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A STUDY OF CERTAIN COMMUNICATION PROCESSES OF
SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE NINE CLASS A PUBLIC SCHOOL
SYSTEMS IN MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION REGION 10

By

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Department of Administration and Higher Education

1965

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF CERTAIN COMMUNICATION PROCESSES OF SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE NINE CLASS A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION REGION 10

by Daniel Otho Smith

This study was directed toward an exploration of the communication processes of superintendents with citizens and staff members in their particular school-community. A structured interview schedule was used in personal contacts with a sample composed of the nine Class A public school superintendents in Michigan Education Association Region 10. This study was concerned with communication between the superintendent and both citizens and school employees.

The interviewed superintendents in this study felt that community surveys and citizens committees were helpful in causing better financial support of schools by citizens of the school-community. Successes in requests for additional operating millage occurred in 100% of the cases and successes in requests for building millage occurred in 92.3% of the cases.

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Some of the superintendents' communication techniques with citizens and staff members seem to be in agreement with advocated principles. Citizens and staff members, to some degree, participate in the formulation of educational policy. Superintendents indicated, in most cases, that citizen and staff participation in certain phases of the administrative task was desirable. However, to be in complete harmony with advocated principles by recognized writers in this area, participation by citizens and staff members should be even more completely received.

Personal contacts were considered the most important type of communication contacts with citizens and staff members. This is confirmed by recognized writers in the field. Most of the interviewed superintendents stated that carrying out a program of communication with citizens and staff members was not as important as some other phases of educational administration. The use of citizens committees and community surveys were in general agreement with recognized writers.

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situation existed, that they would use more of the same type of communication techniques. Major emphasis would be given to an enlargement of other means of contacts as contrasted to personal and written contacts. Other means would include such techniques as radio and television appearances and releases, open-houses for dedicatory purposes and parades to sell bond issues. Lack of money, lack of time, and a need for better understanding of communication principles were the major obstacles that kept the ideal from being attained.

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Grateful acknowledgments are due and freely given to Dr. Floyd G. Parker, Chairman of the Guidance Committee, to Dr. Clyde M. Campbell, to Dr. Harold J. Dillon, and to Dr. Frederic B. Dutton, members of the Guidance Committee, each of whom contributed, in his own way, to the conduct of this investigation. The writer is also grateful to Dr. Laurence L. Quill who so graciously helped when one of the members was on a leave of absence.

Acknowledgment is also due to the superintendents of the school districts that participated in this study.

Finally, to the author's wife, Alice, and to his children, it is sufficient to say that without their patience and understanding this study would never have been completed.

To all of these persons, sincerely it is hoped that this investigation has proved worthy of their interest and encouragement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a gregarious society, such as the one in which we live, the transferal of information is constantly taking place. This may be done by over-the-fence gossip, the radio, television, the press or any number of other methods. With all these sources competing for the attention of the public, the task of the schools in communicating with the public becomes more difficult. Thus, the public school superintendent is constantly confronted by communication problems as he strives to successfully perform his duties as an educational leader. As a result, an understanding of the fundamental techniques necessary for effective communication are of much assistance to him.

The Problem

This study is concerned with the communication techniques used by the superintendents of 9 Class A public school systems in Michigan Education Association Region 10 (see Appendix A) and is concerned with communication between

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the superintendent and both citizens and school employees.

The problem will be to determine:

- (1) Whether the communication techniques used by the superintendents of these public schools are a factor in causing better financial support of schools by citizens of the school community.
- (2) Whether the communication techniques are in harmony with the principles of communication advocated by recognized writers in this field.
- (3) Whether the superintendents would employ different communication techniques than they do now, if a more ideal situation existed.

Importance of the Study

An evaluation of the practices of effective communication between the superintendent and adults in the school-community should be made. Moore says: "A need for skill in mass, as well as staff communications--particularly as a kind of feedback mechanism in decision-making--is pointed up by several studies. Ability to sense public feelings, skill in building favorable community attitudes, facility in bringing the school board to a decision in full view of all facts and yet without harassing delays--these are some of the aspects of the job which studies generally agree are crucial."¹

Communication among members of an organization is

¹Hollis A. Moore Jr., Studies In School Administration (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1957), p. 31.

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fundamental. Without communication an organization becomes directionless. As social changes accompanied the maturing and expanding of the United States, the educational process has become much more complex. Campbell and Ramseyer have stated: "In the closely knit communities of our forefathers, community institutions were intimate and understood. The school, as one of those institutions, had a simple function. In fact, most learning went on in the home, in the field, and in the church. The school was expected to teach some reading, writing, and arithmetic, whereas, citizenship, family life membership, vocational fitness, and ethical values were largely derived from participation in adult activities in the home, the family group, and the village."¹

Delimitation of the Problem

This study is limited to:

- (1) Communication which occurs between the superintendent and school employees and citizens.
- (2) Those communication channels utilized by the superintendent.
- (3) A sample of the Class A public schools in Michigan Education Association Region 10.

The investigator does not intend to explore all the

¹Roald F. Campbell and John A. Ramseyer, The Dynamics of School-Community Relationships (New York: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1955), p. 30.

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channels of communication that exist between the school and citizens, or that exist among the various employees or students in the school.

Definition of Terms Used

Lay citizen--An adult member of the school-community, who is not a member of the staff of the public school and who is not presently serving as a school board member.

Public relations--Encompasses those criteria that cause a public school to have relationships with citizens residing within the school district boundaries or geographical location of residences of school enrollees. The degree of desirability of these public relations is directly affected by the effectiveness of the communication program carried on by the school.

School-Community--This term identifies that geographical area which is limited by the residences of school enrollees in or outside of the school district boundaries.

Communication--"Involves the reciprocal interactions of sending and receiving signals, of composing and understanding messages, and of sharing and enjoying ideas."¹ This term will be more fully explained in later writing.

¹Irving Lorge, "How the Psychologist Views Communication," Teachers College Record, LVII (November, 1955), p. 72.

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Basic Assumptions

The writer assumes that certain generalizations can be made which are applicable to similar school systems. The area being studied contains urban school districts which are becoming prominent throughout the country.

The writer assumes that the selected group of individuals (superintendents) were in a position, by virtue of experience and training, to supply information on existing problems.

The writer assumes that the sample being used does not conclusively give license to the application of Michigan or the universe.

The writer assumes that the structured interview is a proper method for obtaining information necessary to the conduct of this study.

Summary

In this chapter the writer presented the problem and attempted to give an introduction to communication. The importance of the study was also discussed. An attempt was also made to delimit the problem and define terms.

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Chapter II
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Chapter IV

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Chapter V
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Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

Chapter II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The procedure and sample are discussed in this chapter. Questions selected for the structured interview are classified under several headings.

Chapter III. COMMUNICATION IN AN EDUCATION SETTING

Discussion of the communication process. Administrative communication with citizens and staff. General principles of communication in an education setting.

Chapter IV. SUPERINTENDENTS' CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS AND STAFF MEMBERS

Means by which superintendents communicate with citizens and staff members. Frequency of contacts and degree of importance attached to the means of contact.

Chapter V. COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Study of community surveys as a phase of communication processes. Function of community surveys as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes.

Chapter VI. CITIZENS COMMITTEES

Study of citizens committees as a phase of communication processes. Function of citizens committees as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes.

Chapter VII. COMMUNICATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluative processes applied to the communication programs of the superintendents involved in this study. Rating of communication programs.

Chapter VIII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Statement of conclusions and recommendations reached from an analysis of the data in the study. General summary of the findings.

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CHAPTER II

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Procedure

Structured interviews were set up with the nine Class A public school superintendents in Michigan Education Association Region 10.

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research has pointed out that "There is also little limit on procedure. Both interviews and questionnaires are in common use, administered to individuals and to groups, sometimes in face-to-face contact and at other times through the mails or over the telephone."¹

Van Dalen has this to say about structured interviews: "The structure of interviews varies as much as the number of participants. Some interviews are rigidly standardized and formal: the same questions are presented in the same manner and order to each subject and the choice of alternative answers is restricted to a predetermined list. Even the

¹Stephen B. Withey, "Survey Research Methods" Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Edited by Chester W. Harris, Third Edition (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 1447.

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introductory and concluding remarks are systematically stated. These structured interviews are more scientific in nature than unstructured ones, for they introduce the controls that are required to permit the formulation of scientific generalizations."¹

This study is a somewhat descriptive survey as described by Good. "Descriptive studies may include present facts or current conditions concerning the nature of a group of persons...and may involve the procedures of induction, analysis, classification, enumeration, or measurement. The purposes of descriptive-survey investigations may be: 1. To secure evidence concerning the existing situation or current condition. 2. To identify standards or norms with which to compare present conditions, in order to plan the next step."²

According to Van Dalen: "Descriptive studies that obtain accurate facts about existing conditions or detect significant relationships between current phenomena and interpret the meaning of the data provide educators with practical and immediately useful information. Factual information about existing status enables members of the profession to make

¹Deobold B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1962), p. 259.

²Carter V. Good, Introduction to Educational Research (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 244.

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more intelligent plans about future courses of action and helps them interpret educational problems more effectively to the public. Pertinent data regarding the present scene may focus attention upon needs that otherwise would remain unnoticed. Since existing educational conditions, processes, practices, and programs are constantly changing, there is always a need for up-to-date descriptions of what is taking place. Descriptive studies supply not only practical information that can be used to justify or improve the immediate situation, but also the factual foundations upon which higher and higher levels of scientific understanding can be built. Descriptive research is a necessary initial step for a young science to take and sometimes it is the only method that can be employed to study social situations and aspects of human behavior. Since not all social phenomena can be subjected to laboratory experiments, studying conditions as they exist in a classroom, community,... may be the only way to examine and analyze the factors involved in a given situation. The descriptive method of investigation has led to the development of many research tools and it has provided some means of studying phenomena that other methods cannot probe."¹

¹Van Dalen, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

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McGrath and others state that: "...data derived in descriptive research can be meaningful and helpful in diagnosing a situation or in proposing a new and better program."¹

The structured interview form used in this study is included in Appendix B. The questions selected for the structured interview are classified under several headings as follows:

Personal and School Data. This topic identifies the school system and presents the total number of years the person has been employed as a superintendent in all schools.

Communication Media and Techniques. Under this title questions relative to contacts made by superintendents with school employees and citizens will be reviewed or analyzed. The three types of contacts are considered to be personal contacts, written contacts, and other means. The last contact to be listed can be seen to be a specialized type of personal contact. It was placed in the "other means" category for an evaluative comparison with the other two more technical means and includes radio and television contacts and open houses for dedicatory purposes.

Community Information. This topic will determine

¹McGrath, op. cit., p. 78

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whether or not a community survey serves as a logical starting point for planning a successful communication or a public relations program. A determination of the methodology involved in conducting community surveys is included. A summary of the information which the survey attempts to reveal will be made.

Citizens Committees. The structural organization, stated purposes, major successes, and major failures of citizens committees will be determined if citizens committee activity has been or is to be an experience involving the superintendent in the school system where he is employed. If no citizens committee exists at the time of the interview, the reason is noted. The superintendent's opinion is important in the opinion seeking questions. The writer has chosen to discuss citizens committees as one means of popular communication. Citizens committees can be good or poor, and in any case, are just one means or method of communication. The writer is not attempting to imply that all school systems should necessarily employ citizens committees.

Importance of Communication Programs. A comparison is made between those phases of the superintendent's duties which are considered to be most time consuming and those

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considered to be most important in the particular school system in which the interviewed superintendent is employed. The opinions of the superintendents are also recorded as they reveal the importance attached to staff and citizen participation in the phases which are closely linked with the communication process.

The Sample

The sample was composed of the nine Class A public school superintendents in Michigan Education Association Region 10. It should be noted, however, that in one case, Flushing, the assistant superintendent spoke for the superintendent. Class A public schools were studied because it was felt that they encountered problems because of their large size which, in many ways, distinguish them from the smaller Class B, C, and D public schools.

Table 1 identifies the basic data used in school classification and the number of school districts with public high schools in each class in Michigan Education Association Region 10, according to information studied and synthesized in two publications. 1 & 2

¹Michigan High School Athletic Association, Directory Issue of the Association Bulletin 1963-64 School Year, Vol. XL (November, 1963), pp. 232-237.

²Hecker, Stanley E., and Northey, Thomas J. Teacher Salary Schedule Study 1963-64. (Lansing: Michigan Education Association, 1963), pp. 52-55.

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The high schools in Table 1 range from under 200 to over 900 in enrollment. The types of schools range from Class A to Class D. The Table shows that the majority of the school districts in Michigan Education Region 10 are either Class A or Class B.

These public schools tended to be suburban and urban as contrasted with more of a rural setting in other classes of schools.

TABLE 1

CLASSIFICATION AND NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN EDUCATION REGION 10, 1963-64

Type of School	Enrollment in Grades 9-12, or 10-12	Number
Class A	over 900	9
Class B	400-899	10
Class C	200-399	4
Class D	under 200	2

In this study the word tuition is used interchangeably with non-resident. None of the Class A school districts had as many as 10 per cent non-resident or tuition students and hence, none of the systems were considered as tuition schools.

The tenure of the superintendent was considered to be long, if the number of years as superintendent in the school

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district was greater than thirteen years. His tenure was considered to be short, if the number of years as superintendent was thirteen years or less. The average tenure of superintendents in the Class A public school systems of Michigan Education Region 10 at the time of this study was 13.1 years.

Table 2 lists the Class A public school superintendents' tenure by category. Four, or 44 per cent, of the superintendents had long tenure and five, or 56 per cent, had short tenure.

TABLE 2

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CLASS A PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN EDUCATION REGION 10 WHICH HAVE SUPERINTENDENTS WITH LONG AND SHORT TENURE

Tenure	Number	Per Cent
Long (over 13 years)	4	44
Short (13 years or less)	5	56
Total	9	100

Interviews with the superintendents were arranged for and conducted during the summer of 1964.

