might be problematic, or things that might come to their attention that occur in the district" (A-5). They had wanted more information than they had received from the previous administrator since "we felt that we didn't always get all the information that we should get" (A-4).

The trustees receive an information package weekly which contains about 50 pages of information, in bulk form. This package may contain small memos and even large reports. Trustees mentioned that after reading the communications, as they became more experienced with the district personnel, they were able to key in on the correct board office person to contact, rather than the superintendent, if they wished to have further information on an item.

The superintendent felt that he made himself available at all times to deal with trustee concerns and the "secretary understands that if a trustee has problems, that's a #1 priority" (A-S). If one trustee requests any information from administration, it is freely given and the superintendent sends it to all board members so they are equally informed. To ensure that this practice is adhered to, a district policy exists which states, "Any information provided by Administration in writing to an individual Trustee shall be sent to all trustees."

The superintendent mentioned also that if all trustees but one have a clear understanding of an issue, "We'll prepare some material to give out to all trustees with the specific aim for the one trustee to try to explain" (A-S).

There was a feeling by two of the trustees that the Teachers' Association and CUPE were also kept well enough informed and a part of things in order that "they will understand why we have to do the things we have to do" (A-1). The board members received input from these groups, as well, on issues that concerned the district employees.

Since the district uses a number of advisory committees to help give feedback from interested parties, a trustee representative may sit in on some of these groups. They participate on behalf of the board, and because everything is done as a total board, the feeling of one trustee was that, "Every trustee has a pretty good sense about the

corporate feeling of the board" (A-1). The trustee not only carries the board's point of view to these advisory committees but also brings back everything that arises so that the board can handle it as they see fit.

Channels. Although the opportunity exists so that trustees can come in and discuss matters with the superintendent they rarely do so. All the trustees felt that, in general, they initiated any meetings, not the CEO, and usually these were phone conversations rather than visits with the superintendent in his office. Four of the trustees usually bypassed the superintendent and went directly to the secretary-treasurer or an assistant superintendent regarding concerns.

The superintendent was more likely to contact a trustee who was chairman or vice-chairman in order to deal with:

- concerns the superintendent had,
- an item that the chairperson had put on the agenda that needed clarification, and
- information giving so that the individual, as chairperson, would never be caught not knowing.

However, the superintendent did state that "if there's some misunderstanding we'll invite the trustee to come in to get further explanation" (A-5), but this was quite rare.

Recommendations. As mentioned previously, the trustees felt that it was their responsibility to make the final decision on non-administrative matters. To enable

them to do so impartially, administration regularly gives them the advantages and disadvantages of the matters under review. However, in a number of areas, mainly personnel matters, it was suggested by three trustees, that he has an obligation to suggest courses of action. Generally, the board went along with the recommendations because there were educational or legal ramifications that were outside of the political or financial aspects and these had been examined and were explained by the superintendent.

As well, there was a feeling that since the trustees had been responsible for hiring the superintendent, "he was our guy and we sensed obviously feelings for the fellow and there were some similar kinds of approaches" (A-8).

The trustees mentioned, and this was documented by examining board minutes, on only two instances, has the board gone against his recommendations when they involved matters forementioned. In both cases, the superintendent was so concerned with the situation that the board chairman was contacted and a special meeting was requested by the superintendent to re-examine the problem, but with additional information that had been received. The chairman acceded to the request and in accord with the board policy on calling special meetings did so. The board, in both cases, reviewed the information and did make a change in the previous decision.

Dealing with internal and external policy issues.

Because the superintendent in this district rarely makes recommendations, in part because the board does not wish him to do so on most issues, there were few concrete examples as to how such were dealt with. However, all trustees stated firmly with political decisions such as school closures, the superintendent should not give input. When one of the trustees did ask him what direction they should take, he stated that "it's up to you to decide. I can't decide that for you" (A-5).

With regards to discipline issues and related administrative matters, six of the board members felt that they would take his advice because he "has to give you the scenario, the process, whether he thought the process is good, strong and defensible and the result could be relied upon or whether he thought there might be some weaknesses in the process that we should be concerned about" (A-4).

With the former superintendent the board had questioned several administrative appointments but this no longer is the case. The board now routinely accepts personnel changes because stringent procedures regarding personnel processes were developed by the present superintendent and are firmly adhered to.

The Decision Making Process

Committee structure. The board traditionally did not operate using a committee system; rather they operated as a

whole body. Every trustee stated that he/she felt comfortable with that setup as it allowed input from all individuals, each trustee knew the same thing including why another individual felt differently, and since "sometimes the little things are the key to your final decision" (A-3) there was no reason to change to a committee system where the board only ratifies the committee decision and did not "understand why [it's] going that way" (A-8).

In addition, one trustee revealed that when they received reference checks back on the superintendent candidates, they rejected one candidate that had previously thought to be promising strictly because his basic style of operation was to use committees and there was a fear that "he would committee us to death" (A-2).

Although there are no trustee committees, there was a large number of advisory committees. The purpose of these, as outlined by the superintendent, was to involve a variety of individuals in developing reports that are submitted to the superintendent. He then tabled these reports with the board and discussed the recommendations that are contained therein. However, the board considered the recommendations but did not necessarily go along with them.

Agenda making. Within this district there is a policy that deals with the board meeting agenda. It gives clear guidelines as to the order of business, who establishes what is on the agenda, adding items to the agenda, time frame for

distribution, what is discussed in-camera, procedures regarding delegations, as well as procedures for dealing with business not finished in the time limit set for meetings (8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.). Although the policy on the agenda was revised this past year, the process has not changed since the present superintendent came. There is still input allowed from the following:

- trustees,
- individuals or delegations, and
- administration.

All the trustees and the superintendent felt that it is necessary for the superintendent to be involved in the process because not only must he be prepared to answer questions that might arise from any agenda item but also so that he could give background to the chairman as to the sensitivity of an item or even why administration was bringing it up. Although the chairman, vice-chairman, superintendent and secretary treasurer all help to form the agenda, the chairman is the individual who makes the final decision as to what things are on the agenda.

Although it has rarely happened, there is provision in policy that allows for the board to conclude the business meeting the following evening if they did not complete it in the regular time period. If so many items must be dealt with and cannot be covered within the time scheduled for a

regular meeting, the chairman, in consultation with the superintendent--whose input is necessary at this point since some matters are time frame controlled, decide which may be deferred or if an additional board meeting should be called within the week to deal with said matters.

The only change to the format of the agenda the superintendent requested was that there would be a superintendent's report section. He stated that he did so because "it gives me the opportunity, if there's extra information I want to provide, or announcements I want to make and that type of thing" (A-5). Since the agenda is the trustees', not the superintendent's, he went through a formal request procedure to have the agenda changed. As one trustee declared, "[He] has not changed the agenda in any way because he doesn't have that right. Only the board itself, on recommendation from the chairman of the school board" (A-3).

Involvement of trustees in process. The trustees all indicated that they had considerable input in the decision making process of the board and regularly discussed an item before they came to a decision. This is in accord with the feeling of two trustees that said, "Trustees today are much more inquisitive, much more questioning of administration. They are not a rubber stamp" (A-7). This board routinely questioned why things were done in a certain manner and expected to get as much background as possible so that they

could discuss an issue intelligently. Although it happens only occasionally, the trustees do table or defer something if they feel they haven't enough information to make the decision and will request more information along specific lines.

All trustees agreed that input from any one of them was equally accepted around the board table and that the superintendent did not contribute once he had given his report unless specifically asked to do so by the board chairman. Even then, as the superintendent stated, he only would refer to the report he had before him, "with all the data that people have provided me with and that indicates that certain things should occur" (A-S). He concurred with the board that they had to make the final decision and they made their decisions because they thought that they were the right ones, not because he had made a recommendation.

Involvement of superintendent in process. The superintendent and every trustee on this board felt that the superintendent, on most issues, only provided information and agreed that after collecting and presenting the data for the debate, it was not the CEO's role to advise the board on how to make a decision. There was complete agreement that on controversial issues he presents the options and alternatives, the pros and cons, along with sound professional data, not hearsay data. The superintendent

stayed away from any politics involved in the decision and was aware that he had to do so in this district.

As a superintendent I have to watch it, it isn't my job to play politics. It's my job to administer the district, to provide the facts, give out the data, information, clarify--but not to involve myself in the politics of it. (A-S)

Although the majority of the trustees (6 of 8) were firm in their belief that the superintendent did not give his preferences as a matter of course or impose ideas on trustees, the other two were not so certain. As one trustee stated, "I suppose he gave a suggestion. He is a smart man and probably did it very subtly. It is not obvious" (A-2).

In in-camera meetings, however, 4 of the 8 trustees mentioned that the superintendent does offer some recommendations mainly because the sensitivity of the items often have legal ramifications. These individuals felt that the superintendent giving recommendations was a necessity in such matters because otherwise the board could get itself into very deep legal problems.

Two of the former board chairpersons stated that the CEO only would step into the trustees' discussion if the board was going off in the wrong direction on a policy and would thus cause an unworkable situation in the district.

Zone of Tolerance

Community networks. The trustees appeared to actively pursue finding out about community preferences.

The ways employed by nearly every trustee were found to be through parent meetings/groups, phone calls from concerned individuals, noting concerns at ratepayers' meetings, and by asking individuals how they felt on certain issues as they were out in the community. Other sources commonly used were:

- committees that involved individuals from the community
- delegations to the board
- attending school functions
- from the Teachers' Association and CUPE
- reporters
- letters to the editor in newspapers
- people who attend the board meetings regularly
- school surveys/accreditation reports
- fellow workers/business contacts.

One trustee routinely used the district's public attitude survey when it was current while another had contacts at city hall that he felt helped to keep him informed.

The female members of the board spent more time than did the male members with regards to soliciting community input. The male trustees, however, did have the business contacts which added another dimension to the profile of community wishes.

The superintendent employed a variety of mechanisms, as well, to gain information about community opinions. With

respect to citizens in the communities served by the school district, he scrutinized the newspapers, attended public functions and spoke with community groups. In addition, he went to functions at schools where there were parents in attendance or to district displays in the shopping malls so that he could talk with the parents. Concerned citizens are readily able to gain access to him through the telephone or by making an appointment with his secretary. In fact, during the interview, he received three such calls, and emphasized to the researcher that the receptionist is not permitted to screen these.

In addition, within six months of his arrival, the superintendent initiated a thorough assessment which involved district staff, principals, teachers, CUPE, parent groups and non-parents. This examined not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of the district. From this, a comprehensive plan for recovery was done and the district has worked steadily to meet the expectations of the various groups.

Surveys are done on an ongoing basis with respect to various special programs in the district and these are used by administration to ascertain concerns and opinions. These surveys are given to staff, students, recent graduates, parents, and if applicable, non-parents.

Trustee recruitment. Four of the eight trustees indicated that they had been recruited by individuals or groups in the community whereas 75% ran for office because they felt it was their civic duty to do so. Only one member indicated that he/she had been encouraged to run by a retiring trustee. The others had received encouragement, mainly because of their involvement in their children's school parent group.

Responsiveness to community's expectations. Seven of the eight trustees clearly felt that they were delegates as opposed to trustees. This was clearly indicated through such comments as:

You don't bring your own personal opinion to the table. You do have to listen. You are there to respond to what the public wants. (A-7)

It is my responsibility to make sure that [when] you make important decisions that you don't substitute the direction of the superintendent, and perhaps what you want, for the wishes of your constituents. (A-4)

The board goes out on a regular basis to community groups, plus part of their decision making process is keyed in to going to the public. (A-3)

[meeting with the public] has on several occasions prompted me to introduce policies to the board. (A-5)

We try to translate what they're telling us. We keep that in mind when we're making decisions. People would be surprised at the amount of impact that they have in that process. (A-1)

The superintendent also acknowledged the need for the trustees to be responsive.

It's political suicide if they don't try to involve them. The public becomes very aroused on issues. (A-S)

Parents thoughts and concerns were also solicited through the district needs assessment done shortly after the present superintendent arrived. Their responses had as much weight as the other four groups and ultimately the board directed their efforts for improvement there.

A policy has existed in the district for the last decade and a half that all decisions, except those required by law to be done in private, are in public and evidence from the agendas and minutes of the board meetings clearly demonstrates that this is adhered to.

On school closures, public meetings were held at all the schools that were being considered for closure as well as one meeting on neutral ground to "offer the opposing point of view the chance to put that point of view forward fairly" (A-1). Because of the overwhelming concern of the parents, as demonstrated by the number of briefs, presentations, letter writing campaigns, phone calls and even appointments made with trustees during business hours, the board responded to the public wishes and did not close the schools. To prevent discrepancies within the district where some schools were overcrowded, special concessions regarding funding and staffing were given in order to alleviate the concerns of the parents in those areas.

During budget time, the board holds several open meetings to receive input from the community. Generally the public is very supportive of the proposals but in one instance, a coalition of concerned citizens influenced the board to vote against the budget. This was mainly through intimidation tactics as shown by two trustees' comments:

They were actually running up and down shaking their fists at board members and swearing at the board. It was just turmoil and I think it just frightened some of the board members and they backed down. (A-1)

I know at one time, when we were making a budget decision, I'm sure they intimidated some members of the board into going the way they did. Well, there was actual physical abuse to board members in the parking lot. (A-5)

At board meetings two question periods are available for the public to give input. The board found that many citizens did not wish to stay until the very end of the meeting so they added a second question period, 90 minutes into the meeting. The public is allowed to ask any questions about the school district operations, not just items that are on the agenda. If the board is unable to give the answer immediately, the superintendent is instructed to prepare a response for the next meeting.

As mentioned previously, trustees serve on some district advisory committees but they are cautious about their input. The reason given by a trustee is that they

feel since input is being solicited from others, they must not "overwhelm the people that are trying to put input into it. You want to make them feel that it is not a school board committee as much as it is a community [one]" (A-3).

One trustee mentioned that the board did not want a committee structure because, "the public isn't as interested in going to committee meetings as they are into full board meetings" (A-1).

The Teachers' Association and CUPE both have representatives at board meetings and the trustees take a lot of input from them on parts of committees. Although there was no indication from any of the trustees that this influenced their decisions in any manner, the superintendent seemed to feel "that certainly has a lot of affect on the board". (A-S).

The superintendent was most complementary of the board's responsiveness to the communtiy as clearly indicated by his statement:

They [the board] bend over backwards to take as much information, to encourage information giving and to use that in a reasonable way. And if it's not possible for them to do certain things, then they feel strongly responsible to provide feedback why they haven't done that. (A-S)

Since the board is so responsive to the community wishes, the constituents felt strongly that they needed to protect the right of their community to make their own decisions affecting the schools. Within a year of the present superintendent's appointment, the board was in

danger of being replaced by a government appointed trustee due to their refusal to accept government guidelines. Because of the public's wishes, two trustees reversed their decision, thus permitting the board to stay in office.

Two of the trustees that changed their minds and kept the board alive basically did it because of the amount of public input. The number of people that came to the trustees felt that they could come to the trustees. They went to them and said, "Listen, we agree with what you are saying, but we want to keep our board." (A-3).

Conflict management by superintendent. The methods used by the superintendent deal mainly with giving information freely to the trustees. He not only uses the normal channels described previously but he also employs retreats, a goal setting process, a directions process and the use of advisory committees.

The major method to forestall conflict that was identified by all the respondents was the use of retreats. Three or four of these are held yearly to provide the superintendent with the opportunity to deal with matters of dialogue on various situations. He uses these "to clarify matters that possibly may come up before them" in the near future, "for them to clarify matters with me and to get direction for the next period of time" (A-5). The trustees felt very strongly that without these sessions they would lose track of some of the things that were going on since it was impossible at open board meetings to do long range planning, set district goals, or deal with detailed

documents, proposals, and sensitive political issues. The trustees and administration both provide input into the agenda but the board makes the final decision as to items for the retreat. The superintendent, in discussion with the chairperson, makes up the schedule. All the respondents were firm on the fact that these retreats were for information giving/sharing only and any votes taken were only straw votes to see if items should be put on the agenda in an open board meeting. The superintendent concurred with this and stated, "Board decisions are not made at retreats. They may give direction on certain things. The chairman reports back at the board meeting and many of those items find their way onto subsequent agendas" (A-S).

The goal setting process is another way in which conflict was forestalled. The board and superintendent start the year off agreeing on where they are going. Half way through the year the CEO explains exactly where the district is in relation to those goals and if they are going to reach them by year's end. A full and frank discussion takes place at the end of the year but since a midpoint report was given, the trustees are somewhat prepared if a goal has not been reached in its entirety.

The directions process was done upon the arrival of the present superintendent and gave the strengths and weaknesses of the system at that time. Since it identified areas needing improvement, the superintendent could not be blamed

for deficiencies caused by either government restraint or the previous administration. It also gave the superintendent and board an indication as to where to focus their efforts. In recent months, the superintendent has demonstrated to the board the need for a comprehensive review of the entire system and steps are currently being taken to do so.

It is more effective to implement change if it comes from the bottom up rather than being imposed from the top down. The superintendent has demonstrated this clearly through his use of advisory committees. Over half of the trustees indicated that when reports and recommendations came from such committees they were quite comfortable with them for they knew that the reports had been thoroughly reviewed "by those people where they are directly involved. There is not going to be a major shock to those who are directly involved in that area" (A-7).

Although many superintendents only give lip service to the role of trustees and try to have the decision making process totally controlled by themselves, this CEO acknowledges that the school board has a role and that he has to support that. He not only states this in words, "We try to make it so that the board is making the decision and it's plain to the board that we can live with it" (A-8), but also demonstrates this through his actions in the decision making process.

Two of the board chairpersons were especially pleased with the manner in which the superintendent had kept them informed so that they were never unsure of details before the public or unable to answer questions from the press. Another trustee was satisfied with the CEO's manner in articulating district concerns about restraint to the government and the fact that through this, the district received concessions, thus preventing further conflict with the public over the budget. One trustee commented on the fact that administration regularly examined policies to see if they were current so, "in a preventative way, you keep updating your policy rather than just waiting for the crisis and looking at your policy only to find out it is totally unsuitable" (A-8).

Although of a more minor nature, it was determined that this superintendent is wise enough to stay out of disagreements between individuals. Trustees were unable to give any examples of where he has become involved and there was also no evidence in the minutes to contradict their feelings.

The only criticism received on the method of operation of the superintendent was that in the beginning he occasionally gave out literature, usually a massive report, when trustees were just starting the meeting, thus preventing them from examining it in the manner they wished.

This concern, however, was addressed to the superintendent and the general consensus of the trustees still on the board was that there had been an effort to alleviate it. There was the realization that on personnel items requiring immediate attention it was not always possible to have the information prior to the session.

Information distribution to the community. There is a real effort in this district not only to permit people to give input into board decisions but also to ensure that information about board actions is readily accessible. The respondents indicated they believe that the school system will benefit and receive support from a well informed public and therefore there are two policies to ensure that this happens, one on "Public Information" and the other on "Placement of Policy Books in Public Libraries". In addition, in the policy on Board Meetings, there is a section on news releases and a section in policy and five regulations on availability of board minutes.

Other Pertinent Information

Situation in the past. This district has traditionally had a non-partisan board. There are no slates of candidates and consequently individuals come on the board as independent thinkers, not bound by party lines. They did not want or expect the situation to change dramatically with the hiring of their present superintendent for they felt

that "it was pretty much at the optimum" (A-1) at that point. It was interesting to note one respondent said that the board considered going with an insider candidate. "It was really his for the taking. All things being equal, you like to go with the inside man" (A-8), but because he did not present himself well in the interview, they changed their mind and considered the outside candidates more seriously.

One trustee expressed the opinion that "We were an unusual board in B.C. at that time in terms of our assertiveness politically" though many boards have now changed with the realization that there is a "sharing of authority between the school board and the superintendent" (A-4) since the local appointment of superintendents became possible. Each one of the trustees mentioned that they felt this district's board is unique also in that "there has been very little grudge" and "regardless of splits, after it's all over we really regroup" (A-1).

Role of the consultant. Consultants are generally used to screen candidates for such a job as the superintendency. This board used a consultant and were pleased with the list of candidates they received. When it came to making the final decision, the consultant became an active participant and tried to push the board to hire another one of the candidates. The board, however, made their own

decision and were not affected by the interference for they felt, "it was not his business to basically be plumping for a candidate at that point" (A-8).

Socialization of board members. Although the BCSTA conducts their seminars for newly elected trustees, the district also is quite concerned about the orientation process for new trustees. As part of policy and practice, they conduct an in-district orientation and older trustees go out of their way to work with the new members. The superintendent also has offered to hold workshops for new trustees but, "there's a tendency for new trustees not to take up this offer" (A-5). Every trustee felt that, in spite of the above, they were not really efficient in their role for almost a year. Interestingly enough, one trustee even went as far as to say,

When I wasn't on the board, I was amazed at how authoritarian and manipulative the administrators get. But you know, once I had been on the board a few years, it was amazing how much they had grown in that regard. (A-4)

Political acumen of superintendent. Although a difficult area to assess, five of the trustees felt that the superintendent showed considerable skill in handling the board and realized that it was an absolute necessity if the CEO was to be successful. Such comments as,

[The superintendent] has always kept his views separate from political perspective, separate from his recommendations to the board. [He] has been able to maintain neutrality. (A-3)

[He] has that ability of facilitating the role of trustee and also to cover his butt in the event of problems that might arise. (A-8)

Certainly he didn't, at any time, ever really show his colours. (A-2)

[He] could live with the fact that the board could make a decision that he personally wouldn't and that was one of the reasons that we hired him. (A-8)

His style was to respect the board's right to tell him what to do. (A-5)

Any administrator, to some extent, has to be part chameleon. (A-4)

demonstrate that he did this well.

The superintendent also was aware that this was something superintendents must have if they are to maintain a successful working relationship with their board. He assured the researcher that when the board doesn't agree he does not take it personally. He maintained that as long as when he brought something forward it was well discussed and a sound decision was made given the information he had provided, he could live with it. He stated,

Certain things I know will go one way or the other, and I can anticipate which way they'll go. But it may be I feel it's necessary to bring that forward because I think that we're going to have some problems down the line and I feel that it is necessary that I point that out. At least it's on record that I did point out that this could potentially be a problem area. (A-S)

Summary

The extent and nature of any changes within the district were examined and given previously in this chapter but are summarized now for the purpose of clarity in Tables 3 and 4.

Insert Table 3 here

It becomes clearer from examination of Table 3 that Board A's involvement in the district operations has not changed markedly in most areas. The major change has been in the fact that there is a much greater degree of openness on the part of the superintendent and a willingness to provide the trustees with the most complete information possible so that they can make the political and financial decisions in a knowledgeable manner. The superintendent, also, has become more accountable personally and for ensuring that the district goals are achieved.

Insert Table 4 here

Regarding the nature and extent of changes in the board-superintendent relationship with respect to their

Table 3

School Board Involvement in District Operations

Area	Situation		Extent of Change
	Past	Present	
Policy formation	Board used to playing active role in both formation and decision making	Board has active role in both formation and decision making	No change
Decision making	Items discussed before decision is made but superintendent would give opinions	Items discussed fully by board before decision made by board	Superintendent does not become involved in discussion
Evaluation of CEO	No formal evaluation	Annual assessment done	In policy and in CEO's contract
Goal setting	Although goals there, were set by admin. and not clearly enunciated	Done in conjunction with CEO who is made accountable for achieving them	Goals up front and evaluated regularly
Budget	Budget proposals given to board for final decision after community input	Budget proposals given to board for final decision after community input	No change
Action regarding personnel	Superintendent gave recommendations, often with no background as to reason for decision	Superintendent suggests courses of action because of educational and legal ramifications Board usually accepts	Board accedes to CEO's advice but knows reason for why recommendation was made

Table 4

The Board-superintendent Relationship

Area	Situation	
	Past	Present
Communication	Previous administrator held some things back	Unbiased information given
Policy formation	Superintendent gave some input into formation of policies	Superintendent uses advisory committees to give background information for formation of policies. Board makes the final decision on policy
Political decisions	Considerable input with respect to recommendations from superintendent	All made by trustees, superintendent will not interfere
Administrative decisions	Made by superintendent	Made by superintendent
Goal setting and evaluation of goals	No formal annual goals set	Superintendent desired goals to be visible. CEO is accountable to board for district achieving goals
Trustee committees	No committees, decisions made by whole board	No committees, decisions made by whole board
Agenda making	Made up by chairman, vice-chairman, superintendent, and sec.treas. Chairman made final decision as to items on agenda	Made up by chairman, vice-chairman, superintendent, and sec.treas. Chairman made final decision as to items on agenda

relative influence, there was a shift to more acknowledgement of the trustees' role by the superintendent (see Table 4). On personnel and administrative issues, the superintendent's recommendations hold weight whereas in the financial and political arena, the trustees have more power, although this is not a change from the way the previous administration operated. Superintendent input is still given into the decision making process, but the manner in which this is given has changed slightly. In addition, generally decisions made by the board are implemented without question, not because the board is the CEO's employer but rather because the superintendent accepts their role in the educational structure.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Board B

Role Definition

Unanimity and clarity of ideals when hiring. Board B commissioned a report in the early 1980's in order to discover the state of their district and to receive recommendations as to how to improve it. One result of this report was that within six months the board fired their superintendent and set the wheels in motion to hire a new one. They worked together and clearly outlined four typewritten pages of expectations regarding candidate characteristics and submitted these to a consultant and instructed him to come up with a list of possible candidates. They included a lengthy list of personal criteria, complete with extensive definitions of meaning. Some of these criteria were:

- applied intelligence
- analytical ability
- leadership, especially related to motivational ability
- decision making skills and the willingness to accept responsibility and accountability for actions
- planning, especially forecasting and proceduralizing
- flexibility
- tenacity

- use of delegation
- independence, i.e. action based on own convictions rather than a desire to please others
- objectivity
- human relations competence
- communicative skills.

After they received the candidate short list, they interviewed these individuals, three from outside the district, two from inside.

When interviewed by the researcher, the trustees were asked what they felt they were really looking for. All the respondents felt that they were looking for someone to provide strong leadership, someone that would lead the district rather than having the chairman and a bunch of lay people do it. In addition, management skills were identified by 4 of the 6 trustees as a main criteria. One trustee described the necessity for this skill by saying,

The district was floundering. We were always putting out brush fires, we just went from one crisis to another and it was reaction crisis management. We were looking for somebody who would let us move forward rather than just continually putting out brush fires. (B-6)

Although half of the trustees felt experience in a different system was an advantage, this was not really deemed to be of major importance.