The respondents' answers were recorded by the writer

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at the time of the structured interview. It should be stated that the structured interview schedule had been pre-tested with several school superintendents who were not involved in this study. Anecdotal remarks of apparent value were also recorded at the time of the interview.

A copy of the structured interview schedule may be found in appendix B.

The nine Class A public schools which made up the sample for the study are listed in Table 3, together with their resident membership and tenure of superintendent. Resident membership varied from 3,610 to 6,188, with the exception of one school district of 43,289. Tenure of the superintendents ranged from 2 to 33 years.

TABLE 3

SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH PERTINENT STATISTICS LISTED

Name of School	Total Resident Membership	Tenure of Superintendent in Years
Beecher, Flint P.O.	5,425	2
Carman, Flint P.O.	6,188	8
Clio	4,122	33
Davison	3,890	5
Flint City	43,289	2
Flushing	3,610	20
Grand Blanc	5,074	2
Kearsley, Flint P.O.	4,312	28
Lapeer	4,290	18

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Summary

In this chapter the writer has described the method of investigation. The procedure involved setting up structured interviews with the nine Class A public school superintendents in Michigan Education Association Region 10. The questions selected for the structured interview are classified under several headings which are as follows: (1) Personal and School Data. (2) Communication Media and Techniques. (3) Community Information. (4) Citizens Committees. (5) Importance of Communication Programs.

Class A public schools were studied because it was felt that they encountered problems because of their large size which, in many ways, distinguished them from the smaller school districts.

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CHAPTER III

COMMUNICATION IN AN EDUCATION SETTING

The Communication Process

Before a subject can be discussed intelligently there needs to be a definition of terms. What does the word communication mean? The word "communication" is derived from the Latin communis, meaning "to share, to make common." For practical purposes, Wilbur Schramm defines communication as an effort to establish a "commonness" with another person or group by sharing information, ideas, or attitudes.¹

The relationship of this "commonness" concept to modern means of communication is of special importance to those who wish to create wider understanding of education. The kernel of the concept is that by means of exchanging information, viewpoints, or ideas, people can develop common understandings and mutually agreeable working arrangements. This is what makes public consent and joint action possible. The

¹Wilbur Schramm, "Procedures and Effects of Mass Communications," Mass Media and Education, Fifty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 113.

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idea of sharing and exchanging is very crucial. It implies joint consideration and appraisal of relevant information and viewpoints by all concerned. It also implies that effective communication is a two-way process. Everybody speaks, everybody listens, and everybody freely analyzes, interprets, and trades ideas about the meaning and consequence of what is said and heard. This concept goes far beyond the more limited one that communication is a one-way process of some one person or group "telling," or "selling," others who have no chance to talk back.

Since certain conceptions and definitions can make it easier to research and understand the process of communication let us look at another phase of the meaning of communication. Communication can also be defined as a process in which a communicator attempts to convey an image to a communicatee or communicant. This viewpoint considers the communicator, who desires to have some impact upon another person or group of persons, as the initiator of the communication process. Lucio and McNeil say that as communicators, we may or may not be aware of the kind of person with whom we are communicating.¹

¹William H. Lucio and John D. McNeil, Supervision: A Synthesis of Thought and Action (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1962), p. 175.

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In defining such terms as communicator, communicatee or communicant, and image one sees that a communicator is one who is attempting to convey an image. He is the prime motivator of the communicatory activity. We can consider a communicatee as one who has experienced some degree of awareness that another is attempting to convey an image. Whether the communicator has succeeded in conveying the image in its actual or distorted form is measured on the communicatee's side of the picture. There is implication here of varying degrees of awareness on the part of the receiver of the image. An image is a representation of a communicator's purpose or intent and it may be an idea, a message, a signal, a diagram, a picture, a bit of information, an attitude, a feeling, or any emotion. The origin of the image is from the communicator. On the other hand, the interpretation or influence of the image is judged by the communicatee. The image is usually more popularly referred to as the message.

A message should be clear. The clearer the message the less opportunity there is for misinterpretation. Bartky says that it is usually easier to make spoken messages, as opposed to written ones, clear and easily understood.¹

¹John A. Bartky, Administration as Educational Leadership (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), p. 80.

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In a spoken message the speaker is better able to adjust his language to the needs of his audience as they manifest themselves, whereas in a written message he must anticipate these needs.

Each person usually transmits and receives several messages at the same time by several media. The medium that transmits message-carrying symbols can either tend to reinforce or distort the message. It seems reasonable to assume that a medium which appeals to a person makes better communication possible.

The meaning of a message becomes colored by how and for what one listens. All of us hear and read in terms of our own past experiences, attitudes, and values. Since no two people can have exactly the same experience, it is rather difficult for them to attach exactly the same meaning to a symbol. For instance, the word "school" means for the average person the schools he experienced as a child, not the schools of a particular community or of a particular moment.

In order to receive a message as it was sent, the communicatee must attach to the symbols the same significance which they had for the communicator. Otherwise distortion

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will result. Unfortunately, messages can be sent or received without having the communicatee attach a unique meaning to the symbols.

. . .Democratic communication means two-way communication -- not simply communication to but communication with...our task is to mobilize every resource to achieve communication with, the exchange of ideas and feeling.¹

We "read into" a message something the sender did not intend -- and misunderstanding or misperception is born.

The ability to communicate ideas, which is a unique characteristic of man, has enabled him to move from the caves of prehistoric times to the skyscrapers of twentieth century civilization. After the means of communication were developed, it became possible for men to transmit their knowledge and skills to one another--each step bringing with it greater control over the social and physical environment. There is also a psychological impact of communication upon an individual, which can often be directly noted in the tensions, frustrations, fears, and anxieties that manifest themselves.

Even though the individual forms the basic element in the communicative process, it is essential to recognize that communication is a socially oriented concept involving the activity of two or more participants. Relationships

¹Lennox Grey, What Communication Means Today (Chicago: National Council of Teachers of English, 1944), p. 4.

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between members of a group directly affect the way transmission will take place. If the group is unified and morale is high, communication flows freely and interpretation is not distorted by individual self-interest, while splintered groups tend to pervert the communicative process and even the transmission of routine instructions become difficult.

Hagman and Schwartz say that control over the mechanistic aspects of communication has not been accompanied by comparable social understanding of the role of communication in life.¹

As was stated earlier, communication is not necessarily a two-way activity, as a communicator may attempt to convey an image to a communicatee but there is no assurance that the image transmitted is received by the latter. Pernert states that recognized authorities in the field of school administration are aware of the important role which

¹Harlan L. Hagman and Kenneth F. Herrold, Administration in Profile for School Executives (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1955), p. 182.

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the principles of perception play in the study and practice of effective communication.¹ Knezevich writes:

This distinction necessitates the designation of two types of communication--one called unperceived and the other perceived types. Unperceived communications are characterized by situations where the attempt to convey a message results in no measurable degree of awareness on the part of the communicatee. It implies that the latter has a zero degree of consciousness or comprehends below the threshold of consciousness. A superintendent may send a message to a principal, and this is an act of communication. It is unperceived communication if the principal finds himself too busy to read it or loses it. The perceived communication, on the other hand, is characterized by a situation where the attempt to convey an image results in some measurable degree of awareness on the part of the recipient. This does not imply any degree of congruence between the messages sent by the communicator and interpreted by the communicatee. It merely implies that the communicatee was aware that someone was trying to reach him in some way.²

Actually, communication is concerned with who says what, through which channel or medium, to whom and with what impact.

Bartley has noted that perception is the function of the highest order processes and is consequently an expression

¹Earl M. Pernert, "A Study of Certain Aspects of Communication Programs in Selected Class C Public Schools in Michigan" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1960), p. 45.

²Stephen Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1962), pp. 81-82.

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of the person, or as more commonly put, of personality.¹

Individuals tend to perceive actions, the spoken word, written materials, and self-participation in a given activity according to certain pre-conceived notions formed by their personal experience, backgrounds, and established attitudes. Researchers have shown that seeing is more than just a simple action. One learns to see what he wants to see and not what may be projected to him visually. In the words of Allport and Postman:

All mental life is a process of subjectifying the world that lies outside...chiefly we live according to our own theories and evaluations of the surrounding world. What we perceive we invariably embed in our own personalities, and we then explain it to ourselves and to others in accordance with our pre-existing intellectual and emotional nature.²

Society interprets collectively similar truths and facts for the majority of people because of its existing social order of specified rules, taboos, and mores. This happens even though all people have their own version of

¹Howard S. Bartley, Principles of Perception (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 6.

²Gordon W. Allport and Lee Postman, The Psychology of Rumor (New York: Henry Holt, 1947), p. 146.

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facts and truth. It may be that the resultant beliefs which an individual forms upon exposure to clues for thought and action may be a composite of all clues combined with established attitudes. One can then expect a personalized reaction. According to Kelly and Rasey:

Our perceptions do not come simply from the objects around us, but from our past experience as functioning, purposive organisms. We take a large number of clues, none of which is reliable, add them together, and make what we can of them... Since the perception is the usable reality, and since no two organisms can make the same use of clues or bring the same experiential background to bear, no two of us can see alike. We have no common world. Each has his own, to which he responds in his own way.¹

It would appear that communication is basic to our concept of society. Communication is taking place whenever one person attempts to relate to another and since we are naturally gregarious, communication is constantly taking place. Hartley and Hartley note that:

Because communication is the means by which one person influences another, and is in turn influenced by him, it is the actual carrier of

¹Earl C. Kelley and Marie I. Rasey, Education and the Nature of Man (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 34.

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social process. It makes interaction possible.¹

The effectiveness of such communication, as this, lies somewhere along a continuum, between the extremes of absolute failure to communicate and complete success in communication.

Man has found himself rather suddenly with the beginning of the twentieth century, in a highly mobile, rapidly changing society, surrounded by problems to which answers are not readily developed. Homogeneous neighborhoods have changed to heterogeneous ones. The last several years have brought an era of unprecedented scientific and technological advancement, which has resulted in the development of a mass society. This mass society has certainly had an effect upon communication. Public schools need to utilize the mass means of communication which are prevalent in this day, and also attempt to retain and adapt for use the personal relationships which are so important to the effective communication process. Activities involving large numbers of people and impersonal, secondary type relationships among individuals and groups characterize mass society.

¹Eugene L. Hartley and Ruth E. Hartley, Fundamentals of Social Psychology (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 16.

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Educators should be familiar with the theory and practice in the related fields of philosophy, sociology, and psychology, since direct knowledge in each of these areas adapted to the educational field is necessary to the success of education. Society exists because of the commonness of purpose of the individuals and groups of which it is composed and communication gives cohesion to these social groups. John Dewey has noted that:

There is more than a verbal tie between the words, "common", "community", and "communication." Men live in a community by virtue of the things which they have in common: and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in common in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge--a common understanding-like-mindedness, as the sociologist says.¹

The psychologist emphasizes the importance of stimuli in the communication process which result in the modification of behavior. This has ramifications for the educator.

Pernert states the elements in the communication process are: the communicator (sender), vehicle (medium), communicant (receiver), and the influence (effect).² All of

¹Irwin Edman (ed), John Dewey (New York: The Bobbs Merrill Co., Inc., 1955), p. 94.

²Pernert, op. cit., p. 33.

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these are important as component parts of the communication process. Without the proper functioning of each, communication does not take place in the true sense. The communicator transmits a coded message by means of a sign or symbol which is decoded by the communicatee or communicant.

Hartley and Hartley write:

Effective communication is difficult, in part, because the communicator must translate inner experience into an outer form, and the communicant, conversely, must translate an outer form into an inner experience.¹

Lorge emphasizes the problem involved in transmitting a message from the sender to the receiver. He writes:

In the interchange between speaker and hearer or writer and reader, the comprehension of the communication involves not only understanding the content but also the nature of the communicator and his intentions. Social psychologists have been devoting an ever increasing amount of attention to the individual and social consequences of communication. They are the historical successors to Aristotle in that they are attempting to evaluate the effects of communication... The psychologist would like to produce evidence about it (effects). Variations in the text or in the speech will produce different effects in different individuals, and in different groups... The very differences among the individual in education, or in social and economic status, in motivations, and in emotional maturity will produce different results in the members of the

¹Hartley and Hartley, op. cit., p. 127.

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A communicator ought to be alert to the individual characteristics of his audience, whether the intended communication is written or oral. Good, effective communication cannot take place if a message is delivered with a vocabulary that cannot be understood by the one who is receiving. The same problem occurs if a meaning is implied that appears to contradict accepted attitudes and beliefs of the audience. This is pointed out by Lorge:

The communicator makes assumptions about the receiver's ability to understand the message. For instance, when he prepares a text, he may assume implicitly that if he knows the meaning of a word, or can comprehend a metaphor, or responds to an appeal, the listener or the reader, too, will understand, appreciate, and be motivated. Researchers, however, now demonstrate the error of the implicit assumption about the nature of the audience. Certainly, except for two-way conversation, the best assumption about an audience is that it is variable in ability, in knowledge, and in motivation. The effects of communication always have an element of uncertainty.²

It is sometimes important that the communicator accepts necessary delay in the completion of the communication process. It is possible for communication with an individual

¹Irving Lorge, "How the Psychologist Views Communication," Teachers College Record, LVII (November, 1955), p. 79.

²Ibid., p. 79.

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not to take place effectively until the individual has had an opportunity to refer to a group of which he is a member. It is important to have a comprehensive knowledge of the role of group references in communication. Porter has stated that the ultimate effectiveness of exposure to communication cannot be judged by the immediate effects.¹

A group leader's role appears to be somewhat paradoxical. He must be an effective communicator in order to retain leadership status. In this age few situations remain static, so change in leadership patterns are constantly taking place. A group leader is displaced, occasionally, in this process of change. The paradox of this social phenomenon is that often the leader is difficult to identify, remaining in the background. Spokesmen reflect his views, but at the same time he refers to individuals in the group represented for his judgement. Porter also points out that the leader may not even be aware of his role and the leadership function assigned to him.² This results in a double responsibility being placed upon the communicator: first, that of identifying a leader, and second, knowing if and

¹William E. Porter, "Mass Communication and Education," The National Elementary Principal, XXXVII (February, 1958), p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 37.

when the leader is displaced by the group.

Some vehicle must carry the message from the communicator to the communicatee in order for communication to take place. The means by which contact between the communicator and the communicatee is made is known as the medium. This is usually either the spoken or written word, although at times symbols such as visual expression, motions, or touch, carry a message.

Communication from the school or from the administrator's desk flows out from the office a distance equal to that from which ideas are received. To check the quality of communication, one needs to examine not only the formal means of communicating ideas, important as these are, but also the quality of the transmission and reception of ideas.¹

There are two general types of communication that occur, one being defined as personal and the other characterized by the involvement of numbers of individuals. Each one requires a different medium in order to be effective. Although the latter, mass communication, is not the direct concern of this particular study it does deserve some mention. Mass communication is the product of the mass society in which man finds himself today. Written communications tend to be

¹John A. Ramseyer and others, The School-Community Development Study Monograph Series, Number Two (Columbus: University Press, 1955), p. 52.

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of the "mass" type and are an important means of contact in present day society.

The medium by which mass communication takes place is often an effective method of reaching groups of people, although it can be described as being non-reversible and inflexible. Film-strips, movies, newspapers, radio, television, and other written means serve as media for mass communication. By such media of mass communication a communicator is able to transmit a message to a large number of people by indirect means. One of the disadvantages, of course, is that the medium used does not allow for flexibility. Also, once the message is transmitted it is unchangeable, even though adverse effects may be created by the message. It is impossible for the communicator to know the effect of his message immediately through the completion of the two-way communication cycle -- that of the communicatee reacting to the communication efforts. There is also a disadvantage because of the difficulty of individualizing the message. In public education this is particularly true.

In this study it is the belief that the superintendent must rely more upon face-to-face relationships than mass media for effective communication. Pfau has written:

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Current mass information efforts for school public relations purposes tend to reach those already "friendly" or interested but fail to reach groups not interested, unfriendly, or whose expectations have been violated.¹

In personal relationships the two-way aspect of communication can be used to advantage. The communicator and communicatee alternately exchange positions through the medium of the spoken word, with the message becoming more clearly defined with each interchange. About the only means of communication is language, which, when altered according to the situation or augmented by gestures and expression, grants the communicator quite an advantage over more impersonal means. Charters states:

Casual, personal conversations are the stuff of which public opinion is made. This is where the fate of many educational and other civic issues of the community is decided. The role of television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, of course, cannot be discounted in molding public opinion, but social scientists have begun to remind us of the great force embedded in the most fundamental fact of social life--man talking to man.²

The communicator, when involved in personal relationships, can control the media, to some extent, if he is

¹Edward Pfau, "A Study of Selected Aspects of Oral and Written Communication as These Are a Part of School Public Relations Programs." (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1955), p. 2.

²W. W. Charters, Jr., "Person to Person Influence," Nations Schools, LVI (November, 1955), p. 49.

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aware of the factors that result in effective communication. If it becomes apparent that the message is not being properly received, a change can be made or the attempt to deliver the message can be halted before an adverse reaction occurs. Davies and Herrold write:

In addition to decisions about the methods and media of communication, the personal dimensions determine what emotions, attitudes, feeling-tones and unintended messages are transmitted. The "how" of sending makes the difference: One's behavior, verbal and non verbal; language forms and approaches, direct and indirect as well as personal and impersonal; simplicity versus complexity; emotional warmth, sincerity, enthusiasm, courtesy--all are important.¹

Word meanings vary greatly from person to person and group to group. "Sense" meaning may be far from the dictionary definition of a word but can enable a message to be transmitted sometimes when the latter will not. Word delivery and the emphasis given to words, sentences, and phrases can enable a message to be carried as the communicator desires, or inversely, completely distort the intent. The communicator needs to know the experiential and attitudinal background of the audience so that the vocabulary

¹Daniel R. Davies and Kenneth F. Herrold, Communication and the Administrator (New London: Arthur C. Croft Publication, 1956), p. 18.

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Face-to-face relationships have a tendency to result in more than the delivery of a message to an individual or a single group. As explained earlier, individuals have group references, and often there is a close relationship between two or more groups. In effect, this medium can sometimes serve as a mass communication technique. Cabot writes:

Face-to-face groups in our society overlap, creating a network of interactions that links people into wider aggregates. As a result, group norms become generalized, and large numbers of people who have no direct face-to-face contact share these generalized norms.¹

Every individual is unique, possessing characteristics reflecting a viewpoint that is strongly personal. Theoretically, complete communication can never take place since there can never be complete understanding between individuals. However, "imperfect" communication is a part of the "group" society in which man finds a place.

Apparently human nature resists change, unless such change is self-originated. As a result, the messages which the communicatee chooses to receive will reflect present interest, agree with opinions already held, confirm

¹Hugh Cabot and Joseph A. Kahl, Human Relations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 283.

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established attitudes, or be reinterpreted to agree with his established attitudes and opinions. Charters writes of this:

1. People tend to expose themselves to information about things in which they are already interested.
2. People tend to expose themselves only to information which confirms the attitude they hold.
3. When exposed to information and facts which contradict their attitudes, people tend to reinterpret the information rather than to change their attitudes.¹

There are several reasons for the failure of communication. It fails, as a long range program, when the receiver discovers a lack of sincerity or a misrepresentation of truth in the message from the communicator. Communication fails whenever a vehicle, used as a cue for a receiver, is not within his experience pattern. Communication also fails whenever the vehicle is inadequate to carry the message. According to Whythe:

The great enemy of communication then, is the illusion of it. We have talked enough; but we have not listened. And by not listening we have failed to concede the immense complexity of our society--and thus the great gaps between

¹W. W. Charters, Jr., "Facts Are Never Enough," Nations Schools, LIII (February, 1954), p. 57.

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ourselves and those with whom we seek understanding.¹

It may be that lack of trust is the most important reason for the failure of communication programs. Whythe also writes:

Only with trust can there be any real communication and until that trust is achieved the techniques and gadgetry of communication are so much wasted effort.²

The problem of effective communication has been recognized only fairly recently for its true importance. Fundamental research in this area is limited and professional training of school administrators and teachers certainly has not covered the field.

Schram bears this out by stating:

Educators who turn to communication research for help with their own problems should be warned, therefore, not only that they will find no discrete discipline but also that they will find a very young field with a scant theory.³

In the words of Swearingen:

Essential to good planning is a recognition of the problems of communication. Most of these problems

¹William H. Whythe, Jr., Is Anybody Listening (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³Wilbur Schramm, "Educators and Communication Research," Educational Leadership, XIII (May, 1956), p. 505.

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arise from the very nature of communication and not primarily from ill-will or inefficiency on anyone's part. Communication contains more hazard than is commonly assumed.¹

It is not a wonder that people fail one another sometimes, but rather it is a wonder that people communicate as clearly as they do most of the time. In the words of Harris:

In order to assure effective communication, one must know and take into account the needs and problems, motivations and fears, customs and norms of the people to whom one is trying to communicate and then adjust the form of the communication to their cultural milieu.²

Administrative Communication

An administrator confronted with the task of supplying leadership for an organization faces the reality of developing a system of communication which will assist the organization in accomplishing its essential purposes. In order to establish an effective system of communication the administrator must not only concern himself with organizational procedures but he must also study the human factors which comprise an organization.

Administrators are charged with the responsibility for

¹Mildred E. Swearingen, Supervision of Instruction: Foundations and Dimensions (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1962), p. 100.

²Ben M. Harris, Supervisory Behavior in Education: (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, p. 247.

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establishing channels of communication which allow the organization to operate effectively. Thus, it is necessary that a structure be created which will permit the free flow of communication and which will open the channels of communication to all individuals and not just the persons at the administrative level. Individuals, no matter what their positions in the educational setting must be given the opportunity to act as senders as well as recipients of communication. This doesn't imply a state of communication anarchy, with each individual indiscriminately using the channels nor does it imply that all communication is of an equal value. Effective communication movement must be vertical, with the movement going up as well as down, and horizontal, across lines.

The administrator must use the formally established channels of communication at the same time that the informal structure--the "grapevine"--is used to facilitate the free flow of communication.¹

Downward communication is from someone of higher status to someone of lower status--for example, from a superintendent to his principal. An example of upward communication would be a message from the principal to the superintendent; while a message between teachers in the same school

¹Hagman and Swartz, op. cit., p. 184.

would be horizontal communication.

Downward communication deals mainly with matters of procedure, policy, or general information. It may be face to face or by annual reports, bulletin boards, telephone, handbooks, or other devices.

We are lead to believe that upward communication lets the superintendent know what is going on in the school. It may tend to consist mainly of complaints, reports, and rumors. Many times school systems attempt to solve the problem of upward communication by setting up various committees with whom the administrators meet and confer. For example, curriculum development committees often keep school administrators informed about what the teachers are thinking.

A superintendent who neglects his upward communication channels soon finds himself operating in a vacuum, ignorant of what his subordinates are doing and unable even to check on whether his communications are being heeded. A permissive "open door" kind of leadership encourages upward communication. People must feel that their leaders are approachable. Organization members almost always have what are commonly known as gripes. These may be legitimate

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complaints about the way the organization is being run, or they may be nothing more than attempts to gain recognition. If the upward communication system is adequate, these gripes are heard and attended to, either by making the necessary changes or by giving the griper recognition of some kind.

Communication is one of the least-understood areas in administration; yet there are few writers indeed who will question the importance of organizing of a communication structure within any institution.¹

Horizontal communication serves several purposes. It is a short cut between individuals of roughly equal status--they communicate directly with each other instead of going up and down channels. Also, it has a tendency to knit a group together. Horizontal communication has some social qualities. Any activity which increases the probability of interaction between an organization's members is likely to strengthen the organization.

The superintendent needs to set up proper communication channels and then keep these channels unblocked. In "Podunk Center High School" an assistant principal coveted the principalship. He came upon a unique plan to get it:

¹Knezevich, op. cit., p. 82.

he would obstruct and demoralize the communication system. This man accordingly twisted the principal's orders in transmitting them to the teachers, in such a way as to cause resentment and confusion. He then deliberately misinformed his leader about upward communications. Ultimately he succeeded in getting the principal fired, and he is now principal. This is not a nice story but it is a true one. Communication obstructionists not only jeopardize the leader's position but threaten the welfare of the group; the wise leader seeks them out and removes them.

A superintendent should communicate continuously. No person or group can assimilate all of the experiences and facts requisite to a constructive attitude toward a matter so complicated as education in a short time span. Also, any one message is likely to be forgotten because people are constantly confronted with a kaleidoscope of stimuli.

Neglect to keep people continuously interested and informed is a cause of much public lassitude and of some criticism. When school affairs seem to be going well we have an understandable temptation to assume that people appreciate educational services and comprehend school needs. To a large degree that is usually a delusion.¹

It seems reasonable to assume that the average layman,

¹Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1959), pp. 116-117.

at least theoretically, admires and looks up to the superintendent as an expert but in actual practice often acts as if he is afraid that this expert is going to put something over on him. He realizes from experience that most of an expert's ideas involve change. There seems to be a tendency to think that the experts may have ulterior motives, and are trying to reorganize society without consulting the majority. The superintendent's views may conflict with the layman's own ideas based upon his experience.

The cause of education is not aided at all in the public eye by the disagreements and inconsistencies of educators. In fact, the layman's impulse is to reject all contradictory recommendations until the educators can at least agree among themselves. Communication is difficult because reorganizing one's own outlook and patterns of behavior to allow for new ideas is painful, produces anxiety, and takes time. The superintendent must not forget that his words and symbols cannot be interpreted in the same way by others unless they have had enough of the same background to give the words the same meaning.

When a superintendent wants action on a new proposal, it is part of his communication job to justify it to those

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who have not been involved in its development but who will have to act on it. They must be enabled to share, to some extent, the experiences and processes of those who did develop it. If they are not involved they are unlikely either to understand it or to judge it intelligently.

Griffiths states:

An administrator must be able to communicate with others in the field of education; but he must also be able to communicate with lay people. Since so much depends on "getting through" to the lay citizens of the community, it might almost be said that this is of prime importance. It is not enough that we, as school administrators, follow the physical scientists in their conquest of communication, that is, that we invent our own language. We must solve our problem by refinements in our present language, by precision, and by mastering ourselves so that our emotions do not ruin our meanings.¹

An identical message, delivered in the same way by different communicators, can cause quite different effects depending on the degree of prestige carried by each one. If one communicator is attributed greater prestige status by the communicatee another communicator with less prestige may be regarded so lightly that communication does not take place, because the message is almost completely ignored.

¹Daniel E. Griffiths, Human Relations in School Administration (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), p. 77.

Hartley and Hartley tend to confirm this by stating:

1. It is obvious that the communicator cannot predict accurately a communicant's reaction without some knowledge of the framework of mood and attitude within which the communicate will be received.
2. The image of the other makes a difference.
3. The communicator must know his audience and his own limitations.¹

Communication problems constantly confront all superintendents as they attempt to fulfill their duties as educational leaders in school-communities. This is why an understanding of the fundamental techniques necessary for effective communication can be of so much assistance to them.

A school superintendent seems to be a prime target for agitators. Many attacks on the public school contain gross misrepresentations of facts but are difficult to disprove. A superintendent apparently does not seem to have much defense against a charge at the time of occurrence. However, if there is an effective communication program anti-educational outbursts and attacks are more likely to be received correctly as criticisms of the citizens themselves because of collective public ownership of the schools.

¹Hartley and Hartley, op. cit., p. 66.