Understanding of and adherence to roles. Policy setting was the major role that all the trustees perceived they had, although 4 of 6 respondents said that this had to be done in terms of consultation with the senior

administrators. These feelings coincide with the district policy, revised within a year of the present CEO's arrival, regarding School Board Powers and Duties which now states:

The board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy rather than with administrative details.

The other two trustees felt that when any administrative recommendations came regarding policy that the trustees had the additional responsibility of analysing these to ensure that they were "what the people of the community would want" (B-4) and that "our educational system is relevant to the needs of the community" (B-6).

The District Handbook states that the responsibility of the superintendent regarding policy formation is:

Advice and assistance to the Board of School Trustees on the need for new/revised policies and ensures that all Board policies are implemented.

The superintendent said nothing about policy formation but has told the board, "When you decide on something, whatever it is that you decide on, you are my board and I will implement it. I will never corporate sabotage you" (B-S). His actions show that he had been actively involved in the policy formation since all items on the agenda come with an administrative recommendation. He has, however, implemented the board's decision, without dispute, whether the board accepted the recommendation or not.

The other major area of responsibility, as expressed by half the board, was the annual goal setting process. The

general belief was that this was an "excellent non-meddling way for the trustees to give direction to the school district and the trustees can identify areas that are of concern to them" (B-6). The board makes the superintendent responsible for achieving these goals, but the method by which he does this is an administrative decision.

Four trustees felt strongly that in no way should board members meddle in management and that they should keep their hands out of district operations once they set the general direction. The district policy on powers and duties is in accord with this. Only one trustee voiced the opinion that the board really should not let "administration completely run the show" (B-4).

Minor responsibilities of the board were the hiring and evaluation of the superintendent and approving the budget. The responsibility for the preparation, monitoring and control of expenditure of the district budget lies with the superintendent.

In addition to administrative responsibilities described in the School Act, the district handbook also includes:

- the community's perception of the district,
- the working relations with outside agencies,
- advice and assistance to the Board of School Trustees relative to all matters requiring Board action, and

- additional duties as assigned by the Board
of School Trustees

as the CEO's duties.

An "additional duty" described by four trustees was to be "totally responsible for this school district" (B-3). The other two trustees described this "additional duty" as being one of leadership and managing the affairs of the district.

The superintendent seems to have accepted all these as part of his role and clearly has demonstrated that he is in control of the entire district by his line of command. The only concern that he voiced about the board's expectations was that the trustees were not fully cognizant of the complexity of the organization and of the concept that change takes time.

He expressed the feeling that because he has not had to fight the board or play politics with it, he has been able to do his job effectively even though the demands have been heavy at times.

Although the trustees did not identify their role as being a political one, the CEO clearly realized it was and in board meetings stays out of discussions as such. He stated, "It is the politician's meeting, not my meeting. Clearly that is their forum and clearly I think I understand my role" and "we don't conflict on our roles. My board

doesn't do administration and I don't do trustee stuff. They're the politicians" (B-S).

Evaluation. The necessity for accountability of all individuals "from the Child to the Superintendent" was expressed as a top priority a month before the arrival of the current superintendent. Six month later, an ad hoc committee of trustees drew up a form in order to evaluate the superintendent. After input from the CEO and revisions done in consultation with the whole board, the trustees did their first evaluation. They rated their superintendent well (as has been the case in succeeding years) but clearly laid out five expectations for the coming year. Noteworthy were that he was to clarify role descriptions and complete evaluations on senior staff, review the policy manual and to continue to improve district communications.

Annual evaluation of the superintendent is done in the areas of Leadership, Communication, Political Skills, Morale, Organizational Skills, Conceptual Skills, Acceptance of Responsibility, Self-Improvement, Board/Superintendent Relations and Personal Qualities. As well, he is given an overall rating and expectations for the following year are given.

In addition to the superintendent being evaluated, there are now clearcut evaluation procedures in other areas. Prior to his arrival there had been no mechanism for evaluating principals and although under the School Act

teachers were to be evaluated every three years, this clearly had not been done. With the new organizational structure that the trustees asked for and received within a month of his arrival, he made it clear that individuals, whether administration, teachers or staff, would know the results that they were responsible for and would be evaluated on them. The superintendent viewed evaluation as a means to improve future performance. Within months procedures were in place and those areas of trustee concern were rectified.

Since the system itself had been evaluated by an outside firm only a year before, drastic changes were made in the organizational structure during the next year. Subsequently evaluation of the district, the schools and programs are done on a regular basis with 1 of 7 parents selected at random to participate in the process in addition to principals, teachers and the children. This monitoring was deemed effective by one trustee because it "results in more accountability which provides you all sorts of information for your budget" (B-3) and clearly comes under the role of the superintendent as described in the District Handbook which is being accountable for the "school's climate including student and employee attitude to self, others, learning and schools."

Through the yearly goal setting and evaluation process which every school in the district goes through, schools are

made accountable and the district itself is able to monitor what is occurring in all areas. As one trustee expressed, "They are always evaluating how we are doing in the district" (B-6), and a wealth of information in this regard is sent from every school to each trustee so they feel that they know precisely how everything is operating.

The trustees establish yearly goals for the district and the superintendent and staff are responsible for putting these into action. The CEO provides the board with a progress report in December on how the district is proceeding in reaching these goals. At the end of the year, in June, a final evaluation is completed.

Evaluation procedures in all these areas were not in policy or in some cases the policy was not adhered to until the arrival of the present superintendent. Now, procedures do exist and are an integral part of this district's operations.

Policy reviews are also ongoing. An examination of the policy manual showed that nearly every policy was revised within two years of the superintendent's arrival. Only those on By-Laws of the Board, Trustee Indemnity, Student Fees, Rental/Lease of Facilities, Smoking, Volunteers, School Closures, Pupil Discipline and Suspicion of Child Abuse/Neglect have been changed more recently.

Communication Patterns

Information giving and receiving. The superintendent showed a strong belief in providing information to trustees so that they were always well informed and heard things from him first, not through the grapevine. All trustees felt they received really good information since he included reports and survey results along with information on programs that might be coming up or on pertinent staffing issues.

Packages of materials are sent to the trustees at least once a week. Memos are included informing them of everything happening in the district. In order to facilitate understanding, the superintendent will highlight the main points down the side. He said he did this so if a trustee didn't want or didn't have the time to read the whole item, this was an assist so that they "are going to get it right" and "they know there is nothing hidden" (B-S).

Because of the structure in place regarding administrative recommendations, no information is ever given to trustees at the board table for a vote when they first see it. Instead, a recommendation is put forward for information only at a board meeting and a decision, according to district policy, cannot be made on it before four weeks have passed. During that time more relevant information on that particular topic is sent out and trustees can ask for further clarification.

In addition, this superintendent holds in-service nights with his trustees. These are not board meetings and use a different form of operation.

There is a different chairman and there is no motions or what have you. It truly is a night when we just in-service and we talk about all the things happening in the district, the programs... So our board is informed. (B-S)

Although, when this was first put into effect the meetings were monthly, this is no longer so. Now the district policy states that, "Board In-service meeting when scheduled will be held on _____."

Channels. Every board member in this district mentioned that they would regularly phone or drop in to discuss matters with the superintendent. The number and frequency of contacts varied with the individual but all of them felt that the CEO was very approachable. The trustees also mentioned that information was as readily obtainable from the chairperson as from the superintendent and that identical information would be received if both were contacted. One of the three former chairpersons felt that the reason for this was that "it just makes his statements even that much more credible in the fact that he is not keeping it to himself, he is sharing that information around" (B-3).

Since the CEO and chairperson are in constant touch, trustees, upon expressing a concern to the chairperson, can be assured that the matter will be clarified at the next

board meeting. In addition, any discussions that the superintendent and the chairperson have which results in information pertinent to board decision making is sent to all trustees.

Although the superintendent has, on occassion, contacted individual trustees, each one of the respondents felt that it was not done to lobby them on an issue but rather it was done just to give them the latest information on any controversy within the district. The superintendent said he did this as "it is important for our community and our staff and the people to know that the superintendent and the board are acting as one" (B-S).

Recommendations. Even before the superintendent officially took up his position, the board moved the following two motions:

That the Superintendent of Schools submit to the board by _____, a 5 year plan to address District philosophy, goals and objectives, operating directions, and other expressed concerns.

That the Superintendent of Schools submit to the board by _____, a proposed plan of the District's organizational structure.

By the passing of the above motions, major changes have taken place in the way that the district and the board have operated since. The superintendent brought in sweeping changes:

He brought in major changes to the district almost immediately. He is a risk taker and he just came in, extremely well organized. He just started his agenda, heading the district off where he expected it to go. The trustees accepted it right away and he was able to do that. (B-6)

The board had wanted the administration to show leadership and gave him full rein in doing so. In his principles of organization which he presented to the board, he wrote, "Authority can be delegated, responsibility cannot." He explained that as his responsibility was to manage the school district, his responsibility was also to make recommendations so that the district would function efficiently and move forward. The trustees concurred and within 1 1/2 months of his arrival, all items that came before the trustees in a board meeting came with a recommendation from the superintendent. This is now policy and the manual states, "Each item on the agenda requiring a motion will have a recommendation, with an attached explanation sheet."

All trustees agreed that the superintendent does not discuss alternatives to proposals but only makes a recommendation and discusses the implications of that recommendation. One trustee mentioned if an issue affecting the parents is coming up, the superintendent does make certain that the trustees know the parents disagree. He also will make it possible for the parents to come in and address the trustees before the board makes its decision.

The board does make the final decision on the recommendations but one trustee felt that disagreement rarely occurred because usually the chairman and vice-chairman have gone over points for clarification with

the superintendent previously and were able to forestall any conflicts that might have occurred. Two trustees did say that in a few cases, the board has asked that a motion be tabled rather than voting on it then "because there was usually good intent in the recommendation but the board just couldn't accept it in the way that it was written" (B-4). When administration complied with the request for clarification or a rewrite, it always passed, although not necessarily unanimously.

On only one issue has the majority of the board gone against the superintendent's recommendation because of pressure from parents on a school closure. The following year, however, the board reversed its decision and closed the school when the superintendent so recommended and gave sufficient financial documentation for doing so.

Dealing with internal and external policy issues. As mentioned previously, all matters are brought before the board with an administrative recommendation. From the interview data and the evidence contained in board meeting minutes, it was clear that the trustees took every one of the superintendent's recommendations seriously. Although one trustee felt that there have been about five instances, it was possible to document that only on one occasion has the majority of the board gone against the advice of the CEO--that being on a school closure.

The Decision Making Process

Committee structure. Prior to the superintendent's arrival there was a well entrenched committee system in place in the district. There were two main committees: Educational Planning; and Finances and Administration. One trustee felt the reason for such a structure was that,

The previous board had been caught up in the previous superintendent's method of dealing with problems and that was creating a committee or individual to deal with the problems as opposed to solving them. (B-5)

The committees were "used for lobbying trustees like crazy" (B-6) and the trustees were completely involved in the day to day operations of schools. One trustee remarked that they remembered one particular meeting where the committee was trying to make a decision whether a certain school should receive a piano or playground equipment with the funds that were available. Committees created antagonisms on the board as the chairperson appointed individuals to committees and one of the committees was felt to hold more weight. All the trustees did concur that with committee meetings and board meetings, they were spending an average of three evenings a week on board business as they often attended both committee meetings in order to have input into the decision making process.

Within a few weeks of his arrival, the superintendent brought in his district reorganization plan, part of which

was the elimination of committees and a whole new board structure. The board agreed with his recommendations, perhaps for the reason stated by one trustee.

Because of the problems that we had in the past, we were probably ready to listen to anything anyone would have suggested. I don't think any of us were unhappy with going back to what I call the more traditional role of relying on the administration for a good deal of what we did.
(B-5)

Withing four months, the two board committees were replaced by the Committee of the Whole which in turn was done away with six months later.

Three trustees commented that the rationale the superintendent gave for abolishing the committees was:

- that committees bog down to some extent (B-6),
- sometimes committees water down things because everything is done by trying to compromise (B-5), and
- the administration should be running the district and the board should be dealing with the broad general policies and general scope, and not be wasting their time on committees.
(B-1)

The superintendent indicated that with the committee setup the district had on his arrival, decisions were being made before they even got to the board table because of the lobbying. As a result of that situation he felt that "I never got a chance to utilize the expertise that I have in this district and my administrative responsibility to give them the best of our advice." (B-S) and changes had to be made so he would be able to do so.

Agenda making. When the superintendent was appointed, the policy on Duties of the Chairman/Vice Chairman with regards to the preparation of the agenda for board meetings stated:

The Chairman shall prepare the agenda for all Board meetings in consultation with the Secretary Treasurer and the Superintendent of Schools.

The policy on duties was revised within a year, but the above statement has, to this date, remained in policy as written. This seems to be in direct contradiction to the policy on By-Laws of the Board which states in the

Development of Agenda Section:

The Secretary Treasurer will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda. Items for agenda are to be submitted to the Secretary Treasurer's office by noon _____, prior to the _____ Board Meeting.

The agenda will be reviewed by the Board Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Superintendent of Schools and Secretary Treasurer on _____ afternoon..