Harold Hand has noted:

Unwarranted attacks on the schools can be prevented only if and when the lay citizens of the community feel themselves to be unfairly attacked when an unwarranted attack is made on the school. They will never feel this way unless they are convinced that the program of the school is really their program, their psychological property.¹

The school superintendent is seldom in a position where the individual or group, with which he is attempting to communicate, has no choice other than to accept his message. As a result the superintendent has to rely more often on elements of good will, persuasion, and tact in order for successful communication to take place. A superintendent does not automatically gain great prestige, but is assigned a status role by virtue of the community tradition which may or may not carry prestige. After the superintendent has learned and wisely used community mores, leadership patterns, educational traditions, and the history of community support for public education it is possible for him to have an effective communication program established because of his personal influence. The school superintendent best communicates in the role of listener

¹Harold C. Hand, "Improving Communication Between the School and the Community," North Central Association Quarterly, XXX (April, 1956), p. 369.

and gatherer of data, which is pertinent to education in his particular community. Hovland and others state that an individual's tendency to accept a conclusion advocated by a given communicator will depend upon how well informed and intelligent he believes the communicator to be.¹

A superintendent may find that citizens will assume a defensive attitude when conversing with him unless he is particularly careful in his word choice. Many so-called "professional terms" may be unfamiliar to citizens, as was touched on earlier in this study. Also, the superintendent's formal education may be much greater than many of his fellow citizens in the school-community. He must be very diplomatic about not appearing to demonstrate this fact if he is to really be accepted.

In the following few paragraphs will be found some suggestions for improved administrative communication.

Handling of communication that involves other people's egos can be improved. The Golden Rule and tact are all too often missing when tempers are high and reprimands are

¹Carl Hovland, Irving L. Janis, and Harold H. Kelley, Communication and Persuasion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 21.

handed out.

Culbertson has stated:

The proverbial roads to Rome and formal communication channels in schools and school districts have a common characteristic; both converge upon a focal point. In school systems that focal point is the administrator. Unlike the Roman roads, however, communication channels frequently contain unanticipated and ill-defined barriers or roadblocks which interfere with the accurate transmission of in-going and/or outgoing messages.¹

The flow of communication within a school organization can be improved. The fear of reprimand may be a prime deterrent to free communication about errors in many cases. It seems reasonable to assume that self-appraisal of each unit by its members might be provided for periodically as this may tend to increase the flow of ideas for improvement. It also seems reasonable to assume that the superintendent should tend to play down status, whether his own or others, in all preliminary discussions. Suggestions should be accepted in good faith, unless other evidence provides caution.

Transmission of communication can certainly be improved. The administrator should transmit his message

¹Jack Culbertson, "Recognizing Roadblocks in Communication Channels," Administrators Notebook, Vol. VII, No. 7 (March 1959), p. 1.

through as many different media at the same time as possible. He increases the chances that at least one of them will register. These media should be chosen in groups that will fit together, however. Words and pictures should be integrated on the printed page; diction tempo, tone and words in a speech: auditory, olfactory, tactile, visual appeals in an exhibit. Perhaps one audience should be reached by letter, another through the press, another by flash announcements on the screen of the local motion picture houses, another on radio or TV. One should reduce the competition of media carrying distracting messages by choosing a setting where his audience can concentrate on his chosen medium and message. A good superintendent shouldn't hesitate to ask the experts for help in such unfamiliar media as TV, radio, homemade motion pictures, and direct mail. They can do wonders for one, and the results can justify the expense.

Communication, says one administrator we know, is the art of telling people who don't want to listen something they don't want to hear, doing it in such a way that they will do something they didn't want to do before--and leaving them pleased with themselves and with you.

There in one statement, we see many of the ingredients of communication: telling, listening, persuading, feeling, directing, promoting action--all aspects of an administrator's job and all of first-line importance. Some even argue that communi-

cation is the whole job of the administrator.¹

Communication is certainly one of the most important aspects of administration. Much of the quality of administrative ideas and decisions depends upon the flow of information from others. Certainly, no one man can possibly possess all of the knowledge to manage a modern organization. The transformation of decisions and ideas into action depends largely upon the quality of communication.

Pernert states that informal reasons for failure of communication programs as they apply to the public school superintendent include:

1. Indifference to the importance of organizing an effective program.
2. Failure to understand the principles of perception as they apply to communicants.
3. The belief that by virtue of authority of office, orders will get the job done.
4. Failure to react to messages from the communicant as they arise by virtue of a stimulus by the communicator.
5. Failure to gain prestige in the school-community.

¹Davies and Herrold, op. cit., p. 1.

6. Framing the program so that personal gain is the only goal.
7. Failure to use the informal (grapevine) system when other more formal patterns fail.¹

Pfau presents a review of several factors, which if kept in mind by the administrator of a communication program, can by their application increase the effectiveness of the program:

1. Virtually all individuals in the school public possess attitudes of various kinds on the subject of schools, and a school in particular.
2. Little is known as to the nature of specific changes or effects.
3. Individuals tend to perceive materials in terms of their attitudes toward the subject of perception. The attitude includes a readiness to perceive the issue in a particular form of reference, and the same information item may serve to reinforce entirely divergent attitudes.
4. Individuals tend to presume in frames of reference similar to the groups to which they belong or identify themselves.
5. Threats to attitudes which are ego involved tend to arouse resistance to this threat. Attitudes change, information and logic do not have the casual relationship often claimed for them.
6. Attitudes may be changed by means of group

¹Pernert, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

decision, when the individuals share in the process of discovering information and arriving at conclusions.¹

Citizen and Staff Involvement

A school superintendent should constantly attempt to interest citizens in their schools. It has been said that in normal times many citizens tend to be disinterested in the school situation, but they are not slow to exert their rights as owners of the schools when a crisis takes place. In far too many cases the pattern that follows such a crisis serves to create situations in which emotional action predominates over logical action. As a result, damage to the educational program takes place. It has been discovered that citizen interest is generated by an effective communication program. Harral states:

In no other enterprise of public or private nature is interaction so close, or so frequent as between the public school and community. This is a relatively new phenomenon occasioned by America's belief in education, increase in the school's functions, and the fact that people need to remain close to the institution which helps solve their fundamental problems.²

¹Pfau, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

²Stewart Harral, Tested Public Public Relations for Schools (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), p. 6.

If citizens are to assist in the creation of better educational opportunities for children, both by giving adequate support to public education, and by learning to be better teachers of children in the home and in the community, they must have opportunities to be exposed to factual information concerning the problems of social change in our democracy and to act with others in their solution. Campbell has stated:

How to induce change in people so that they willingly discard medieval customs and beliefs is the challenging goal of education today. It is indeed a difficult and serious task for educational leaders. Unless steps are taken to educate people so that they will manage public affairs by intelligent discussion rather than pressure-group techniques the privilege of democracy may defeat the ends of a free society.¹

Citizen participation must be more than just a framework in which discussion occurs. However, the legal structure upon which public education is based should not be violated. Some responsibilities belong primarily to the state and others to the local school board. Suggestions given by lay citizens can be heard and sometimes acted upon by the school board. However, responsibility

¹Clyde Campbell, Practical Applications of Democratic Administration (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), pp. 25-26.

and judgement for decision making is required of those citizens who have been selected for that education function by being appointed or elected to office. John Dewey has stated:

The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together: which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings and individuals.¹

Dewey has also touched upon the point that staff member participation in parts of school administration is an important phase of an effective communication program. He notes:

One of the first steps to be taken practically in effecting a closer connection of education with actual social responsibilities is for teachers to assert themselves more directly about educational affairs and about the organization and conduct of the schools - asserting themselves. I mean, both in the internal conduct of the schools by introducing a greater amount of teacher responsibility in administration, and outside in relation to the public and community.²

The school superintendent should strive to reach high morale in personnel relationships. Benben has concluded

¹John Dewey, Education Today (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 337-338.

²Ibid, pp. 258-259.

that:

Every normal individual desires recognition. This desire can be seen in the gamut of the behavior of children and adults to gain attention. The individual seeks groups in which he can find appreciation and recognition. The wish for recognition is a strong drive in the selection of a career. Those who have selected teaching as their life's work believe that it will give them status and recognition in their social groups. It is in this area of recognition that the administrator must be most cautious. Too often, commendations for work well done are given only to the administrator. Accepting recognition for work done by others without passing it on to the performers stains the administrator with the sin of self-embellishment. It is well to expect a good piece of work from staff members; it is more important that the staff member know that the administrator is aware of work well done and that his expectancy has been met.¹

It has been reported by Arnold that effective communication in schools is positively related to the morale of teachers.²

Henry Harap has brought forth some conclusions from a study of teacher morale:

Sharing in policy making enhances self-respect. Most administrators are under the impression that their teachers have a part in policy making, but the majority of the teachers do not agree. Participation

¹John S. Benben, "Keys to Effective Administration," School Executive LXXVIII, (May, 1959), p. 61.

²Dwight L. Arnold, "Morale as Influenced by Participation in Group Planning and Action," Educational Research Bulletin XXXII, (November, 1953), p. 203.

in making school policy varied from place to place depending on the philosophy of the head. Where the teachers shared in decision making, the evidence showed that they greatly appreciated this recognition, i.e. they rated it frequently among the strongest points of a school system.

On the other hand, where sharing in policy making was neglected, it was resented by the teachers and morale was adversely affected. In one instance the discontent spread to city-wide proportions. The teachers and principals expressed strong disapproval of the dictatorial administrative procedures. When organizations and informal groups of teachers made suggestions for improvement, the superintendent ignored them. The estimate of morale in this school system was considerably below the average.¹

An effective two-way communication program which stresses citizen participation is necessary. The school superintendent must not fail to be concerned with that phase of administration which makes organized citizen participation possible. Campbell states:

In a community, whether we wish it or not, everybody is a teacher, everybody is a learner, everybody is growing in some direction intellectually. It may be a negative way toward delinquency, crime or a useless form of living, or it may be growing positively toward the highest intellectual atmosphere that one might imagine - but moving in some direction in any case.

¹Henry Harap, "Many Factors that Affect Teacher Morale." Nation's Schools LXII, (June, 1959), p. 57.

To many people the ideal democracy is one where small neighborhood groups are studying, thinking, discussing and pooling their mental resources. The aggregate of these small neighborhood groups becomes a community and the aggregate of states becomes the United States.¹

One of the most important reasons for the establishment of effective communication programs by the superintendent is the attempt to reach the goal of complete community and school cooperation. The 37th yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators states that:

Schools have no more urgent communications job to do than to set up efficient means through which the public can express itself on school matters and the relation of these matters to community welfare.²

By means of a two-way flow of communication the superintendent can determine where people are in their thinking about public education so that he may advise and assist them. This communication also points the way to goals that can create both a better education for children, and a better community in which this education can take place.

¹Clyde M. Campbell (ed.), "The Editor's Corner," Educational Leadership in Michigan, I (March, 1959), p. 4.

²American Association of School Administrators, Educational Administration in a Changing Community Thirty-Seventh Yearbook (Washington, D.C: a department of the National Education Association, 1959), p. 204.

Whenever two or more individuals discuss matters relating to education, citizen participation in public education is taking place. Most of this participation takes place on the street, in the home, or at a group meeting which is not basically dedicated to the task of furthering the cause of education. Through the use of an effective communication program the superintendent should attempt to reach objectivity, if education is to advance and to assist this nation in preserving fundamentals of democracy. We must remember that, many times, citizens tend to discuss tax money, the basketball team, and many other topics without much real objectivity. The superintendent needs to equip adult citizens with facts about public education so that the citizen will be objective when a discussion of public education occurs. It is apparent that the adult citizen in any community is in an excellent position to exert influence upon children and other adult citizens.

The home, church, recreation center, street corner, and other gathering places are examples of settings which produce experience that provide adults and children with attitudes and behavior patterns that influence both themselves and others. Some of the teaching and learning that

take place as a result of experiences in these settings reinforce the action of the school; some directly contradict the teaching to which the child is exposed to in the school; and still other teaching will be directed at reinforcing that of the school, but will fail in its purpose because of a lack of proper perception of the school's task.

An ideal situation is approached if citizens, parents, teachers, school boards, and superintendents all go down the same road together in the same direction and toward the same goal. Trump, in writing of the secondary school of tomorrow, notes:

The position of the secondary school of the future in its community will be on a sounder basis than it is today. The school today creates community understanding through the P.T.A., citizens' advisory councils, newspaper-radio-television publicity, and personal contacts of its students and teachers. These means of communication will be augmented by the fact that the future school's program will take place in the community rather than being limited to a somewhat isolated school building.

Large numbers of adults will be used as part-time instructors and teaching assistants. Community resources will be utilized more frequently by students. Moreover, education will be a continuous process as graduation becomes less important because of adult education programs and closer integration of secondary school and college

or employment.¹

It would appear that the partnership idea is very important in public education. Professional school employees should help to form and carry out policies of the board of education. By utilizing the experiential and technical knowledge of the school administrator and faculty member the "how" of the public education function can be formed.

It is important that citizens assume responsibilities that lead to decision making in the phase of school policy that determines the "what" of the education function. There should be participation which ranges from a local to a national framework. It is important that the superintendent utilizes his knowledge of communication techniques to assist citizens to secure the benefits of all available resource materials, organizational patterns, and professional personnel to attack problems in a manner which produces sound results.

¹J. Lloyd Trump, Director, Commission on the Experimental Study of the Utilization of the Staff in the Secondary School, Images of the Future, The National Association of Secondary School Principals (Washington, D.C.: a department of the National Education Association, 1959), p. 35.

Cooperative endeavor does not always guarantee simple answers to complex educational problems, but the citizens usually develop a better appreciation of the complex task of the public school. Miller states:

As more information about schools is disseminated there is likely to be less public certainty that simple answers are to be found. Schools will be seen not so much as training centers imposing the pattern of American life on a quantity of raw human material but rather more an educational agency recognizing that whereas the school is the formalized educational agency the whole community educates the child and the other community learners.¹

Citizens will assist teachers and other school employees at the time of a special school function, as members of various school organizations or clubs, and possess information that will allow factual, intelligent discussion of school problems to take place when cooperative endeavor is effective. Participation in a community survey and membership on a board of education sponsored citizens committee for educational purposes are both considered to be outstanding ways in which citizens may share in school activities.

¹Van Miller, "A Look to the Future," The School Executive, LXXV, (January, 1956), p. 119.

It is important for a citizen to know that he is making a contribution to the success of the education function and that he is really sharing in the activity that creates success. Dewey has written:

Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success, its failure as his failure, is the completing step. As soon as he is possessed by the emotional attitude of the group, he will be alert to recognize the special ends at which it aims and the means employed to secure success.¹

Partnership between the professional and citizens in the school-community needs to be based upon more than the day-to-day problems of education. It is important that long range plans for the improvement of public education be made.

Summary

In this chapter the writer has attempted to present a picture of the communication process and general principles of communication in an education setting. Administrative communication with citizens and staff are also discussed.

It is not practical to divorce communication acts from

¹Edman, op. cit., p. 105.

the broader field of educational leadership. In this chapter there are a number of references made by individuals who are recognized for their competency in the field of educational leadership and communication. The statements reflect a viewpoint of the communication process as it concerns the educational leader.

There are several composite statements which should be of value to the public school superintendent in planning a program of communication with citizens and staff members. They follow:

1. Written communication techniques are often "one-way" means of communication.
2. Face-to-Face relationships are more effective means of communications.
3. The communicator, to be effective, needs to understand the principles that make this process effective.
4. Educators need to develop skills and techniques which will assist in building favorable community attitudes toward public education.
5. They should encourage public and staff member participation in the formulation of educational policy.
6. The community survey is an effective means by which information can be gathered to develop this skill.

7. Citizens committees are effective means of developing community understanding and support for public education through the communication which takes place between professional school employees and citizens.

Since public education has come to assume a very important position in a democratic American society, the need for effective communication programs has increased with the passing of time. One of the significantly important functions which the superintendent of a public school performs is the establishing of an effective communication program with staff and citizens in a school-community.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERINTENDENTS' CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS AND STAFF MEMBERS

Introduction

The preceding chapter reported on the general principles of communication in an education setting. In the present chapter we will study the means by which superintendents communicate with citizens and staff members. The superintendents were also asked how often the contacts occurred and the degree of importance which they attached to the means of contact.

In the interviews the superintendents were also asked to evaluate contacts made with citizens and school staff employees. Primary and secondary contacts were both listed and classified as personal, written, and other means. Distinctions were made between contacts with citizens and staff members.

In this particular study superintendents were asked how they attempted to sense the feelings of citizens in their school-community. Their answers are recorded in Table 4.

TABLE 4

HOW SUPERINTENDENTS ATTEMPT TO SENSE THE FEELINGS OF CITIZENS IN THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY

Knowledge From	Number	Knowledge From	Number
Key Individuals	9	Local Newspaper	6
Personal Knowledge	9	Data From Community	
School Board Members	9	Survey	4
Any Individual	7	National & Regional	
Citizens Committees	7	Attitudes Toward Ed.	1
Students	7	Politicians	1

It is interesting to note that all of these superintendents ranked themselves highest along with key individuals of the community and school board members. There is conflict here with the thinking of some experts who believe that the superintendent has much difficulty in sensing the attitudes of people in the school-community.

In this present study the results of the interviews which were related to the superintendents' opinions regarding staff participation in making recommendations on school board policy, curriculum study, and participation in bond issue drives are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

SUPERINTENDENTS' OPINIONS REGARDING STAFF PARTICIPATION IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS ON BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY, CURRICULUM STUDY, AND PARTICIPATION IN BOND ISSUE DRIVES

Item	Degree of Desirability							
	Very Desirable		Desirable		Undesirable		No Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Board Policy	5	55.6	4	44.4				
Curriculum Study	8	88.9	1	11.1				
Bond Drives	4	44.4	2	22.2	2	22.2	1	11.1
Average No.								
And %	5.67	63	2.3	25.9	.67	7.4	.33	3.7

The superintendents rated curriculum study by staff members most often in the very desirable classification. They rated participation in bond issue drives the least often in the very desirable classification. The highest average of the three participative acts was found in the very desirable classification. 88.9 per cent of the opinions were classified as either very desirable or desirable.

The superintendents interviewed in this study were asked to give their opinions about citizen participation in phases of school administration. The phases were:

recommendations on school board policy, curriculum study, and participation in bond issue drives. The results are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

SUPERINTENDENTS' OPINIONS REGARDING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS ON BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY, CURRICULUM STUDY, AND PARTICIPATION IN BOND ISSUE DRIVES

Item	Degree of Desirability							
	Very Desirable		Desirable		Undesirable		No Opinion	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Board Policy	1	11.1	4	44.4	4	44.4		
Curriculum Study			4	44.4	4	44.4	1	11.1
Bond Drives	6	66.7	2	22.2	1	11.1		
Average No.								
And %	2.3	25.9	3.3	37.0	3	33.3	.33	3.7

The superintendents rated citizen participation in bond issue drives most often in the very desirable classification. Curriculum study was not rated at all in the very desirable classification. The highest average of the three participative acts lay in the desirable classification. 62.9 per cent of the opinions were classified as very desirable or desirable. This contrasts with Table 5 in which 88.9

per cent of the opinions were classified as either very desirable or desirable.

Contacts With Citizens

Personal contacts made with citizens by the superintendents who were interviewed are listed in Table 7.

TABLE 7

SUPERINTENDENTS' PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS AND THEIR RATED IMPORTANCE

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Athletic Booster Meetings	4			4
Band Booster Meetings	1	2	1	4
Child-study Club Meetings	2	1		3
Incidental Contacts at School	5	4		9
Incidental Contacts at Non-school Type Meetings	5	4		9
Incidental Contacts at Meetings at School	5	4		9
Incidental Contacts Down-town	5	2	1	8
Home Visits	4			4
Telephone Calls	7	2		9
P.T.A. Meetings	6	3		9
Vocational Group Meetings	1	1		2
Total	45	23	2	70

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64.3 per cent of the contacts used by the superintendents in Table 7 were considered "very important". Only 2.9 per cent were considered "unimportant".

Contacts made by telephone and by Parent Teacher Association meetings were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents. One superintendent thought that meetings with the athletic boosters were unimportant and one thought that incidental contacts downtown were unimportant.

Table 8 shows the frequency with which the superintendent made personal contacts with citizens.

TABLE 8

FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS WITH
CITIZENS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Athletic Booster Meetings		1	1			2
Band Booster Meetings			1		1	2
Child-study Club Meetings			1	1		1
Incidental Contacts at School	2	2				5
Incidental Contacts at Non-school Type Meetings	1	4	1			3
Incidental Contacts at Meetings at School	2	1	1			5
Incidental Contacts Down-town	2	2				4
Home Visits			1			3
Telephone Calls	4	2				3
P.T.A. Meetings		1	5			3
Vocational Group Meetings		1	1			2
Total	11	14	12	1	1	33

The superintendents used the telephone most often in daily contacts with citizens. They used incidental contacts at non-school type meetings most often in weekly contacts with citizens. P.T.A. meetings were most often used in monthly contacts. In the occasional category incidental contacts at school and incidental contacts at meetings at school

were used most often.

Table 9 lists the written contacts with citizens which were made by the interviewed superintendents.

TABLE 9

WRITTEN CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS WHICH WERE MADE BY THE INTERVIEWED SUPERINTENDENTS

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Annual Reports	3	1	3	7
Current School News Released				
Through School News Letter	6	1		7
Letters describing "trouble"				
Educational Situations	4			4
Letters "directing" the receiver to				
take some specific "action"	3	1		4
Letters of Condolence	4	2	1	7
Letters of Congratulation Concerning				
Educational Achievement	4	2	2	8
Letters of Inquiry	1	3		4
Newspaper Releases	6	2	1	9
Written Adult Education Announcements	2	4		6
Written Curriculum Study Reports	3	4		7
Written Reports on Need for Additional Funds for Operation	5	3		8
Written Reports on Need for Passing Bond Issues for Building	6	2		8
Written School Transportation Information	3	1	1	5
Written Testing Results Information	2		1	3
Total	52	26	9	87

59.7 per cent of the written contacts with citizens that were used by the superintendents were considered to be very important. 10.3 per cent were considered unimportant.

Newspaper releases were the most frequently used of the written contacts. Following very closely behind newspaper releases in frequency of use were: letters of congratulation concerning educational achievement, written reports on need for additional funds for operation, and written reports on need for passing bond issues for building. Current school news released through school news letters, newspaper releases, and written reports on need for passing bond issues for building were the most important means of written communication with citizens.

Table 10 lists the frequency of use of the various written contacts with lay citizens. One superintendent used newspaper releases on a daily basis. The superintendents used newspaper releases most often in weekly contacts with citizens. Current school news released through school news letters was most often used in monthly contacts. In the annual category annual reports were used most often. The superintendents used written reports on need for passing bond issues for building most often in occasional contacts with citizens.

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS WITH
CITIZENS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Annual Reports					7	
Current School News Released						
Through School News Letter			4			3
Letters Describing "trouble"						
Educational Situations						4
Letters "directing" the receiver						
to Take Some Specific "action"				1		3
Letters of Condolence						7
Letters of Congratulation Con-						
cerning Educational Achievement					1	7
Letters of Inquiry						4
Newspaper Releases	1	4	1			3
Written Adult Education Announce-						
ments				1		5
Written Curriculum Study Reports					1	6
Written Reports on Need for Addi-						
tional Funds for Operation					1	7
Written Reports on Need for Pas-						
sing Bond Issues for Building						8
Written School Transportation						
Information					2	3
Written Testing Results Infor-						
mation						3
Total	1	4	5	2	12	63

Other means of contacts with citizens made by the superintendents who were interviewed are listed in Table 11. 37.5 per cent of the contacts used by the superintendents in Table 11 were considered "very important". Only 4.2 per cent were considered "unimportant". Open-houses for dedicatory purposes, radio news releases, and television news releases were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents. One superintendent thought that open-houses for dedicatory purposes were unimportant.

TABLE 11

SUPERINTENDENTS' OTHER MEANS OF CONTACT WITH CITIZENS AND
THEIR RATED IMPORTANCE

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Open-houses for Dedicatory Purposes	3	4	1	8
Parades to Sell a Bond Issue				0
Radio Appearances by Citizens		1		1
Radio Appearances by School Personnel	1	1		2
Radio News Releases	3	3		6
Television Appearances by Citizens		1		1
Television Appearances by School Personnel		1		1
Television News Releases	2	3		5
Total	9	14	1	24

Open-houses for dedicatory purposes, radio news releases, and television news releases lead the list of other means of contacts with citizens.

Table 12 lists the frequency of use of the various other means of contacts with citizens.

TABLE 12

FREQUENCY OF OTHER MEANS OF CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS
WITH CITIZENS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Open-houses For Dedicatory Purposes					1	7
Parades to Sell a Bond Issue						
Radio Appearances by Citizens						1
Radio Appearances by School Personnel						2
Radio News Releases			1			5
Television Appearances by Citizens						1
Television Appearances by School Personnel						1
Television News Releases						5
Total			1		1	22

In Table 12 occasional use predominates. In one school district the superintendent stated that representatives from all news media are welcomed at any time to his office, where

there is a perpetual cup of coffee! In this particular system news conferences are also held and representatives are invited in for lunch. In this one particular system all of the other means of contacts were used with the exception of parades to sell a bond issue.

Table 13 lists those contacts with citizens which were considered either very important or unimportant. The figures listed are percentages which were obtained by dividing the number of contacts considered either very important or unimportant by the total number of contacts which were made in each classification.

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGES OF LISTED TYPES OF CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS
CONSIDERED EITHER VERY IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT BY THE
SUPERINTENDENTS INTERVIEWED

Item	Means of Contact		
	Personal	Written	Other Means
Very Important	64.3	59.7	37.5
Unimportant	2.9	10.3	4.2

Contacts With Staff Members

Personal contacts made with staff members by the superintendents who were interviewed are listed in Table 14.

TABLE 14

SUPERINTENDENTS' PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR RATED IMPORTANCE

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Athletic Booster Meetings	2	1		3
Band Booster Meetings	1	2	1	4
Child-study Club Meetings	1	1	1	3
Incidental Contacts at School	5	3	1	9
Incidental Contacts at Non-school Type Meetings	3	4	1	8
Incidental Contacts at Meetings at School	4	4	1	9
Incidental Contacts Down-town	2	5		7
Home Visits	1		1	2
Telephone Calls	3	6		9
P.T.A. Meetings	2	5	2	9
Vocational Group Meetings		3		3
Staff Meetings	7	2		9
Total	31	36	8	75

41.3 per cent of the contacts used by the superintendents were considered to be very important while 10.7 per cent

were considered unimportant. The most widely used of the personal contacts were incidental contacts at school, incidental contacts at meetings at school, telephone calls, P.T.A. meetings, and staff meetings. Two superintendents thought that P.T.A. meetings were unimportant.

Staff meetings were also ranked highest in the very important category by the superintendents. Incidental contacts at school and incidental contacts at meetings at school were next in the very important category.

Table 15 lists the frequency of use of the various personal contacts between the superintendent and staff members.

TABLE 15

FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS WITH STAFF
MEMBERS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Athletic Booster Meetings			1			2
Band Booster Meetings			1		1	2
Child-study Club Meetings			2	1		
Incidental Contacts at School	5					4
Incidental Contacts at Non-school Type Meetings		1				7
Incidental Contacts at Meetings at School	2		1			6
Incidental Contacts Down-town		2				5
Home Visits						2
Telephone Calls	1	1				7
P.T.A. Meetings			5			4
Vocational Group Meetings		1	1			1
Staff Meetings	1	1	3	2		3
Total	9	6	14	3	1	43

Written Contacts with staff members which were used by the superintendents interviewed are listed in Table 16. 39.8 per cent of the written contacts with staff members used by the superintendents were considered to be very important. 9.6 per cent were considered unimportant.