When asked as to how the agenda was made up, not a single individual described the policy above. Instead, those that had been chairman or vice-chairman said that a draft agenda was developed by the superintendent and secretary treasurer after consultation with their district staff. It was then presented to the chairman and vice-chairman who reviewed all the items and made any necessary changes in consultation with the CEO and secretary treasurer. The superintendent's description of the process agrees with those of the former

chairmen and vice-chairmen, so policy does not seem to be followed precisely in this area.

Input is allowed from not only administration, but also trustees, individuals, and/or delegations. It is easy for board members to have an item placed on the agenda. The superintendent and one trustee said that individuals and delegations "just had to phone the secretary treasurer" and "give us a little note describing what it is about" (B-S) and they would be put on the agenda. The district policy manual, however, has a lengthy description of procedures required of delegations which seems to protect the board from ready access by the public in spite of the policy commencing with the statement, "the Board is anxious that citizens and parents have the right of access to the Board, and to a redress of grievances which relate to the actions of the Board and/or its agents." Individuals/delegations must first submit their grievances in writing and the school district administration will try to deal with the matter. If it is not resolved to the individual's/group's satisfaction, it is then placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting. The Board then meets with the delegation and at the same time reviews the Administrative Report on the matter. Delegations wishing to speak on an item already on the agenda do not have to follow the above procedures but rather must contact the secretary treasurer by 4:00 on the

day of the meeting, and will be heard or "unless the Board, by majority resolution, otherwise agrees." All responses to delegations are not made until the following Board meeting.

All the trustees felt strongly about the necessity for superintendent involvement in the process of making the agenda. He is aware of issues that are coming through the system and in order to operate effectively as the CEO has to have a pulse on the operations of the whole district. All trustees declared that most items came from administration and this is consistent with the findings shown in Table 5.

Table 5

% of Recommendations Made at Board Meetings

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Board</u>	<u>Admin.</u>
prior to superintendent coming	75 %	25 %
within 1 month	71	29
within 2 months	55	45
within 6 months	12.5	87.5
within 1 year	8	92
within 2 years	22	78

With the former superintendent, the board chairman mainly drew up the agenda and he/she would the meet with the superintendent to discuss the items. This was done "without

going through the process of getting input from other people" (B-6). In addition, there was no format for the agenda as there is at present. Items were just listed by topic and the idea for dealing with the issue could have come from anywhere. Although a policy does not exist as to the order of business, the order used has been in effect since 10 months after the present superintendent arrived. What does exist in policy is that every item requiring a motion will have an executive recommendation and those items for information only will have the recommendation "that the item be received for information."

The seating at the board table is a minor change that occurred. The Parents' Association, the Teachers' Association and CUPE each have a place at the table and the superintendent and secretary treasurer are positioned, one on either side of the board chairman in order to act as resource people for the chairperson.

Involvement of trustees in the process. Every one of the trustees expressed the opinion that their main input in district decision making came through the goal setting process done at the annual retreat. There the trustees identify 5 to 7 areas needing improvement in order to give some direction to the superintendent for the coming year's priorities. Administration then addresses these areas of concern and is accountable for successfully doing so.

Within board meetings, the trustees do have an opportunity for discussion after the superintendent makes a recommendation. Of the 6 trustees, 4 mentioned that they sometimes did a fair amount of debating. The general feeling of the board members though was that after the superintendent gave his presentation and they made him justify his recommendation, they generally just accepted it because,

In most instances, they know, when the recommendation comes to them, that it has been looked at by senior management from every angle possible. So we know when the recommendation comes to us that, quite clearly, we probably don't have to spend a lot of time really discussing it. (B-3)

The board may ask the administration to draw up a policy on a particular matter. It is then brought before the board for review and providing they agree with the wording and it meets the criteria that they wanted covered, a trustee will serve notice of motion regarding it.

Superintendent involvement in the process. Although the superintendent gives a recommendation on every motion 5 of the 6 trustees felt that he does not enter into the debate unless specifically asked by, or through, the chairman. Usually the involvement is an explanation or an answer for a specific question. The superintendent said that he avoided giving his point of view within the discussion. He felt that because he had put forth the

recommendation in the first place the board meeting was the trustees' forum, not his. One trustee mentioned that on a few occasions the superintendent had interjected but this respondent was quick to point out that it only occurred, "if we are operating on a false assumption or false information" (B-5).

If a trustee raised a new issue, usually another board member would ask for the superintendent's recommendation "because the trustees really believe that you shouldn't act unless you force him into telling you what he thinks you should do and why he thinks you should do that" (B-6).

A policy exists that requires the "Executive Officers to call to its [the boards'] attention policies that are in need of revision. One trustee said that in such cases the CEO comes with a recommendation to that effect but the board actually decides whether to review the policy.

Zone of Tolerance

Community networks. The trustees felt that their main source of information on community preferences was through interaction with the PTG (Parents' Association). Only 4 of the 6 trustees mentioned receiving any form of input from individual parents. Two trustees spoke to the head of the Teachers' Association regularly. Only 1/3 of the board visited schools and talked to individuals there.

Other sources mentioned were:

- local papers
- my wife's contacts
- Rotary Club
- public meetings at budget time
- city council
- district surveys

but these were single trustee choices.

In comparison to the trustees, the superintendent appeared to actively pursue finding out about community preferences. Some sources used were through

- membership in several service groups and the Rotary Club
- involvement in the speaker's bureau
- PTG meetings at individual schools
- district PTG council meetings twice yearly, and
- monthly meetings with a random selection of district teachers.

The CEO also formed what he referred to as a "key communicator group" which is a group of businessmen selected from across the community. Monthly luncheon meetings are held and the superintendent felt this was a very valuable source of feedback on community needs and preferences.

Through the annual goal setting process for every school the needs within schools and local areas are clearly outlined. Surveys are done every two years to receive input

from parents, principals, teachers and the children in order to receive an overall impression of the state of the district, its programs and the schools.

More recently, the superintendent set up a task force of teachers that went out to each school where they spoke to every individual working for the district in order to find out what they thought were priorities and short falls. Using the information received, he has committees containing parents, CUPE, teachers and administration working on recommendations which are to be incorporated into long range plans for the district.

Trustee recruitment. Five of the six trustees indicated that they had been recruited to run for office; one by the board chairman at that time, one by friends on the town council and the other three by their PTG. It was of interest that 3 of the 6 members also mentioned that the reason they agreed to do so was that they were extremely dissatisfied with the previous administration and board.

Responsiveness to community's expectations. The board in general felt that citizens in this district do not seem to become aroused on most issues regarding their schools. As one trustee commented,

I was amazed at the apathy in _____ about school issues. I have always been curious as to why people don't show more concern about their schools or at least be concerned about how we spend their money. You could never really motivate anybody. The issues that brought people out always struck me a bit strange. (B-5)

In contrast, the superintendent felt that there had been several strong, organized and emotional pressure groups active over the past years. Administration, however, has special procedures for handling the various groups and protects the trustees from involvement with such parties as they first emerge. The CEO forestalls a lot of conflict by having his staff go out and listen to all the concerns. During that time he keeps the board totally informed as to what is occurring. As facts emerge, he makes a recommendation to the board, for information only, but no decision can be made for a month. That period allows for delegations to speak or any lobbying from parents to take place before the board makes its decision based on facts, not only emotions.

Delegations from the public have decreased markedly with the above procedure but three issues where the board became involved with the public were on school closures, bussing, and a special educational program. On school closures, with the exception of one decision which they reversed the following year, the board has not submitted to pressure by the parents. The reason given by 4 of the 6 trustees was that they had to look at the needs of the total district as opposed to the needs of a few individuals. With bussing, the board worked with every single group individually and dealt with each case separately--but in most cases they stayed with the original decision. The only

situation in which the board acceded to the public wishes was regarding a special educational program that would be beneficial to many children in the district as a whole.

Two trustees mentioned that the board did not really operate in the manner of being responsive to the public because generally these groups were minorities and the board had to please the most number of people that they could. Of the six trustees, only one felt that such pressure groups had any influence on him/her as an individual.

All trustees said that where public thoughts had some influence was during the annual goal setting process since the suggestions were personal ones, generally arrived at through talking with people or seeing what was happening in the community.

The superintendent, in contrast to the opinions expressed by the trustees, said that "we are here for service. Clearly if there is a group out there that we can serve better by changing something without impacting negatively on somebody else, we will try to satisfy them" (B-S). He clearly listens to the public and makes a concerted effort to obtain all pertinent information and present it to the board for their final decision. He removes a lot of the emotional impact that such groups have through his information gathering process but he has never denied these citizens access to the board on such controversial issues.

During budget time, an annual informational meeting is held to tell the community about the financial decisions. This has been poorly attended in the past and no decisions have ever been changed because of impact from citizens.

The board has a policy on notification of board meetings to the public. The regular board meetings are open to the public and end with a general question and answer period. The board policy asserts that this is done not only so the public has the opportunity to question the board but also to provide the board with the opportunity to hear the public's concerns and recommendations.

Conflict management by superintendent. When the superintendent first came, he brought with him his Principles of Organization. He let it be known to the trustees what were his expectations of them but at the same time what he thought they should expect of him. One of the principles stated:

Every individual should promote and maintain a relationship of mutual trust, confidence and respect with all members of the District

and every trustee expressed the opinion that he has done his utmost to do so.

He constantly provided the board members with information, whether it was through information packages, memos, phone calls or the in-service meetings. There was unanimity among the trustees that he never permitted any surprises to occur. The board chairman said that the

superintendent was exceptionally good to work with because the media would regularly call and since he/she was always kept current by the CEO, that was no problem.

The goal setting process was another way in which conflict was forestalled. Not only were board members given the opportunity for input, single issue individuals could see that there were other concerns as well and the board made the final decision as to which areas they wished to pursue.

In dealing with single issue or difficult trustees, the superintendent still helped them to bring items of concern onto the board meeting agenda. There, the board as a whole makes the decision as to whether to pursue the issue but none of the trustees felt the superintendent ever put down any of them for such a proposal. One trustee commented, "He has always been very patient and very tactful" (B-3). The superintendent did remark that he had followed this procedure regularly and only once did he have to remind a trustee that "your power is at the board, and as an individual you are just an individual" (B-5), when being lobbied for his support.

The order of items on the agenda has been set up in such a manner that if a difficult situation has been dealt with in-camera and trustees are upset, there are various happenings (presentations, delegations, reports) before any

discussion takes place on motions. In addition, if a difficult situation was arising during board meetings, one trustee mentioned that the superintendent

would sort of think for a minute, something to get the chairperson's attention. You couldn't really call it interruptive, but it was almost as though the chairperson knew and they had a secret clue going there. If something wasn't going, or if he could see something developing that could be a problem, I noticed the chairperson would ask for clarification or ask for an explanation. (B-4)

There is a definite chain of command in place in this district and all individuals adhere to this line. With the accountability procedures mentioned previously much conflict has been forestalled at all levels in the district.

The superintendent goes out of his way to help first time candidates for school board by inviting them into his office and giving them any help or information. After the election he continues this open door policy.

Information distribution to the community. The superintendent expressed the opinion that the district has responsibilities to the community regarding keeping them informed. They hold Education Forums several times during the year to help get the parents out and present something about education. They also communicate to the public through press releases, brochures and the magazine containing Adult Education offerings. The chairman also gives a report at the public board meetings as to what was discussed in-camera so the public will know that only those things that are required by law are being discussed in

private. At public board meetings they regularly have presentations so that individuals in attendance can see some of the district programs.

Regarding availability of other information to the public, the board has three policies that deal with these. Although the first requires that copies of the School Board Policy Manual shall be available at the district office and one will be in every school, it does not state that these are readily accessible to the public. The policy on communication with the public refers to the necessity of keeping the public informed and getting input from the public, but the regulations pertaining to this policy are not specific with regard to how this is to be accomplished. The policy regarding the availability of school board minutes says that they are to be circulated to all schools where they are to be made available to staff and the public at large. As a courtesy, they are sent to the various district councils, the Teachers' Association and CUPE. The policy concludes with the statement:

Further, any person wishing to acquire copies of minutes of Board meetings, may do so by paying a fee of 50 cents per set of individual Board meeting minutes.

Other Pertinent Information

Situation in the past. This district has a non-partisan board but a decade ago, although there were no slates, candidates ran on issue platforms. As a result,

trustees proposed motions, often without input from the superintendent or without other trustee support. Basically the board ran the district and told the superintendent what to do and when to do it. The board changed somewhat a year before the present superintendent arrived and the chairman instead acted as the CEO. The feeling of five trustees was that the chairman did an excellent job but it wasn't the role that he wanted but it was a role that somebody had to take so he did it. The entire board clearly wanted someone that was going to take charge since the board chairman had had a job relocation and consequently would not be in the district the following year. One board member was adamant that they would not hire from inside the district, even though they granted courtesy interviews to two insider candidates.

When you hire the top man you don't hire from inside, especially if the previous superintendent surrounded himself with people who probably shouldn't have been there in the first place.
(B-5)

Role of the consultant. The board because of the gravity of the position, hired a consultant to screen candidates. There was a real dissatisfaction on the part of five trustees with the manner in which the consultant did the job. They felt that he had not got a lot of really qualified candidates, only one. One trustee inferred that the candidate that was ultimately selected had actually been asked to apply by the former board chairman and had not been

originally chosen by the consultant. The consultant tried to interfere with the final selection and tried to get the board to rethink their decision.