Current school news released through school newsletters, letters of condolence, written curriculum study reports, and written reports on need for additional funds for operation were the most frequently used of the written contacts.

TABLE 16

SUPERINTENDENTS' WRITTEN CONTACTS WITH STAFF MEMBERS AND
THEIR RATED IMPORTANCE

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Annual Reports	1	3	2	6
Current School News Released				
Through School News Letter	5	2	1	8
Letters describing "trouble"				
Educational Situations	3	2		5
Letters "directing" the receiver to				
take some specific "action"	1	3		4
Letters of Condolence	5	2	1	8
Letters of Congratulation Concerning				
Educational Achievement	3	2	2	7
Letters of Inquiry	1	4		5
Newspaper Releases	2	4		6
Written Adult Education Announce-				
ments			2	2
Written Curriculum Study Reports	5	3		8
Written Reports on Need for Addi-				
tional Funds for Operation	1	7		8
Written Reports on Need for Passing				
Bond Issues for Building	1	6		7
Written School Transportation Infor-				
mation	1	2		3
Written Testing Results Information	4	2		6
Total	33	42	8	83

Table 17 lists the frequency of use of the written contacts with staff members. One superintendent used letters of inquiry on a daily basis and one used newspaper releases on a daily basis. Newspaper releases were also most often used in weekly contacts with staff members. Current school news released through school newsletters was most often used in monthly contacts. In two cases the superintendents used written testing results information in quarterly contacts. In the annual category annual reports were used most often. The superintendents used letters of condolence and written reports on need for additional funds for operation most often in occasional contacts with staff members.

TABLE 17

FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN CONTACTS BY SUPERINTENDENTS WITH STAFF
MEMBERS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Annual Reports					6	
Current School News Released						
Through School News Letter		2	4			2
Letters Describing "trouble"						
Educational Situations		1			1	3
Letters "directing" the receiver to						
Take Some Specific "action"		1		1		2
Letters of Condolence						8
Letters of Congratulation Concerning						
Educational Achievement						7
Letters of Inquiry	1					4
Newspaper Releases	1	3				2
Written Adult Education Announcements				1		1
Written Curriculum Study Reports					1	7
Written Reports on Need for Additional Funds for Operation						8
Written Reports on Need for Passing Bond Issues for Building						7
Written School Transportation Information					3	
Written Testing Results Information				2	2	2
Total	2	7	4	4	13	53

Table 18 lists other means of contacts with staff members. 32 per cent of the contacts used by the superintendents in Table 18 were considered very important. 12 per cent were considered unimportant. Radio news releases and television news releases were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents.

TABLE 18

SUPERINTENDENTS' OTHER MEANS OF CONTACT WITH STAFF MEMBERS
AND THEIR RATED IMPORTANCE

Item	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Total Contacts
Open-houses for Dedicatory Purposes	1	6	1	8
Parades to Sell a Bond Issue		1		1
Radio Appearances by Citizens	1			1
Radio Appearances by School Personnel	1	2		3
Radio News Releases	3	1	1	5
Television Appearances by Citizens		1		1
Television Appearances by School Personnel		2		2
Television News Releases	2	1	1	4
Total	8	14	3	25

Table 19 lists the frequency of use of the various other means of contacts with staff members. Occasional use predominates in Table 19. Open-houses for dedicatory purposes appear to be a rather popular other means of contact by superintendents with staff members. Radio news releases are next in general use.

TABLE 19

FREQUENCY OF OTHER MEANS OF CONTACT BY SUPERINTENDENTS WITH
STAFF MEMBERS

Item	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually	Occasionally
Open-houses for Dedicatory Purposes					2	6
Parades to Sell a Bond Issue						1
Radio Appearances by Citizens						1
Radio Appearances by School Personnel						3
Radio News Releases						5
Television Appearances by Citizens						1
Television Appearances by School Personnel						1
Television News Releases						4
Total					2	24

Table 20 lists those contacts with staff members which were considered either very important or unimportant. The listed figures are percentages which were obtained by dividing the number of contacts considered either very important or unimportant by the total number of contacts which were made in each of the classifications.

TABLE 20

PERCENTAGES OF CONTACTS WITH STAFF MEMBERS CONSIDERED
EITHER VERY IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT BY THE SUPERIN-
TENDENTS INTERVIEWED

Item	Means of Contact		
	Personal	Written	Other Means
Very Important	41.3	39.8	32
Unimportant	10.7	9.6	12

The superintendents attributed the highest percentage of contacts in the very important classification to personal contacts. They attributed the lowest percentage of the unimportant classifications to written contacts.

Table 21 compares the frequency of use and the designations of very important and unimportant for personal, written, and other means of contact between the superintendents and both citizens and staff members.

TABLE 21

CITIZEN AND STAFF MEMBER CONTACTS WITH THE SUPERINTENDENTS

Group	Number of Different Types of Contacts	Percentage Very Important	Percentage Unimportant
Personal Contacts			
Citizens	70	64.3	2.9
Staff Members	75	41.3	10.7
Written Contacts			
Citizens	87	59.7	10.3
Staff Members	83	39.8	9.6
Other Means of Contact			
Citizens	24	37.5	4.2
Staff Members	25	32.0	12.0

Personal contacts exceeded the other two means of contact with citizens in the very important category. Personal contacts with staff members also exceeded the other two means of contacts with members in the very important

category. In the unimportant category the lowest percentage of contacts were personal contacts with citizens.

There were some miscellaneous contacts, not otherwise noted, mentioned by some of the superintendents. One superintendent was in the habit of going out and setting up meetings. He also did not wait for invitations to any meeting. One superintendent held news conferences. Another one made special note of contacts at his (Presbyterian) church, along with getting involved in bingo games in a parochial (Catholic) school in his district.

Summary

In this chapter the means by which superintendents communicate with citizens and staff members have been studied. The three means of contact between superintendents and both citizens and staff members were personal, written, and other means. The superintendents were also asked how often the contacts occurred and the degree of importance which they attached to the means of contact.

Contacts made by telephone and by Parent Teacher Association meetings were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the personal contact category with citizens. In this category telephone use occurred most often. Newspaper releases were the most

frequently used of the written contacts. Current school news released through school newsletters, newspaper releases, and written reports on need for passing bond issues for building were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the written contact category with citizens. Open-houses for dedicatory purposes and radio news releases were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the other means contact category with citizens. Occasional use predominated in the frequency of other means contacts with citizens.

Staff meetings were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the personal contact category with staff members. In this category incidental contacts occurred most often. Current school news released through school newsletters, letters of condolence, and written curriculum study were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the written contact category with staff members. Newspaper releases occurred most often. Radio news releases and television news releases were considered to be very important by the largest number of superintendents in the

other means category with staff members. Occasional use predominated in the frequency of other means contacts with staff members.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

An effort is made here to utilize one major phase of communication processes. An attempt is made here to penetrate rather deeply into community surveys as they tend to put many of the common communication concepts into play. It is thought that community surveys can function as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes.

Through community surveys information can be gained which can either directly or indirectly affect the public education function. This information is important, since it can be used by the superintendent in making his communication program with citizens and staff employees more effective. Community surveys are designed to gather information about communities. The information may be of a factual nature, or it may be in the form of opinions of residents of the community or opinions of non-residents whose children go to school in the community.

The superintendent may use community surveys to improve his communication program by obtaining information

concerning possible social tensions, community customs, population characteristics, and traditions. The result may be a well tailored program for an individual school-community. It is possible to conduct a community survey in an informal, unstructured manner to determine general or specific and factual or unconfirmed information. A survey may also be structured formally to obtain the desired information. Constant attention should be given to the changing sociological structure of the school-community by the superintendent. Communities do not tend to remain static.

Purposes of a community survey, how it is conducted, and the roles of persons involved will be discussed in this chapter. The interviewed superintendents were asked about community surveys for educational purposes which they either had completed recently or were planning to use in the near future in their respective school-communities. Interpretation and tabulation of the results appear in this chapter.

Responsibility for the conduct of a community survey for educational purposes is usually delegated to the superintendent, although the legal authority actually rests with the board of education. The information desired, use to be

made of the survey, and the size of the community all help to vary the manner in which the survey is conducted.

The organized, formally structured community survey may begin with the selection of a committee by the school board. The membership, in this case, usually includes the superintendent, other administrators, staff members, and citizens. It is possible for students to be involved also. Experts in this field from outside the school-community may become active members of the committee or serve as consultants to the committee. It should be emphasized that there are a number of ways to select members.

It is possible that each member might be assigned specific duties to perform. Depending upon the purposes for conducting the survey, different sources of information can be used. If a complete community survey is to be conducted, information may be obtained from county and state records, local newspaper files, telephone directories, national statistical and census reports, school records, information obtained from answers to questionnaires sent to groups or individuals in the school-community, written policies of the school board, and personal interviews with citizens or school officials.

Another possibility in conducting a community survey would be to have a college or university obtain information which is desired by the superintendent. In this method there may be little or no communication by the superintendent with citizens or staff but it is quite possible that information may be received which will enable the superintendent to formulate a more effective plan for communication.

The superintendents, in this study, were asked who conducted the survey and the method used. The questions were also phrased to fit future surveys to be made. Tabulation of the results is found in Tables 22 and 23.

TABLE 22

PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AS STATED BY THE INTERVIEWED SUPERINTENDENTS

Personnel	Completed	Future	Total
Lay Citizens	2	1	3
Research Experts	2	2	4
School Staff	2	1	3
Superintendent	3	1	4
Assistants	1	1	2
Research Office	1	1	2
Board Members	1		1

TABLE 23

METHODS OF CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AS STATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENTS INTERVIEWED

Means Utilized	Completed	Future	Total
Community Interviews	3	3	6
Examination of School Records	4	3	7
Examination of Other Records	3	3	6
Incidental Method	4	3	7
Specialist-lay citizen type		1	1

Superintendents and research experts were involved more than any other groups in conducting community surveys for educational purposes. The school staff and lay citizens were the next most involved groups.

Examination of school records and the incidental method were the most frequently used techniques in conducting community surveys for educational purposes. The next most frequently used techniques were community interviews and examination of other records.

The superintendents interviewed were asked to indicate whether community surveys which they had conducted recently or expected to conduct in the near future, included any purposes presented to them in the interview. They were also asked to add any other purposes that were specific to their surveys. The results are shown in Table 24.

TABLE 24

PURPOSES OF COMMUNITY SURVEYS AS STATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENTS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

Item	Completed	Future	Totals
Assist Annexation to School District	2	1	3
Assist School District Reorganization	2	1	3
Create Interest in a Specific School Issue	4	3	7
Get Publicity for the School	3	2	5
Help Improve School Curriculum	3	3	6
Help Sell Building Program	4	2	6
Determine Communication Channels	2	1	3
Determine Community Customs	1	1	2
Determine Community Traditions	1	1	2
Determine Expected Results of a Bond Issue	2	1	3
Determine Expected Results of Vote for Additional Operating Funds	2	1	3
Determine if, and What Social Tensions Exist	3	3	6
Determine Population Char- acteristics	3	3	6
Determine School-Community Leaders	2	3	5
Determine History of Commu- nity Efforts for Education	2	2	4
Determine Nature of Organized Groups in School-Community	2	3	5
Determine Future Financial Needs		1	1
Draw Units of Government Together		1	1

The main purpose of community surveys as stated by the superintendents who were interviewed was to create interest in a specific school issue. The next most important purposes included helping to improve the school curriculum, helping to sell a building program, determining if, and what social tensions exist, and determining population characteristics. One superintendent added "Determine future financial needs" and "Draw units of government together" to the list.

Some of the items are related more directly to a program of communication than others, but all aid the superintendent in utilizing those opinions, attitudes, and facts in a school-community that, as has been previously stated in an earlier chapter, are so important to an effective communication program. One aim of a community survey for educational purposes is certainly to better equip the superintendent with factual knowledge about the community in which he is employed so that his communication program may become more effective. The point has been stressed that concerning the educational leadership of a superintendent he must:

know the community and know it intimately -

know its traditions, beliefs, resources, and limitations.¹

One of the important reasons for conducting a community survey is to determine means by which community leaders may be identified. Usually there is a small number of persons in the school-community, identified as opinion leaders, who can influence thinking of many persons in the community. Superintendents should identify these people and attempt to make them active supporters of the school system.

One group, or type of influential individuals are those who are given a position of leadership by the citizens because of their long residence in the community, along with prestige positions and family backgrounds. Leaders such as these can make valuable contributions to knowledge about established attitudes, community traditions, history of local efforts to support public education, and identification of other leaders. In a changing and growing community these leaders may be in conflict with recent residents who aspire to community leadership.

¹American Association of School Administrators, Community Leadership (Washington, D.C.: a department of the National Education Association, 1950), p. 6.

A second group involves those individuals who are concerned with state and regional affairs, and who depend upon the professional aspects of their positions for leadership traits. The contributions which they make may be in more of a general nature such as pointing out to other citizens the broad educational trends which need explanation. It is very important to properly identify these two types of leaders if one wants to establish and maintain an effective communication program. The first type or group has been identified as "locals" and the second as "cosmopolitans".¹

In this study, it appears that superintendents do not consider the community survey important enough in relation to communication to plan to use it more extensively in the future for the development of any phase of the school program.

Properly conducted, well planned community surveys reach groups of citizens who may not be contacted otherwise. They also divulge information about prevailing patterns of customs and community traditions, point out channels through which public opinion is formed, identify

¹W. W. Charters, Jr., "Person to Person Influence," Nations Schools, LXXV (November, 1955), p. 49.

friends and enemies of education in the school-community, couple educational and racial background of the population, and indicate reasons for unfriendly attitudes toward the public school.

Information concerning phases of community life such as community beliefs, community aspirations, community economy, traditions, population characteristics, decision making and leadership structure, physical setting, growth of population, relationship of groups, and formal groupings is important to the superintendent and can be determined by means of a community survey.

Many times community surveys require the participation of numbers of citizens. These citizens tend to become stronger supporters of the school because they have become more familiar with the educational problem confronted by the study. Ayars has stated:

A community survey with teachers, pupils, and community representatives making judgments concerning progress made and goals yet to be achieved is not only good evaluative procedure but gives a basis for continued group and individual evaluation.¹

¹Albert L. Ayars, Administering the Peoples Schools (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1957), p. 315.

In this particular study four of the nine superintendents interviewed indicated that no community survey for educational purposes had been conducted in the immediate past or would be conducted in the immediate future. Some responses from those superintendents were: "It is not good to arouse the citizens of the community by using such a device"; "I have seen no need for one"; "It hasn't been done because of a lack of training"; "Results would not warrant the time or expense involved".

Summary

In this chapter the study of community surveys as a phase of communication processes has been made. An attempt was made to study the function of community surveys as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes. The community survey was discussed as a communication technique.

Superintendents and research experts were involved more than any other groups in conducting community surveys for educational purposes. The school staff and lay citizens were the next most involved groups.

Examination of school records and the incidental method were the most frequently used techniques in

conducting community surveys for educational purposes. The next most frequently used techniques were community interviews and examination of other records.

The main purpose of community surveys as stated by the superintendents who were interviewed was to create interest in a specific school issue. Eighteen purposes were mentioned by one or more superintendents.

CHAPTER VI

CITIZENS COMMITTEES

Introduction

It seems reasonable to assume that citizens committees are devices that can potentially aid in the improvement of the superintendent's communication program. An attempt is made here to study and utilize citizens committees as they tend to put many of the common communication concepts into play.

Donald Myers has stated:

Citizens participation in education has become an accepted practice that is encouraged by educators and laymen. During the last decade the layman has become more active in school affairs through the formulation of citizens committees or citizens advisory committees. There presently exists a wide range of opinion regarding the role of citizens committees in American education.¹

The ultimate decisions about public education are made in the United States by the citizenry. Sometimes these decisions are made very thoughtfully with the public

¹Donald A. Myers, "Citizens Advisory Committees and Educational Policy Development" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1962), p. 1.

interest in mind; often they are made ill-advisedly and without regard to long-range plans. Many citizens, because of a lack of understanding, are apathetic about public education or seem to be apathetic because channels for their intelligent participation in educational policy decisions have not been provided. It is certainly apparent that conflicts among citizens and between lay citizens and professional educators keep the public schools from serving the public as well as they might. Education is too important to the public to risk longer the perils of inadequate or inept citizen action. Citizens committees have been in existence for many years.

Citizens committees have existed in the United States for sixty years. Many types have been tried with varying results.¹

The superintendent has an excellent means by which he can improve phases of his communication program if citizens committees are organized in a school-community in the interest of bettering public education. Face-to-face contacts, stressed earlier in this study, with citizens

¹Illinois Citizens Education Council, A Research and Development Project in Citizen Participation in Policy Making for Public Education in Illinois (Urbana, November, 1963), p. 2.

resulting when a citizens committee is formed are of particular value to the superintendent. When carefully planned and well organized, citizens committees more than justify the additional necessary effort of the superintendent to make them functional. Jones notes:

The people of the community can become aware of their responsibilities for providing better educational opportunities for the youth of the community. In cases where citizens' advisory groups have been active, the tendency has been to expand school services rather than reduce them. The school is not the only social institution concerned with children and youth; consequently, public participation in the school program provides an opportunity for several groups to plan together.¹

We must not forget that the role of the educator is the highest of all callings in a society operating on democratic principles. This is the role of leadership and the citizenry can not be excluded.

In the first place, citizen control is seldom avoided, or even made less effective, by excluding the citizenry from groups where school problems are under consideration or by withholding information about school problems. Such practices may delay effective citizen control and will certainly result in less intelligent, less sympathetic exercise of this control. A good operational rule,

¹James J. Jones, "The Superintendent Must Lead in Curriculum Development," Educational Administration and Supervision, XLV (March, 1959), p. 94.

then, is an open door policy in which school affairs are public affairs.¹

It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the organizational structure of citizens committees, but purposes of the committees are listed.

The origination of citizens committees and the methods of selecting members are described in this chapter.

The interviewed superintendents in this study were questioned about various phases of citizen committee activity in their school-community and the answers were tabulated.

Origination and Purposes

The National Citizens Commission has stated its policy as follows:

The entire success or failure of a citizens committee is decided when the members are chosen. If they really represent the whole community... it is very difficult for a citizens committee to do wrong. If they don't, it's almost impossible for the group to do right.²

The most opportune time for the establishment of a citizens committee is at a time when there is no pressing

¹Ben M. Harris, Supervisory Behavior in Education. (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 275.

²Wilmer J. Menge and Roland C. Faunce, Working Together for Better Schools (New York: American Book Company, 1953), p. 125.

problem in the school-community which may tend to split it. This should not be interpreted to mean that this is the only time that such committees should be formed, as it is often necessary to form them in times of stress. When no serious problem faces the school the superintendent can communicate to citizens the need for long range planning evolving from present practices and procedures.

There are several ways in which citizens committees for public education may be evolved. Writers in this field consider appointment by the board of education, and then responsibility to it, as desirable.

All council (citizens committees) members should recognize the limitations of their functions and authority. The council should be advisory only, and the board's responsibility for making final decisions should be clearly enunciated.¹

There is one major difference between citizens committees and faculty or other types of professional groups which deserves comment. It is a fallacy to feel that the superintendent can simply call a group of intelligent citizens together, and have them solve all educational problems. Under this assumption, some superintendents and school boards

¹Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959), p. 380.

have presented citizen groups with a problem and expected a quick solution. Because of their lack of understanding of educational problems, these groups are unable to work without much study and guidance. Superintendents who have been able to work successfully with citizens committees have provided both consultants and information so that citizens had the facts on which to work. It is a very serious error to work with citizens committees without thoroughly briefing them on the nature of the problem and the relevant research and other data that are available. Citizens committees are not miracle committees. They are simply composed of intelligent lay people, who, once they acquire an appropriate background, can make decisions that are wise.

In this study the superintendents were asked whether citizens committees had existed during their tenure of office in the school-community as superintendent, and their present and future status. The results are shown in Table 25.

TABLE 25

STATUS OF CITIZENS COMMITTEES AS REPORTED BY THE INTER-
VIEWED SUPERINTENDENTS

Item	Number	Item	Number
Have Had in the Past	8	Will Have in the Future	5
Do Have	1	Don't Plan to Have	1

The superintendents were also asked to whom the citizens committees were responsible. Eight of the nine superintendents who said they had experience with such committees stated that the committees were responsible to the board of education.

There are several different ways by which a school board may select the members of a citizens committee. One basic fundamental to always keep in mind is that a citizens committee should be representative of the whole community and should be made up of persons from all segments of the community. The members of citizens committees should be carefully selected from among those members of the community who are of high general ability and who are genuinely interested in the welfare of the community.

Sumption has stated:

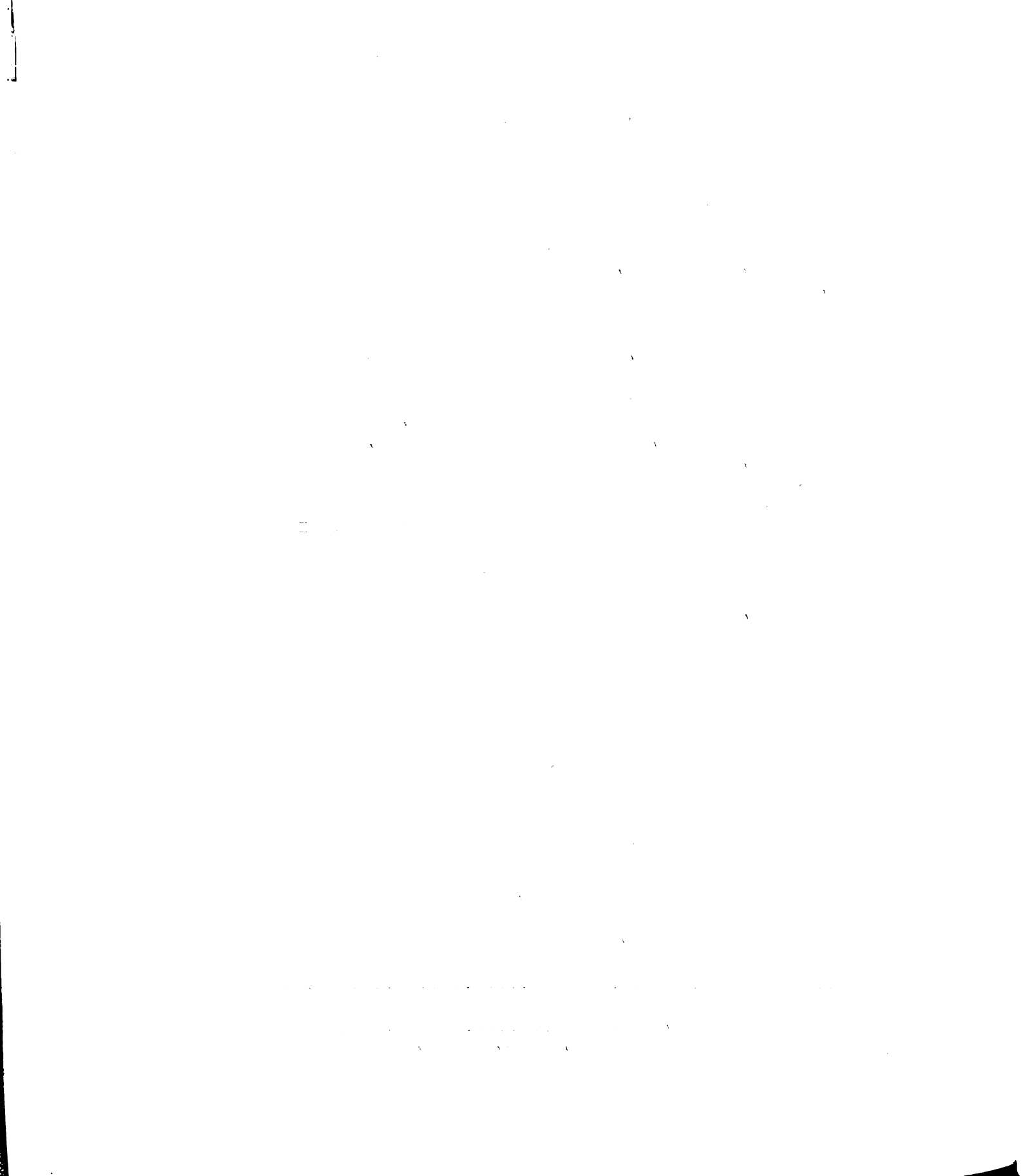
Persons selected for membership on the committee

should be intelligent, competent, and civic-minded. They should be interested in the welfare of their community to the extent that they are willing to give time and effort to the study of a vital community problem. Selections should be made in terms of what people can and will do rather than what organizations they represent. If a person is intelligent, competent, and is willing to give his time, it is immaterial whether he belongs to ten organizations or none.

The committee must always represent the total educational community, never a segment of it. The committee should be as truly representative of the community as possible. Its membership should be drawn from the different geographic areas, cultural and economic levels, religious denominations, racial backgrounds, and vocational pursuits of the community. It should be a real cross-section of the community. An equal division between men and women has been found to work out quite satisfactorily. In no case should the committee be composed either entirely of men or entirely of women. Care should be taken to see that both parents and nonparents are represented, and to include property owners as well as renters.¹

The superintendent should be an ex-officio member of all citizens committees that have been organized at the request of the board of education. It would seem to make sense for the superintendent to place himself in a position to influence citizens committees to act objectively. He should furnish pertinent information, arrange for the appearance of resource people, and guide the action of the

¹Merle R. Sumption, How to Conduct a Citizens School Survey (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 6.



committee away from known areas of danger which may lead to the discouragement or the dissolution of the committee. The democratic process, so often confused with one of laissez faire, will not operate effectively unless lines of communication between school and community are kept open so that objective interchange of ideas may result.

Kindred has described specific methods by which the membership of a citizens committee may be determined as follows:

...selection by the board of education; selection by invitation from the board of education to community interest groups; asking them to name individuals; selection by asking individuals to name others whom they believe would be qualified; and a combination of the three methods named.¹

Participation through membership on a citizens committee can aid the individual members of the committee to understand the total operation of the school system rather than the narrow viewpoint of a single department within the system. One of the tasks of the school superintendent, as he serves in an advisory capacity to a citizens committee, is the presentation of the total program

¹ Leslie W. Kindred, School Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), pp. 202-204.

as well as aiding in the compilation of information pertinent to the specific problem of the committee. There is a continued need for involving citizens in the operation of the public schools.

A school board may use sociometric means in selecting members of a citizens committee. This procedure may be incidental or highly organized. Webb has attempted to devise a method which the practicing school administrator could use to study a community and to identify community leaders as opinion leaders, as well as to suggest a program of instruction which would aid an administrator in securing such information. Some of his conclusions follow:

1. Interviews with selected informants and with the general public selected at random, revealed that people were in general, concerned about the problems of their school and community. The interviewees indicated, however, a lack of knowledge concerning the real power structure of the community and the manner in which decisions were reached.
2. If the persons designated as influential can, as they appear to do, actually influence decisions made by people of the community, it follows that members of the power group have a definite effect, either directly or indirectly, upon the policy decisions made by the board of education, the superintendent of schools, the teachers, and the pupils.

3. School administrators in the communities studied cannot be cited for their perspicuity in recognizing the power structure of the community.
4. If the superintendent of schools is to become a community leader, his effectiveness is definitely curtailed because of his lack of knowledge and skill in locating and dealing with members of the power group.
5. Because of the hierarchical nature of the power group, discovery of its membership by the superintendent may be difficult unless he is well prepared in sociology and psychology and skilled methods of discovery.¹

Incidental contacts at school, on the farm, in the business section, in the factory--anything within the sphere of influence of the school can possibly result in effective communication by means of casual conversation. Viewpoints and names of some of the community leaders can be obtained. It is quite possible that this method can serve the purpose of identifying people who will be desirable members of a citizens committee.