Socialization of board members. All the trustees felt although the BCSTA seminar was most beneficial for new trustees, the superintendent also went out of his way to help new trustees. He spends a half a day with each one personally, giving them information and answering their questions. The district retreat, held in January, was felt by one trustee to be especially important in helping new board members to understand about the workings of their particular school district and their role versus that of the superintendent. Every trustee felt that they actually spent the first year learning and after that they were more comfortable with their role and confident that they were acting effectively.

Political acumen of superintendent. Three trustees felt that their CEO was quite politically astute for he was able to use techniques to discover what trustees would go for and then use this information effectively. Where he was taking a risk, one trustee felt that "he does his homework and makes sure that it is well presented with good rationale" (B-6). The superintendent also showed that "as a superintendent you do not want to lose too many recommendations" (B-5) and if the superintendent did, he should examine what is happening very carefully. He also

maintained that recommendations he makes are clearly not decisions and if the board disagrees with them, that is their role and he does not view that negatively.

Summary

The total structure and manner of operation in this district changed markedly with the arrival of their present superintendent. Although these changes have been previously given in the chapter, they are summarized in Tables 6 and 7 for the purpose of clarity.

Insert Table 6 here

Trustees have become less involved in policy formation and the overall decision making process although they still make the final decision as to acceptance or rejection of the superintendent's recommendations (see Table 6). Due to a reorganization of the district's financial structure, a lot of decisions previously done by the trustees are now decided at the school level so their involvement in this area has decreased considerably. The board has also accepted the advisability of consulting with the superintendent on matters regarding personnel because of the difficulties they encountered legally in the past. The board has become involved in two new areas since the arrival of their present superintendent, goal setting and the evaluation of the

Table 6

School Board Involvement In District Operations

Area	Situation		
	Past	Present	Extent of Change
Policy formation	Board chairman and trustees decided all policies, usually in reaction to a situation in the district as opposed to looking ahead	Policies mainly suggested by superintendent in anticipation of situation that may occur. Trustees may also suggest policies	More input by superintendent, shared responsibility
Overall decision making	Trustees decided most matters in district, whether political or administrative, financial or curricular. Trustees did take input from superintendent	All matters that come before board now come with the CEO's recommendation and board votes as to acceptance or rejection of the suggestion	Trustees gave power to superintendent
Evaluation of CEO	Not done in past	Done annually	Superintendent responsible to board for running district
Goal setting	Not done in past	Trustees do this annually and CEO responsible for having district work towards these goals	Goals established and evaluated regularly
Budget	Board decided all matters (except salaries) right down to what supplies individual schools should have	Decentralized system Budget proposed by administration, approved by trustees	Trustees gave organizational and financial power to CEO
Action regarding personnel	Trustees made decisions, sometimes without proper legal background	Background information and recommendations come from administration, final decision made by board	Board accedes to superintendent's recommendations

superintendent. Through these two processes, they maintain their involvement since the superintendent has become accountable to them for the areas in which they gave up their personal involvement.

Insert Table 7 here

The superintendent has acquired considerable more influence than he previously held in this district (see Table 7). He has acquired power in the areas of suggesting policies, making political and administrative decisions, and agenda making. The board now makes decisions as a whole, based upon the superintendent's recommendations, not as in former times when the standing committees often made the decisions. The board also has acquired power in that it sets goals for the district and the superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the district achieves these goals. Prior to the present superintendent coming, the board did not hold the superintendent accountable for the running the district, but it does so now.

Table 7

The Board-Superintendent Relationship

Area	Situation	
	Past	Present
Openness in communication	Trustees did not consult with superintendent	Information provided freely with main points highlighted for ease of understanding. In-service nights for more in-depth discussion
Policy formation	Done by trustees	Main input comes from superintendent as to need for a policy or change in existing policy. Trustees may ask for policy
Political decisions	Made by trustees	CEO gives background information and recommendations, but board makes actual decisions
Administrative decisions	Considerable interference by trustees	All administrative decisions made by superintendent
Goal setting and evaluation	Not done	Trustees set goals, CEO accountable to board for district achieving goals. Everyone in district is then accountable to CEO
Trustee committee structure	Well established standing committee structure. Large amount of lobbying with decisions often made before matter went to whole board	No committee structure, board decides as a whole
Agenda making	Chairman made up and then met with superintendent to discuss items	Draft agenda made up by sec.treas. and CEO. Chairman and vice-chairman review and make necessary changes

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter begins with a comparison of the factors in each district found in previous research to have an effect on board-superintendent relations. These factors are analysed in three separate areas:

- board
- superintendent and
- other

since the community factors were controlled in the study. These are then interpreted as to their relevance in this study. In this way it was possible to ascertain which, if any, of the variables had an effect on the working relationship a superintendent has with his/her board. Conclusions are given as to what factors were deemed to be necessary for good board-superintendent relations and the chapter concludes with implications for further study.

Analysis

Board factors. Although the boards of Districts A and B were of different sizes (Board A--8 trustees; Board B--6 trustees), general comparisons could still be made in the areas of:

- age
- male/female ratio
- children in the educational system
- level of education
- reason for running for school board, and
- length of time as a trustee.

For ease of examination, the results are tabulated in Table 8.

Insert Table 8 here

The average age of trustees in Board A was greater than that of Board B but both are below the B.C. average trustee age of 45 years. Although O'Reilly (1985) determined that male/female balance on boards is a factor in establishing a harmonious board-superintendent relationship, this would not affect the results obtained in the districts under study since there was no appreciable difference in the male/female balance on the boards (data given in this area includes the trustee on each board that was not interviewed). There was an equal balance of trustees' children at all levels in the educational system. Level of education obtained by board members was not significantly different between the districts so this factor was not a determinant as to why the boards operate in such a dissimilar manner. With respect to

Table 8
Comparison of Board Composition

Category	Board	
	A	B
Age:		
30 - 35	1	1
35 - 40	3	3
40 - 45	2	0
45 - 50	1	0
over 50	1	1
Male/female ratio	5/4	4/3
Children:		
Pre-school	1	2
Elementary	4	3
Secondary	2	2
Work force	2	1
Level of Education:		
High School not completed	1	0
High School completed	2	1
Some University/college	1	2
Trade school	1	0
University completed	2	1
Post-graduate studies	1	1
Reason for running for school board:		
Former volunteer work	4	1
Recruited	4	4
Civic Duty	6	0
Family member involved in education	3	0
Dissatisfaction with provincial govt. policies	2	0
previous board and staff	0	3
not specified	2	0
Other		
interest in politics	1	0
interest in Fr. Immersion	1	0
public apathy	1	0
Length of Time as Trustee:		
less than 1 year	0	1
1 year	2	3
2 years	2	1
3 years	1	1
4 years	1	0
more than 4 years	2	0

occupations, both had equal numbers of professionals and those in business. Board A, however, did contain 2 individuals very heavily involved in union affairs at the managerial level.

When reasons for running for school board were examined, only 50% of Board A members were recruited as opposed to 83% of Board B. The majority in both groups, however, were not asked by trustees on the board but rather by members from their school Parents' Association so no conclusions can be made that the recruitment factor helped to determine what occurred in each district.

Of significance was the fact that on Board B, three trustees ran for office because of dissatisfaction with the previous board and administration. The community was not undergoing a significant socio-economic change as found by Iannaccone and Lutz (1970) to be a factor in changing school board membership and consequently the superintendent to a new CEO with values in accordance to the new board. The community, however, did change ideologically (formerly the community had expressed a Judeo-Christian philosophy which they felt should be embodied in the schools) and changed the board's composition one year prior to the firing of the superintendent.

A large variation in the length of time members had served on their respective boards was evident. The average length in office for trustees in Board A was three years,

whereas the average for Board B members was just over a year. As socialization was deemed to have a significant effect on the way a board operates (Kerr, 1964), and previous research by Hentges (1986) determined that those members who had served for longer periods of time are generally more content to maintain the status quo and not to make changes in the way the board operates, the variation noted above was significant. The longer serving board in District A did not want any changes in board operation and the decision making process, whereas the recently elected members of Board B were looking for someone who would provide leadership and make changes.

Both boards, when hiring their superintendents, clearly outlined the criteria they were looking for and there was unanimity within each board as to their main criteria (see Table 9).

Insert Table 9 here

In accord with the research findings of Iannaccone & Lutz (1970) on hiring the superintendent from inside or outside the district, it was found Board A would have found it perfectly acceptable to hire an insider candidate, showing that they were quite satisfied with the way their district

Table 9

Characteristics Desired of Superintendent

Criteria	Board	
	A	B
Main criteria	openness and communication skills	leadership
Criteria desired by over 50% of trustees	someone who would let board members play an active role in policy formation ability to involve others in the decision making process	management skills
Other factors	insider candidate acceptable	only outside candidates considered seriously

was operating. On the other hand, Board B did not consider such a likelihood as they wished to have someone who would initiate changes.

With both boards, the consultant tried to promote a candidate that he felt met their needs best and when the board made their final choice, he again interfered by trying to question their selection. Ultimately each board made their own decision based on what they perceived as the individual's ability to meet the needs of their specific school system organization and both districts feel they have an ideological match.

Although the responsibilities of the superintendents in the two districts were vastly different, both were clearly outlined (one in policy, the other in the personnel handbook) and all parties interviewed maintained that they were strictly adhered to.

Neither board was partisan in nature. Since there is conflicting research in previous literature as to whether this makes the board more or less responsive to citizens or to whether cooptation by the superintendent occurs more readily with such boards, it was difficult to draw any conclusions in this area. Each board operated in a different manner and at a different responsiveness level to the public. Although both were non-partisan, Board A was responsive to the public's expressed wishes and the

superintendent rarely made recommendations. Board B, however, wanted their superintendent to make recommendations for all matters and usually acceded to his suggestions.

Although Board B did have committees when the superintendent first arrived, these were done away with almost immediately and both districts operate without a standing committee structure. The situation in District B prior to the change is in accord with the findings of Zeigler, Kehoe & Reisman (1985) that standing committees can be influenced readily if they exist. Board B members were regularly lobbied during committee meetings and principals especially used these meetings to gain additional resources for their schools. Since trustee committees are no longer used by either district, this was not a factor in determining the factors that allow variations to exist in the manner each board works with its superintendent.

Superintendent factors. Several factors that emanate from the superintendent that may effect the board-superintendent relationship were examined by comparing the data obtained on the superintendent's questionnaire. Neither CEO had been a superintendent before but both had served in very large districts, of over 40,000 students, that traditionally had locally appointed superintendents. Both had undertaken post-graduate study. Zeigler, Kehoe & Reisman (1985) found that superintendents with doctoral

degrees are most ideologically committed and have difficulty in refraining from imposing their judgments on board decision making. Although the superintendent in District A had his doctoral degree, he did have 11 more years of experience than the superintendent in District B which according to Boss, Zeigler, Tucker & Wilson (1976) mediates the negative influence of education. The findings in this study are in accord with the above since the CEO in District A refrained from imposing his beliefs on those of the board and rather presented all sides of the questions on issues.

The superintendent in District A was a decade and a half older than the superintendent in District B and had spent all of his career in one district prior to his present appointment. District B's superintendent had worked in 2 different districts and had rarely stayed in a position for any length of time. Although these factors may be determinants in how a superintendent works effectively with a board, there was no indication in this study that age or length of time in a position have an adverse effect. Both superintendents were equally enthusiastic, well organized, communicated with their trustees, demonstrated the kind of leadership desired by their boards and were looking ahead and making comprehensive plans for the district's future.

Neither superintendent had to deal with factional boards and both showed that they were politically astute in the manner they worked, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Comparision of Manner CEOs Work With Their Boards

Criteria	Board	
	A	B
Communication with trustees	Large packages of background info. sent out weekly	Large packages of background info. sent out weekly
	If one trustee requests info., all trustees receive it	If board chairman is given information, all trustees hear about it
	In-depth discussions held at regularly scheduled retreats	Background information given with possibility of discussion at in-service nights
	Open door policy for talking or meeting with trustees	Open door policy for talking or meeting with trustees
Goal setting process	Trustees set goals	Trustees set goals
	Superintendent accountable for district meeting goals	Superintendent accountable for district meeting goals
Policy implementation	Implements board decisions without difficulty	Implements board decisions without difficulty
Evaluation of superintendent	Done annually	Done annually

Other factors. Of seemingly more significance in this study, with respect to the question of the board-superintendent relationship, than the community, board or superintendent factors are factors such as:

- acknowledgement and adherence to respective authority
- use by superintendent of the power of expertise
- receptiveness of trustees to input from the community in deciding internal and external policy issues
- community zone of tolerance, and
- conflict management techniques used by the superintendent.

Although each superintendent played a vastly different role with their board, the role each acknowledged was in accord with the expectations as clearly outlined in their job descriptions. Both boards adhered to the division of authority they had agreed upon and neither board interfered in administrative matters.

The superintendent in District A did not use the power of expertise with his board. Rather, because his board expected it, he gave information on both the pros and cons of a decision, and the board had to make the final decision, weighing the information themselves. This was the case with both internal and external policy issues. The board in external policy issues (such as school closures) showed that

public opinion carries as much weight as the technical expertise of the superintendent. In contrast, Board B, when they hired their present superintendent, no longer wished to do the weighing of the information. Consequently, the superintendent was able to do away with the trustee standing committees that were then making the decisions and instead was able to introduce a whole new organizational structure for the district, with himself having the authority to make decisions since he was the educational expert. He was able to use his expertise and became the acknowledged expert to the trustees. Due to the manner in which he took charge and the astuteness of the decisions he made immediately, he has been able to use the power of expertise most effectively ever since as shown by the fact that all matters coming before the board must have a recommendation from the superintendent. The board, as a majority, has only voted against his recommendations once and that was on an external policy issue. Even then, by use of the power of expertise, the decision was reversed the following year when the superintendent showed additional facts and figures to support the closing of the school.

The trustees on Board A actively pursued finding out about community preferences and have developed extensive networks to enable them to do so. They are responsive to what the community expresses it wants. As there is no indifference regarding educational services in this

district, the board has learned it must be cognizant of and adhere to the public concerns. Consequently, it is evident that the superintendent must not only be in tune with the community, but must also ensure that the decision making process involves the trustees.

Board B does not operate in this manner as the majority of the citizens do not take an active interest in the affairs of the school district. They do not have wide networks to receive input, but rather use the PTG as their main source. Instead, it has been necessary for the superintendent to establish networks into the community to find out what will be acceptable and what will not. Because things have stabilized since the present superintendent arrived and the individual schools are running well, parents do not become involved and it is unlikely that this would change unless their own children's situation was threatened. It appears that the superintendent, being aware of this, has been able to widen the community's zone of tolerance by ensuring that a good standard of education is being given and that clear procedures exist within a school that allow parents to air their concerns and have them remedied, ever before they come to the administrative or board level.

The superintendent in both districts are well versed in conflict management techniques. Each forestalls potential conflicts by providing the board with considerable information in a variety of ways and by allowing easy access

for trustees to contact them when they have a concern. Neither board felt that the superintendent gave them any surprises, but felt instead that they were never unsure of details before the public or press. Both CEOs "feel out" their boards and are aware of community expectations and through their skill in these areas know not to make a proposal that would meet with opposition from these groups.

Evaluation is important and consequently surveys are done regularly within each district to assess educational programs and make any needed changes to meet the ongoing needs of the community. Both superintendents submit to an annual evaluation by their board and have mechanisms in place to ensure that other personnel in the district are also being assessed regularly.

The goal setting processes employed by both superintendents avert potential conflicts since agreement is reached by the board and administration on where the district focuses are for that year. The district then works towards those and mid-year reports are given explaining if a goal will be reached or not. A final report is given at year-end but trustees were prepared previously if a goal was not going to be reached in its entirety.

Although the superintendent in District B has a little more comprehensive program to acquaint new trustees with district operations, the superintendent in District A does assist new members in assuming their role. Both

superintendents are involved in the agenda making process although District B has their superintendent play a more active role in its formation.

From these comparisons, something of the character of each school district emerges. In many respects, the districts are similar, but in other areas they act in very divergent ways. The superintendents employ many of the same techniques to forestall conflicts and their boards are extremely satisfied with their performance, yet one uses a team management style while the other has assumed a greater degree of control and a definite line of command.

Interpretation of the Findings

Boyd (1976) asserted that whether the local appointment of a superintendent makes the board more active in policy formation is a complex issue to assess. Previous researchers were divided into two camps, those that believed that policy making is dominated by the superintendent and those that asserted that the superintendent is the beleaguered public official.

Through examination of two boards and the relationship that they have with their superintendents it was possible to look at the question from the B.C. perspective where local appointment is a relatively recent phenomenon.

A good working relationship exists in both districts although the boards work in quite a dissimilar manner.

There was no evidence in these two districts that local appointment of superintendents is either the cause of difficulties for a superintendent or the cause of domination of policy making by the superintendent. Neither superintendent could be classed as the beleaguered public official. Neither completely dominated their district's policy making.

These findings suggest it is clear that local appointment is not the main factor affecting the board-superintendent relationship. It does play a part in the overall scenario since each board chose a particular individual to be superintendent according to what they felt was an ideological match, but other factors are also significant in making for a successful working situation for both parties. Since the boards operate in quite a dissimilar manner, it is necessary to identify what factors were present that are critical to the establishment of good board-superintendent relations.

How can these differences in their operational styles be explained with respect to factors that make for good board-superintendent relations? The discussion which follows attempts to shed light on this question.

Factors that were the same for both districts are deemed not to have an effect on why these boards operated differently while the superintendents were equally

successful. These factors were:

- the male/female balance on the board
- age and educational level of trustees
- recruitment of trustees
- absence of committee structures
- non-partisan boards, and
- role of the consultant.

Conditions that showed some disparity which could possibly account for the difference between the boards were:

- union background of board members
- changes in board composition a year previously
- length of time as a trustee
- use of power of expertise, and
- use of community networks.

Upon examination, however, it is clear that the evidence of their influence on the board-superintendent relationship is not conclusive.

Although Board A had two very strong union representatives as trustees, this board had played an active role in the decision making process prior to either one of them being on the board and continued to do so even after both left the board. Therefore, with this board, the fact that there were such individuals as trustees at the time the superintendent was hired and for the first 2 years of his tenure, appears to be of little consequence to the findings.

A change in board composition, although not a factional or partisan board, as occurred in District B is of greater significance. With the change of trustees came a change in expectations for the superintendent. The board no longer accepted the role the superintendent played or the one they felt they were forced to enact and as a result fired their superintendent because he did not act as they expected him to.

Since hiring their superintendents, neither board has had a large turnover of membership, generally only 1 or 2 members an election, but prior to that, the composition of one board did change markedly. A lot of research has been done previously on socialization of trustees and the fact that after a period of time they conform to the patterns that the longer-serving trustees have set. This belief is somewhat confirmed by the difference in average length of time served by board members, at the time of hiring the superintendent, in District A as compared to District B. Board A, with trustees having served an average of 3 years, were reluctant to change the patterns that they had established whereas the trustees on Board B were relatively new and were basically all elected at the same time. Board B had had no chance to become set in a pattern before they decided to hire a new superintendent. When the new CEO arrived, bringing with him a new organizational plan, he did not have to overcome set values as to how a board should

operate. Rather, by showing the need for and the value of his educational expertise, he was able to start a new manner of interaction between trustees and the superintendent and these new expectations were quickly accepted by the board.

There is a substantial difference in the responsiveness of the two boards to their community's wishes. Board A regularly goes out to the public to get input and then uses that input in the decision-making process. Board B is not receptive to community preferences but rather is somewhat shielded from them by the superintendent.

After studying the forementioned variables in terms of their effect on board-superintendent relations, it can only be concluded that these variables do not appear to be indicators of what makes for a successful relationship and why these superintendents are successful although their styles of operation are different.

What then is responsible for the good overall board-superintendent relations in these districts? It is believed that several factors come into play which enable the superintendents to satisfy the board and yet not merely become a "functionary."

Both boards had very definite criteria in mind when they originally hired their superintendents and firmly adhered to these during the selection process. These criteria (as outlined in Table 9), although different for each district, clearly indicated their expectations as to

the working relationship they wished to develop with a superintendent. It may be possible, as Boyd (1975) and McCarty & Ramsey (1971) maintained, that when the selection process is done in such an organized manner the screening process produces an ideological match. There is evidence from the interviews that indicates that Board A did not hire one of the candidates because he would have "organized everything to his preconceived patterns" whereas Board B only really considered one candidate because of his "organizational expertise" and felt strongly that the others were not "fit and proper candidates". The assumption, also, that prospective administrators tend to seek compatible school systems rather than going to areas where confrontation is likely to occur due to differing ideologies, entrenched forces, or contrasting styles of operation seems to be entirely true in these districts. Whether either CEO would have been successful had they been hired in the other district is not evident, but certainly most unlikely because of their differing operational styles.

Reeves (1969) maintained that the responsibilities of a superintendent must be precisely laid out and the board must adhere to these or difficulties will occur. It was evident that both districts had clearly defined policies on the duties of both the superintendent and the board and clearly followed these. The duties of each superintendent in many ways were not alike, so it may be possible that it matters

not so much what the responsibilities are but whether these are attended to. In these districts, both superintendents did not overstep their authority, and both boards did not interfere in what they felt was administrative duties. A larger sample size might have revealed more definitive results in this area, but the conclusion must be that districts which have all parties working cooperatively together but with clearly outlined roles and adherence to these will have a better working relationship between the board and the superintendent than those that do not.

All trustees stressed the amount of information they received from their superintendent as being very important. They asserted that without it they could not make appropriate decisions and if they did not receive enough background material they would table a decision, rather than vote on it, in order to receive further clarification. Both superintendents asserted that they went out of their way to provide a multitude of information so that their trustees were informed on all aspects of the school district operations (as shown in the communications area of Table 10). They felt that the board was entitled to the information since it is, by law, the policy making body. One superintendent even went as far as to summarize aspects of reports that were written with so much jargon for ease of understanding by his trustees. It is evident that it is not only desirable, but expected that there is an openness of

communication. These findings suggest that any superintendent who did not go along with such an expectation would be unlikely to retain his position for very long.

Conflict management is a somewhat difficult area to examine and draw conclusions about. It is interesting to note that both superintendents employed a variety of techniques to not only forestall conflict but also to anticipate and therefore contain it. They actively worked at building up trust and credibility with their boards. It may be possible that had they not possessed these skills in the first place, they would never have attained such a position, for even as an assistant superintendent (which both held previously), one must be adept in such matters. The fact that they did employ such techniques successfully suggests that they are important in maintaining a good board-superintendent relationship.

Why are these superintendents successful although their styles of operation are so different? Since this question is not yet fully answered, we must look further. McCarty & Ramsey (1971) asserted that there were different types of communities and this is reflected in the type of school board and in the role that the superintendent can engage in with the board or community. It is evident from the analysis of the districts that both superintendents are "political advisors," that is, they give advice (which includes alternatives for Board A) based on the best

educational research and theory, not on the ideology of the group. Although the superintendent in District B gave many more recommendations than the individual in District A, both boards examined the appropriateness of policies in terms of what the community needed. Both superintendents demonstrated that they were politically astute and used this to their advantage.

Board A appeared more responsive to community desires and yet there was no real opposition from the citizens in District B as to the manner in which their board made decisions. Here the community's zone of tolerance comes into play. It was evident that the citizens in District A demanded a voice in the decision making process and that any board that tried to operate without considering the community's wishes would be defeated in the next election, and therefore the superintendent would be put in a precarious position. This was clearly not the situation in District B where the board really only used the input from the community in determining annual goals. They usually did not listen to groups. Board B felt their decisions were based on what was best for the most people. Thus the disparity between the zone of tolerance in the two districts becomes more evident. The boards also work in the following different ways: one with everything coming before it with recommendations from the superintendent, the other being

presented with the advantages and disadvantages before making the actual decision (without an executive recommendation) themselves. There was considerable evidence that both superintendents had learned to cope with the community's zone of tolerance. In this major respect they differed from their predecessors, who were provincially appointed, and did not have the necessity to do so since they were answerable to the Ministry of Education, not the school board and the citizens of the community.

The conclusions reached are, therefore, that superintendents must be politically astute and demonstrate a knowledge of and adherence to the community's zone of tolerance. These two factors are of paramount importance for a successful board-superintendent relationship when a CEO is locally appointed.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to examine, by means of a case study, the effect of local appointment on the board-superintendent relationship. Further, the study sought to discover what factors do go into making for an effective relationship.

The conclusions were arrived at by examining what occurred in the district prior to and for the two years after the arrival of the present superintendent, as

described by the trustees and superintendent during the interviews. Information from agendas, board meeting minutes, policy manuals and the public records were examined and triangulated so that the data was more plausible and as a safeguard against any bias or error caused by distortion of perceptions over time. It was discovered that the districts varied in their manner of operation, but that there were also definite similarities in other areas.

The conclusion reached from the research is although locally appointment of superintendents does have a small effect on board-superintendent relations, some very basic additional elements must be present for a good working relationship with a school board to exist. In addition, it seems that local appointment does not appear to ensure more control in district operations or policy making by school boards.

Factors, that may have an effect on the relationship, but not determined to do so in this study since they were the same for both districts were:

- the male/female balance on the board
- age and educational level of trustees
- recruitment of trustees
- absence of committee structures
- non-partisan boards, and
- the role of the consultant.

No definitive conclusions as to the influence of the following could be reached:

- union background of board members
- use of power of expertise, and
- use of community networks.

Further research in these areas is necessary if one is to fully comprehend the degree, if any, to which they affect the manner in which a board and superintendent work together.

Of some significance was the notion that socialization of board members affects the way a board acts. The longer a trustee is on the board, the more likely he/she is to maintain the status quo. If there is a major turnover of trustees, such a degree of socialization is not apt to occur and often changes in the board's operational style and the board-superintendent relationship will result.

Results of this study indicate that trustees must share a common ideology as to what characteristics they wish to see in a superintendent and then must firmly adhere to this ideology when going through the hiring process. If a common front does not exist, a board cannot hope to hire a compatible superintendent and any superintendent that would go into such a position would be asking for trouble.

In addition, superintendents and boards must have clearly defined responsibilities and full cooperation must

be maintained to see that all parties adhere to their roles. The potential for conflict exists and unless the trustees adhere to the principle of non-interference in administrative matters and the superintendent stays out of the political realm, insurmountable problems will ensue.

The assumption that trustees are not educational experts and therefore should not make decisions is outdated. Superintendents have a function in ensuring that a good board-superintendent relationship is established and constantly nurtured. They must be good communicators and see that their boards are well informed so that the trustees can make the necessary decisions on behalf of the community. If superintendents do not do so, they are not fulfilling one of their main responsibilities as a CEO, and consequently, as Coleman (1974) maintained, should be removed whether they are locally-appointed or provincially-appointed.

Superintendents must be skilled in the use of conflict management techniques. Presumably these would have been acquired before they were hired, for the anticipation, forestalling, and controlling of conflict are much too critical to be left to a novice.

Both the board and the superintendent must not only be cognizant of the community's zone of tolerance but must also ensure that they do not overstep its boundaries. This being hard to assess, both parties must have clearly established

networks to receive community input from all aspects of the population, not merely a small segment that may be unrepresentative of the total populace.

Although other factors may affect the board-superintendent relationship, if the above criteria exist, a cooperative partnership can be fostered.

As important as the forementioned factors are, even if they do exist, they do not ensure that the superintendent will have a long tenure in a district. It was evident that the success of a superintendent, whether locally or provincially appointed, really depends on whether he/she is politically astute and is able to work within the parameters of the community's zone of tolerance.

Implications For Further Study

There are several directions for follow-up to this study. The most logical would be to do another comparative case study, in two districts that had recently fired their superintendent, to determine if the criteria established in this study as essential in maintaining a good board-superintendent relationship were absent. If it was found that indeed they were absent it could well provide further confirmation as to their necessity or if they were all present, what additional factors are deemed critical.

Since board-superintendent relationships have never previously been studied in British Columbia, we really do

not have definitive answers to the following questions and each would be of interest to boards and superintendents.

- What effect does a large representation of union individuals as trustees have on the board's expectation as to its role in the decision making process of a district?
- How do boards seek out superintendents that will be compatible ideologically?
- How closely are superintendent and trustee responsibilities, if clearly defined, adhered to?
- If there is a large turnover of trustees on a board (more than 50%), what result does this have on the board-superintendent relationship?

It is important for research on boards and superintendents to continue. The system exists not only in British Columbia but also in most areas of Canada and the United States. We live in changing times where individuals are demanding more say in governmental affairs and more accountability from public officials. What effect this will have on the board-superintendent relationship needs to be monitored if the system is to continue its important function.

APPENDIX A

BCSTA Brief to Minister of Education

Mr. Minister,

School boards in this province have, for many years, advocated that district superintendents be directly hired and employed by the board. The BCSTA raised this matter of local appointment with you in May, 1976, and you responded that the matter was under study. The matter was raised again at our August, 1976 meeting, when we pointed out that some immediate problems were occurring in school districts under the existing system of appointment of superintendents.

In the last few weeks major problems have developed in the selection and appointment of district superintendents. The BCSTA is now most concerned that changes be made immediately to current practice.

The major problems that boards are encountering are:

1. When boards have made representation to Ministry officials to have unsatisfactory superintendents removed they have often encountered what could be viewed as official non-response.

In one case, representation to a Ministry official was made last Fall for the removal of the superintendent but no action was taken. When the same Ministry official was approached again, two weeks ago, regard-

ing what was happening, the first response was, "We hoped if we did nothing, the problem would go away". When convinced by the board chairman that the problem was not "going to go away", the Ministry official's response was, "We have twelve superintendents worse than yours who have to be moved first."

Clearly, Mr. Minister, this inability of Ministry officials to remove incompetent superintendents is an unacceptable situation.

2. There is a growing body of evidence to show that Ministry officials are playing games with the school boards concerned when vacancies in the district superintendents' offices occur.
 - (a) School board "A" is told by the Ministry to meet and decide quickly because it is in competition with school board "B" for a superintendent. At the same time a similar tactic is being used with board "B". Quite apart from the question of integrity in the game itself, it is being played on an untruthful basis because the short lists which are subsequently supplied to districts "A" and "B" do not contain any names common to both lists.

- (b) Dates are set for interviews by Ministry officials in such a way as to promote the playing of one board against another while allowing the seniority system to operate.
- (c) The ministry refuses to supply the boards with the names of all applicants. Instead, the Ministry supplies its own short lists at the last minute which prohibits an adequate checking of the applicants.
- (d) On March 3, 1977 a Ministry official was asked by a board chairman, "What happens if we reject all applicants on your short list?" The answer received was, "That never happened."

Now one of these districts has discovered what happens. The board interviewed four of the five candidates given it by the Ministry (the fifth was out of the country) and rejected them all. A Ministry official has advised the board that it will just have to select one of them as no further names will be given to the board.

- (e) Another board is slated to interview on March 9. It seems that this board has a short list of one to interview because, on the strong recommendation of a Ministry official, he is the only candidate

they need to interview. To make matters worse, the board was not even advised as to the name of this individual.

The foregoing, Mr. Minister are examples which have come to our attention over the past four working days.

3. Another problem which has developed is the interference by the Ministry in the selection methods used by school boards. The first applicant to be interviewed by one board refused to write a standard senior executive assessment instrument approved for use by the board. He immediately contacted his superior at the Ministry and complained. The Ministry official then contacted the board and threatened to withdraw all candidates if the executive aptitude and motivation assessment procedure was not abandoned.

It should be noted, Mr. Minister, that the aptitude and motivation assessment instruments in question are standard practice when business, industry and government search for senior executives. It would appear that Ministry officials have taken it upon themselves to dictate to an elected body what its selection procedures should be. Furthermore, they have rejected an assessment instrument without having first checked its reliability or validity.

4. We also wish to bring to your attention the attached list of principles and guidelines concerning the appointment of district superintendents which was supplied to one board by the Ministry. This list illustrates the whole facade of board interviewing of district superintendents. Item 2, for example, states, "That first assignments be for a minimum of three years and a maximum of five years, provided that consideration for earlier transfer be accorded district superintendents serving in isolated areas." How can any such assurance be given to individuals by the Ministry if school boards are the only ones to be involved in interviewing (Item 5)? This appears to reveal an inconsistency. There are other inconsistencies in the list.

Mr: Minister, we are concerned that, as school boards are accountable not only for the education provided in their districts, but also for the administration necessary to achieve this, they must be able to exercise judgement in the selection of staff, especially for administrative positions. It is not so much a question of who is hired (there are many excellent district superintendents), but of how. The process must not only be a responsible one but must be seen to be such.

We ask, therefore, that you:

1. Immediately postpone all appointments and interviews currently taking place until
 - (a) boards are advised of the criteria used in selecting candidates for district superintendents;
 - (b) boards requiring a new district superintendent receive a list of all applicants for the position in sufficient time and with sufficient information for them to check the qualifications of the candidates, prepare a short list and arrange for interviewing;
 - (c) boards have full autonomy in the determination of how they wish to go about selecting their superintendent.

2. As a long range goal, give boards, as locally-elected bodies responsible to the public for providing quality education, the right to advertise and draw the best available candidates for superintendent from the total job market. For the time being, Mr. Minister, it doesn't matter who hires the superintendent. What matters is that the best and most competent superintendents are available for selection.

Thank you, Mr. Minister

9 March 1977

1. That superintendents be informed about their first assignment before they make an irrevocable commitment to the Department. Superintendents assigned in mid-term to a specific vacancy have that privilege now.
2. That first assignments be for a minimum of three years and a maximum of five years, provided that consideration for earlier transfer be accorded district superintendents serving in isolated areas.
3. That no superintendent be allowed to apply for another assignment until he has served his first three-year stint.
4. That for every vacancy Department officials establish a list of eligible superintendents who have applied, short-listed if the Department sees fit.
5. That Boards, and only Boards, as elected representatives responsible to their constituents, be permitted to interview those on the list provided by the Department, and to interview only those on the list presented, to a maximum of three.
6. The Department should reserve the right to require that a person of the Department's choice be interviewed.
7. That vacancies in small dual superintendencies be filled by direct assignment by the officials within the Department.
8. That regular appointments of new superintendents be made prior to April 30. After that date, it is

difficult for Districts to replace principals and others appointed to the superintendency.

9. That, in general, superintendencies that are expected to become vacant during the year be cleared for new assignments by August 1 in any year.
10. That vacancies in a superintendency occurring during the school year for such unpredictable reasons as death, unresolved but serious crisis in the superintendency or appointment of the incumbent to the Department shall be filled by the same process as in August, but to avoid the possibility of disrupting several superintendencies, the new appointee will not take up his new duties until August 1 next following. In the meantime, a temporary appointee will perform the necessary duties in the superintendency.
11. That should the Department wish to transfer a superintendent to departmental duty, that intention will override all other considerations on the principle that the Department must retain the right to determine where its officers will serve.
12. That the Minister be asked to endorse these principles and guidelines so that there will be assurance that they will be observed in practice.

APPENDIX B

Report of BCSTA/ABCSS Joint Committee

FORMALIZING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF THE BOARD AND THE SUPERINTENDENT

Whether focusing on an ongoing relationship or a beginning relationship between a board and a superintendent, there are a number of formal steps that can be taken to ensure the health of the relationship.

Needs Assessment

The board should clearly enunciate its perception of the needs of the district, and its expectations of the superintendent. The board may choose to utilize external resource people to assist it in this task.

Role Description

Based on the needs assessment, the superintendent should draft a role description which incorporates the board's expectations of the superintendent. Such a document may include specific objectives to be achieved and time frames for achievement, but care should be taken that the result be a "living document." In other words, it must recognize that the role of the superintendent and his/her relationship to the board is continually evolving along with the needs, priorities, and conditions of the district.

The Employment
Contract

The superintendent's contract with the board should facilitate the trust relationship between the two parties. In this spirit, it is advisable that the contract should include matters of salary and benefits, renewal, termination and, possibly, evaluation. Such a contract would avoid

maintaining latitude for the superintendent in the administration of the district and preserving the trust nature of the relationship.

The contract serves to clear away the "logistical" details of the relationship. The parties can then concentrate on the working relationship. Boards and superintendents are advised to consult the BCSTA/ABCSS publication Guidelines to the Development of Employment Contracts for Superintendents of Schools when initiating or revising a contract.

Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct for trustees and administrators may be drawn up to codify some of the thoughts and good intentions expressed in this document.

Evaluation

Although evaluation is treated in depth in the next section, it goes without saying that a formal process of evaluation creates a situation where both parties are operating under the same set of expectations. This can only serve to further the objectives of trust and openness.

APPENDIX C

Report of BCSTA/ABCSS Joint Committee

EVALUATION

A board which does not engage in evaluation is like a captain of a ship who sets sail for a particular destination but fails to check periodically if the ship is on course.

The board wants to be assured that the superintendent is effective in providing leadership for the school system. The superintendent wants to be assured that he/she is doing a good job. A good evaluation system will provide those assurances for both parties.

Topics for Evaluation

However, when a board engages in evaluation, it should not focus exclusively on the superintendent and his/her performance. There are at least three distinct areas/topics which require attention:

1. the district and its needs, objectives, and priorities,
2. the board and its functioning, and
3. the superintendent and his/her role performance.

Board Evaluation

Aside from these broad areas, the focus of an evaluation cannot, and should not, be prescribed in a document such as this. Fundamental to the concept of local autonomy is the presumption that local needs and local situations can best be dealt with by those who are closest to, and most familiar with, those situations. However, it is worth emphasizing that the board should be sure to include in the evaluation process an evaluation of its own operation. This is because the board establishes the goals and objectives which are going to be evaluated, and the board (together with the superintendent) defines "progress" on the specific goals and objectives.

Evaluation Summary	Beyond that, an evaluation summary should be included which addresses (a) those items which have been accomplished, (b) those items which have not, and (c) those which require more attention.
Communication Opportunities	<p><u>A good evaluation process can be an effective channel for communication between the superintendent and the board.</u> Evaluation provides at least three opportunities for such communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - during the "pre-evaluation planning stage" as both parties discuss plans, programs, and projects the superintendent might undertake; - during the "periodic conferences" between the superintendent and the board to determine whether changes are needed in the programs, the projects, or the evaluation scheme itself; and - during the "formal review" when the results of all aspects of district operations are assessed for their progress, and implications.
Planning	<u>Evaluation should also be the starting point for planning.</u> As a part of the evaluation process, problems are identified, potential solutions are generated, and program implementation schemes are devised. Given an inventory of what needs to be done, the superintendent will have a list to guide his/her planning efforts during the coming year.
Evaluation Instruments	There are many forms that evaluation can take. These include checklists, rating scales, questionnaires, narrative assessments (by external evaluators), self-appraisals, or combinations of all of these.
Subjectivity vs Objectivity	It should be recognized, though, that all forms of evaluation call for subjective judgements. Many instruments used for evaluation purposes have a

mantle of objectivity because they are associated with elaborate weighting or rating systems. However, boards that use rating scales should not delude themselves about objectivity when they use numbers to indicate how well they think the superintendent prepares the budget or keeps the public informed. Numbers may make rating more convenient, but not more objective.

Errors of Omission When evaluation systems include stated objectives with observable/measurable outcomes, the temptation is also present for those involved to ignore problems or issues which have not been specifically articulated. Ignoring emergent issues simply because they have not been specifically included in the evaluation process would be a serious mistake. The stated objectives are the issues which will be evaluated; others may also be considered, and this must be understood by all concerned. In this respect, evaluation must also be considered as an ongoing process and opportunities must be provided to address emergent issues as they arise.

The important point is that local needs should determine local action, and therefore it is unlikely that any two evaluation instruments will be identical.

APPENDIX D

Covering Letter for Superintendents

4152 206A Street
Langley, B.C.
V3A 2C7

Telephone -- 533-2831 (home)
941-3481 (work)

March 15, 1988

Superintendent of Schools
School District #--, -----

-----, B.C.

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Administrative Leadership Program at Simon Fraser University. I wish to undertake research in your district to determine what changes, if any, have come as a result of the policy which allowed districts to hire their own superintendents rather than having provincially appointed ones. I am specifically interested in whether there has been a change in school board involvement in district operations since your appointment or if the level of involvement is equitable to that of the previous administration.

I wish to begin this research immediately and would appreciate your cooperation in allowing me to conduct this study in School District #__. Your district's cooperation is vital in order to control certain variables and therefore I am asking for your assistance in the following three areas:

1. permission to gain access to agendas and minutes of all trustee committee and regular board meetings for the year prior to your arrival and the two years following it
2. permission to interview those board members who made the decision to hire you and who were trustees at the time of your arrival
3. permission to interview yourself (one session of approximately one hour).

All information received will protect the confidentiality of the individual as well as that of the community and district. Upon completion of the study and analysis of data, a copy of the thesis may be readily obtained.

I will be contacting you later this week to receive your authorization and to answer any questions that you may have regarding this research.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this study.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) Joy E. Ruffeski

APPENDIX E

Covering Letter to School Trustees

4152 206A Street,
Langley, B.C.
V3A 2C7

Telephone: 941-3481 (work)
533-2831 (home)

March 15, 1988

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Administrative Leadership Program at Simon Fraser University. I have received permission from _____, the Superintendent of Schools, to undertake research in _____ to determine how districts have adapted to the legal change which allowed B.C. school districts, regardless of size, to appoint their superintendents locally. The focus of data collection and analysis will be the extent and nature of changes in school board involvement in district operations and in board--superintendent relations.

In order to undertake this research, I need to interview those board members who were trustees at the time when _____ took over as superintendent. I would like to interview all the board members since my interest is in studying the politics of the board as a whole decision making unit rather than as individuals. Your participation is purely voluntary, however, and if you agree to participate, confidentiality of your responses will be ensured. Neither the boards being studied, the superintendents, nor the trustees will be identified in the published document. Upon completion of the study and analysis of the data, a copy of the thesis may be readily obtained.

The interview will be of approximately one hour in length, and held at a location of your choosing. I will be contacting you by telephone during the week to answer any questions that you may have regarding this research and should you agree to participate, we will set up a time that is mutually convenient for the interview.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this study.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Joy E. Ruffeski

APPENDIX F

Interview Schedule -- School Board

Hiring Practices

Q: Could you talk about how the board arrived at the final decision, in particular, what emerged as the most important criteria?

P: Were there trustees that tried to influence the decision of the other members?

P: Was the decision a unanimous one? What was the consequence of this unanimous/split decision?

Job Responsibilities

Q: Please describe one or two specific matters that the board dealt with during the two years after _____ came to _____ which clearly illustrate how the board and the superintendent work together.

P: What do you see as the main responsibilities of school trustees?

P: What do you see as the main responsibilities of the superintendent?

P: What changes did you expect there to be in the way the board would function after they hired their own superintendent?

P: In what ways did your expectations come true?

Committee Structure/Agenda Making -- roles, policy initiation

Q: What board committees were there before the superintendent came to the district?

P: What was the superintendent's role in these committees?

P: How has this changed since _____'s arrival?

P: How did you personally feel about the changes?

Q: Would you explain to me how the agenda for board meetings is made up?

P: What are your feelings about the way the superintendent is involved in the process?

P: If _____ changed the agenda in any manner, what were the changes and what rationale did he give for making the changes?

Networks in the Community

Q: Could you describe some sources you used to find information about community preferences?

P: In what ways does this affect your decisions as to policies that are suggested by others?

P: In what ways does this affect the policies that you propose?

Q: What important pressure groups have been active in educational matters?

P: Remembering specific instances, exactly how was the decision influenced?

Zone of Tolerance/Power of Expertise

Q: Would you walk me through a typical in-camera meeting where a controversial issue is being dealt with?

P: What things does the superintendent do in order to help the board come to a decision?

P: What effect would a controversial issue, originally discussed in-camera, have on the discussion and decision in an open meeting.

Conflict Management

- Q: Would you recount some specific instances that caused conflict?
- P: What sorts of things did the superintendent do in order to diffuse the situation?
- P: What difference is there in the superintendent's behavior between open and closed board meetings?
- P: How often, and under what circumstances, does the board go against the superintendent's position when he makes recommendations?
- P: Why did the board decide to go against the superintendent's recommendations and decide to _____ rather than _____.

Socialization of Board Members

- Q: How were you helped to understand your role as a trustee?
- P: What part did the superintendent play in this?

Communication Flow

- Q: On what kinds of occasions and for what purposes did you consult with the superintendent individually?

P: How often did you do this?

P: Who usually initiated these meetings?

P: Consider the last retreat that you had,
what were some of the topics that came up
and what was the result of the discussions?

APPENDIX G

Interview Schedule -- Superintendent

Job Responsibilities

Q: How does the job you perform differ from your role description?

P: Since board members are not educators, what demands have they made on you which were difficult to fill?

Committee Structure/Agenda Making -- roles, policy initiation

Q: The school board in _____ functioned as a committee of the whole when you arrived. Why did you not feel that it was necessary to initiate any changes in this structure?

P: There are many District Advisory committees that board members are represented on. What is the superintendent's role in these committees?

P: If you changed any of the committees, why did you find it advisable to do so?

Q: Would you explain to me how the agenda for board meetings is made up?

P: Research shows that superintendents generally are involved in the agenda making. Why do you feel that this is necessary?

P: If you changed the agenda in any manner, what were the changes and why was it advisable to do so? (time sent out, who is involved, order, structure)

Networks in the Community

Q: What important pressure groups have been active in educational matters?

P: Remembering specific instances, how exactly was the school board's decision influenced?

P: What kind of effect have these influences had on your job as superintendent?

Q: Could you describe some sources you use to find information about community preferences?

P: In what ways does this affect your proposals to the board?

Zone of Tolerance/Power of Expertise

Q: Would you walk me through a typical in-camera meeting where the board is dealing with a controversial issue.

P: What things do you do in order to help them come to a decision?

P: What affect would a controversial issue originally discussed in-camera, have on the discussion and decision in an open meeting?

Conflict Management

Q: Would you recount some specific instances that caused conflict.

P: What sorts of things do you do in order to diffuse the situation?

P: How often and under what circumstances does the board go against your position when you make recommendations?

Socialization of Board Members

Q: How are trustees helped to understand their role?

P: What part do you play in this?

P: How do you deal with "difficult" board members, for example, those who want to run the whole show or who are only interested in a single issue?

P: What is the purpose of the retreats? Consider the last retreat that you had, what were some of the topics? How do these come up? What was the result of the discussions?

Communication Flow

Q: On what kinds of occasions do you meet with board members individually?

P: What is the purpose of these meetings?

P: How often do you have to do this?

P: Who usually initiates these meetings?

APPENDIX H

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Please answer for the time period during which the present superintendent was hired

1. Age ----- below 30 _____
30 - 35 _____
35 - 40 _____
40 - 45 _____
45 - 50 _____
over 50 _____
2. Sex ----- Male _____
Female _____
3. Marital Status ----- Single _____
Married _____
Separated/Divorced _____
4. Family Status -----
No children _____
Children in pre-school _____
Children in elementary school _____
Children in Secondary school _____
Children in private school _____
Children in work force _____
Children attend college/university _____
5. Highest Level of Education Obtained -----
Did not complete high school _____
Completed high school _____
1 - 2 years college/university _____
Trade school _____
Completed University _____
Post Graduate studies _____
6. Career ----- _____ (please specify)
7. Reason for running for the School Board -----
former volunteer work in the school _____
asked by individuals/group _____
civic duty _____
member of family involved in education _____
dissatisfaction _____
other (specify) _____

8. Length of time as a trustee -----

less than a year	_____
1 year	_____
2 years	_____
3 years	_____
4 years	_____
more than 4 years	_____

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT

Please answer for the time at which you were appointed to your present position

1. Age -----

between 35 - 40 _____
40 - 45 _____
45 - 50 _____
over 50 _____

2. Marital Status -----

Married _____
Single _____
Separated/ Divorced _____

3. Family Status -----

No children _____
Children in elementary school _____
Children in secondary school _____
Children in private school _____
Children in work force _____
Children attend college/university _____
Other _____

4. Highest Level of Education Obtained -----

B.A. _____
B.Ed. _____
M.A. (Ed.) _____
M.Ed. _____
Ed.D. _____
PhD. _____
Other _____

Majors: _____

When completed: _____

5. Length of time in positions prior to appointment -----

Teacher _____
Elem. Principal _____
Sec. Principal _____
Helping Teacher _____ Area _____
Supervisor _____ Area _____
Director of Instruction _____
Assistant/Associate Superintendent _____

6. Size of district previously worked in -----

10 - 20,000	_____
20 - 25,000	_____
25 - 30,000	_____
30 - 40,000	_____
over 40,000	_____

APPENDIX J

DEFINITION AND METHOD OF CATEGORIZATION OF RESPONSES

Role Definition responses were those those that dealt with perceptions the respondents had about what the job responsibilities were of the superintendent and the role of the trustees in relationship to that of the CEO. These responses were subdivided as follows:

1) unanimity and clarity of ideals when hiring--desired criteria of a suitable superintendent as recalled by trustees. If individuals mentioned a single characteristic more than twice during the questioning on what criteria emerged as important when hiring, this was noted as being of more importance than an item mentioned only once.

2) understanding and adherence to roles--view of role played in the decision making and operations of the district. Specific examples were asked for and noted as to how the board and CEO worked together on issues. The trustee's expressed perceptions of what role they felt they had was compared to the actual roles they described in order to determine if, in actuality, all parties concerned stayed within the parameters as described in the policy book and School Act.

3) evaluation procedures--described processes in place in the district that assessed the superintendent's performance in addition to the level of success in acheiving

the district's yearly goals. This subsection was included separately under the role definition category because all parties expressed the opinion that this was a responsibility of both parities.

Communication Patterns dealt with those items that described how, where, when and why information was given to the trustees/superintendent and how in turn it was received.

These responses were subdivided as follows:

1) information giving and receiving--level of access to information by trustees from administration and types of material supplied by the superintendent. Included in this subcategory was how trustees, as individuals, represent the board's perspective on district committees and in turn bring back information to the board.

2) channels--communication flow. Of particular interest was the direction of the communication flow and whether individual board members were contacted by or made contact with the superintendent and if so, to what degree and for what purpose.

3) recommendations--described the manner in which material was presented to the board from the superintendent's office and in turn how it was received by the board. Included in this subcategory was how the superintendent dealt with situations in which the board went against his expressed preferences.

4) internal and external issues--how the board and superintendent view their roles in deciding on such issues. This subcategory also sought evidence as to whether their perceptions were what actually occurred.

The Decision Making Process responses were those dealing with the procedures and processes that were in place prior to the present superintendent's arrival and any changes that took place after. These responses were subdivided as follows:

1) committee structure--extent of and routine use of any committees whether they be standing, ad hoc, committee of the whole, or advisory. This category also examined why boards operated in the manner they did and if changes occurred, what reasons were given for said changes.

2) agenda making--procedures in place for establishing order of items on the agenda and how items were presented. The necessity for and the degree of the superintendent's involvement were examined. In addition, the availability of access to placement of items by other individuals was noted.

3) involvement of trustees and superintendent--degree and method of influence that the board/superintendent had on the decisions made in the district. This included how and by whom new items were usually introduced and also how these were dealt with by the parties in question.

Zone of Tolerance responses were those that demonstrated the level of involvement by citizens, the methods used by the respondents to determine the community's preferences and what influence the community's wishes/expectations had on decisions made within the district. These responses were subdivided as follows:

1) community networks used--methods used by trustees and superintendent to determine the wishes of the citizens and their view of the performance of the system as a whole.

2) trustee recruitment--determination of the reasons given for running for office of school trustee. Of particular interest was the number of trustees who had been asked by groups or members of the community to run for office.

3) expectations of community--manner in which board provided the opportunity for public input, dealt with the specific requests and level to which the board acceded to the expressed wishes of a vocal body of individuals.

4) conflict management--methods used by the superintendent to forestall conflict. This included techniques employed with the trustees as well as with district personnel.

5) information distribution to community--methods used to inform the public of decisions made at board meetings, policy changes, educational issues and related matters. Availability of information to the community of

such things as policies and board meeting minutes was also examined.

Other Pertinent Factors responses were those that dealt with matters not previously described but felt by the researcher to be necessary for a full understanding of the operations of the districts under study and the effect that they had on the board-superintendent relationship. These responses were divided as follows:

1) district situation in past--what events occurred in the district in the two or three years before the first real local appointment and what effect this had on the expectations of the trustees.

2) role of the consultant--manner in which the consultant was used in the hiring process, how he tried to affect the final decision and the degree to which he was successful.

3) socialization of board members--manner in which and by whom trustees were helped to understand their roles.

4) political acumen of superintendent--astuteness shown by CEO in working with the board.

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