Difference of opinion can be desirable and healthy to a citizens committee as long as objectiveness prevails. Viewpoints of both the school board or superintendent and citizen committee members may be altered by the information

¹Harold Vernon Webb, Community Power Structure Related to School Administration (Laramie, Wyoming: Curriculum and Research Center, College of Education, University of Wyoming, 1956), pp. 58-59.

presented at meetings, whether it is opinion or fact.

Although authorities will vary slightly, the Illinois Citizens Education Council states that the number of members needed on the committee depends somewhat on the community but should not be fewer than 12 nor more than 20.¹ It is not always recommended that organizations be represented on a citizens committee. Organizations usually existing in a school-community are: chambers of commerce, church related groups, patriotic organizations, farm organizations, service clubs, and educational organizations. The potential problem with organizations is that they tend to have vested interests. There are a number of ways to select committee members. Some feel that organizations should be definitely represented and others feel that individual citizens who have a definite interest in education, regardless of their affiliations, should be the committee representatives.

Staff and student membership is considered desirable for the welfare of citizens committees. Staff members may be selected according to the purpose of the citizens

¹Illinois Citizens Education Council, Guidelines for the Organization and Operation of Local Citizen Advisory Committees as Developed in Statewide Clinics (Urbana, 1963) p. 2.

committee and students may be selected by asking the student council to choose representatives. It is important that non-teaching employees receive proper consideration. Non-resident staff members and students should be eligible to participate as resource persons or consultants, but usually would be ruled out as members since they have no legal voice in the school district.

The superintendents were asked, in this study, who was represented on the committees. Their answers were as follows: Superintendent, six; lay citizens, eight; school board members, seven; staff members, six; and students, two.

The superintendents were also asked how the membership of citizens committees was determined.

TABLE 26

METHODS OF SELECTION USED IN CHOOSING MEMBERS FOR CITIZENS COMMITTEES

Method	Number
Sociometric Techniques	4
Direct Selection by the Board of Education	4
Invitation to all Citizens to Recommend Names	3
By the Superintendent's Recommendation to the Board of Education	2
Volunteers	3
Names Suggested by Both Staff and Board to Get Cross Section	1

As indicated in Table 26, sociometric techniques and direct selection by the board of education were used more often than any other in the selection of members for citizens committees. Sociometric techniques would include criteria such as economic status, sex, age, occupation, degree of formal education, and geographic location of the residence within the school district. Seven of the eight superintendents having or planning to have citizens committees indicated that the school board approved the selection of citizen committee members. This agrees with recognized good practice in this field.

The public school superintendent, in his duties connected with community contacts, must be able to deal

effectively with members of a citizens committee in carrying out a program of public education. One of the prime purposes of a citizens committee is to allow each individual, as a member of the committee, or as one who communicates with the committee, to contribute to public education in the school-community.

It has been stated by Hamlin that the principal purpose a citizens committee can serve is to share with a board of education, a school staff, and others in the development of policies a board will enact.

If a committee functions well as a partner in policy development, it has an opportunity to serve four other purposes:

1. If it has won the confidence of the professional staff of the school system, it may be asked by the staff to share in planning school programs, which the staff properly regards as its responsibility.
2. If it is to act responsibly in making policy recommendations to the board, it must make many studies of community needs, the effects of the school on the community, and the school program.
3. It may help in providing effective communication between school and community.
4. It has the obligation to support in the district policy recommendations in which the board and the committee have concurred.

If a committee is denied a responsible share in the making of policy decisions, it cannot be expected

to function in these four other ways.¹

It is possible for a citizens committee to be organized to serve in a sounding board capacity to the school board. The school board does not relinquish its legal responsibility for decision making. A citizens committee, acting as a sounding board, may be able to determine community reaction to policies, present practices, changes, proposed actions and past performances as they are concerned with the function of community public education. For instance, a proposed change in curriculum can be communicated to a citizens committee and the reaction noted in the form of a report which might express complete rejection, acceptance, or consensus with the minority report also being heard. If the citizens committee reports a favorable reaction to the proposed change, it becomes a less complicated matter for the school board and the superintendent, with the aid of the citizens committee, to inform other citizens in the school-community of the proposed change. In this instance a great deal of prestige will have been added to the message.

¹Herbert M. Hamlin, Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making for Public Education (Urbana: College of Education, 1960), p. 9.

The framework for effective communication and resultant improvement of the educational program in the school-community would appear to be best constructed when ideas flow from the professional educator to the board of education for examination and approval, and then from the school board, through the superintendent, to the citizens committee. The citizens committee can examine ideas of the school board and through contacts with other citizens arrive at a determination of rejection, approval, or amendment of the ideas. In this way communication is two-way at different levels, and at all times the superintendent is in a position to know more of the specific design of the school-community, and what techniques are best utilized to communicate effectively other ideas. Identification and evaluation of attitudes and opinions is of importance but in certain areas of education it is difficult for school board members and superintendents to determine without assistance.

Citizens committees may also be organized as fact finding groups. The school board, in appointing such a committee, asks the group to report factual information about a specific problem. The citizens committee is dismissed after the report is made. As a result of such a

procedure the desired information is brought to the school board and the citizens involved in the collection of the data become part of the cooperative endeavor concept, which has been found to be desirable. The superintendent should be in close contact with the citizens committee to help insure objectiveness since opinions easily become mistaken for facts, and caution should be observed in the reporting of data. Naturally, face-to-face relationships with members of the school board and professional school people become more frequent.

In this study, superintendents were asked for what purpose citizens committees were organized.

TABLE 27

PURPOSES OF CITIZENS COMMITTEES

Purpose	Number
To Gather Facts	8
To Advise the Board of Education	7
To Serve as a Sounding Board for the Board of Education	4
To Study School Problems	3
To Register Complaints	1

The main purpose of citizens committees as shown in Table 27 is to gather facts. The next most mentioned purpose is to advise the board of education. Only one superintendent mentioned a registering of complaints as a purpose of citizens committees.

The superintendent is usually a member of the citizens committee so he has an excellent opportunity to communicate with many citizens of the school-community.

A list of study topics of the citizens committees, as presented by the interviewed superintendents, is shown in Table 28.

TABLE 28
STUDY TOPICS OF CITIZENS COMMITTEES

Study Topic	Number
Building Program	4
Finance	4
Population Trends	3
Curriculum Study	1
Reorganization Data	1
To Create Interest and Trust in School System	1

The main study topics of citizens committees as shown in Table 28 are building programs and finance. The next most mentioned study topic is population trends. Curriculum study, reorganization data, and creation of interest and

trust in the school system were each mentioned once.

Successes, Failures, and
Termination of Citizens
Committees

The application of effective communication techniques is important to the success of citizens committees. An effort should be made to apply effective principles involved in the communication process. Lehman has stated some principles that relate directly to the success of citizens committees:

1. The more effectively the board of education is perceived to have worked with the citizens committee, the higher the level of success for the committee.
2. The more favorable the perception of the board of education became to people of the community, the higher the level of success for the citizens committee.
3. The more positive the change in attitude toward the board of education as perceived by members of the citizens committee, the higher the level of success for the committee.¹

In his study of citizens committees Lehman has also

¹Charles Frederick Lehman, "A Study of the Interpersonal Role Perceptions of School Administrators, Boards of Education Members, and Members of Lay Citizens Committees in Michigan Public Schools" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1957), p. 81.

made some general observations:

1. When there is a greater knowledge on the part of the community about the work of the committee, the higher may be the expected level of success.
2. More than 23% of the citizens committee respondents indicated a favorable change in attitude toward the superintendent after working with him on the committee.
3. The perception of the superintendent's working effectiveness with the committee spelled out tactfulness, willingness to devote time, free contributions of suggestions, and sincere cooperation.
4. The superintendent sees the purpose of the citizens committee rather specifically as communication from the citizen - to school people. The board of education and the citizens committee place more emphasis on public relations and communication back and forth from citizens to school people.
5. The community should be brought to as full a knowledge as possible of the work of the citizens committee.
6. The superintendent and members of the board of education need to share all information at their disposal with the citizens committee so that they are not seen as dominating the process of information giving.
7. Preparation programs for school administrators should furnish information and accurate methods of estimating community opinion.
8. Preparation programs for school administrators should give emphasis to the principles of group management and should provide practice in the techniques of applied group dynamics.

9. Additional research is also indicated to determine whether or not the citizens committee is an effective communications medium.¹

In this study the interviewed superintendents were asked to mention the major accomplishments that resulted from their work with citizens committees. The general implications were that the attempts to communicate were successful. Some of the comments follow: "This was once the largest reorganized area in Michigan and the citizens committee pointed the way in the whole educational area"; "Two building programs were successful as a result"; "They helped us pass a millage issue"; "They reviewed the entire curriculum program and formulated quite a comprehensive curriculum"; "Curriculum guides, aims, objectives, and philosophy evolved in quite an inclusive way"; "They created an understanding in a larger number of lay citizens which has resulted in passage of bond and millage issues"; "It gives people confidence that you are truthful and creates interest in people"; "For the first time two of the older community members knew what the schools were doing and had a better

¹Ibid., pp. 85-99.

understanding".

The superintendent needs to realize that there are some reasons why citizens committees might fail, or at least not be considered successful. Personal animosity may exist unless precautions are taken concerning respective rights and responsibilities.

Davies and Herrold give several reasons why citizens committees may go wrong:

We cannot communicate with one another.
 We continually disagree, withdraw, or attack one another.
 We fail to analyze previous unsatisfactory experience and prevent it from recurring.
 There is lack of interest in the goal ahead.
 There are personality clashes within the committee.
 There is undue deference to status of "leading citizens," of experts, of professional people.
 There is the feeling on the part of some that they are "better" than others.¹

Davies and Herrold continue:

Until recently we usually assumed that committees, like individuals, either "had it" or they didn't, just as we used to think about leaders. We know now that the real difference is one of training and preparation. Perhaps "it" is better called skill and understanding.²

¹Daniel R. Davies and Kenneth F. Herrold, Citizens Committees (New London: Arthur C. Croft Publications, 1954), p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 26.

It is possible for citizens committees to become discouraged and consequently lose interest in the problem at hand if domination is used by professionals or members of the school board. Controversy and failure may result if unpleasant tasks are shunted to citizens committees. This is not likely to happen if the superintendent is an effective communicator and acts in good faith as a paid employee of the school board. The superintendent can inform people, as a professional representative of the school board, concerning ideas that reflect sound education, but in the final analysis, the schools belong to the people.

In this study the interviewed superintendents were asked if they had noticed anything that might be classified as a failure in citizen committee action in their school-communities. Several individual reactions from the superintendents interviewed were: "Hot issues scare them"; "The last building program was delayed a year"; "The basic idea still did not get down to the grass roots"; A certain small number lost interest".

In most cases, communication between a citizens committee and school personnel will be effective, if the citizen committee members are specifically aware of the role

expected of them before they start their study.

It seems reasonable to assume that not all citizens committees are successful in their work, so that termination may follow either success or failure. Organized citizens committees are disbanded for a number of reasons. Some of them are organized to work upon a special problem and then are dismissed after the problem has been studied. It would seem logical, after the specific task is completed, for the citizens committee to be dissolved. Ayars states:

A committee is created for a specific job and should be terminated when it is completed, though the executive committee or basic group may be a continuing organization with provision made for regular turnover in membership to avoid self-perpetuation.¹

Summary

In this chapter the study of citizens committees as a phase of communication processes has been made. An attempt was made to study the function of citizens committees as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes. The citizens committee was discussed as a

¹Albert L. Ayars, Administering the People's Schools (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1957), p. 69.

communication technique.

Seven of the eight superintendents having or planning to have citizens committees indicated that the school board approved the selection of citizen committee members. The most mentioned purpose of citizens committees was to gather facts and the next most mentioned purpose was to advise the board of education. The main study topics of citizens committees were shown to be building programs and finance.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

In a study of this type it would seem reasonable to have an evaluation of communication programs by the superintendents involved in the study. Every superintendent should evaluate his communication program in order to determine its value. Such evaluations, or appraisals, also serve to uncover some problem areas within the program. The evaluations may even suggest improvements that might be made in the program.

Evaluative processes that were applied to the individual communication programs of the superintendents in the nine Class A public school systems in Michigan Education Association Region 10 are listed in this chapter.

The interviewed superintendents were asked their opinions about the amount of citizen participation in their school systems, and what kind of citizen interest was demonstrated. Six indicated there was about the right amount of citizen participation, three not enough participation, and none indicated there was too much citizen participation.

Five indicated that the citizen interest in education in their school-community was desirable, three very desirable, one a combination of both desirable and very desirable depending on the groups, and none undesirable. Four also stated they reacted very favorably to citizen interest, five favorably, and none unfavorably. Anecdotal answers given are as follows: "The only way to get a good educational system is where citizens think about what good education is without becoming professional educators"; "It seems that the citizens are interested enough to give support in programs and financing"; "We achieved North Central Accreditation as a result of a citizens committee"; "The interest is toward a good quality education for boys and girls and there is a sincere willingness to finance such a program"; "There is a good supportive attitude to teachers and the teacher in the classroom"; "We are interested in all advice and action"; "We have good turn outs at elections"; "We only lost one election and afterwards when we looked at it we could see why"; "Let the record speak for itself"; "Nine out of eleven bond and millage issues have passed".

The superintendents were asked to rate their

communication programs as to quality, possible improvement, and what major obstacles blocked improvement. They then compared their programs with what they thought was an ideal program. Two of the nine rated their programs excellent, four good, three fair, and none poor.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the data obtained in this part of the study as listed in Table 29.

When the superintendents were asked how they would improve their communication programs if an ideal situation existed, fifteen communication improvement factors with citizens were noted, compared to fifteen improvement factors with staff members. The superintendents seemed to indicate an equally greater need for improvement in communicating with both citizens and staff.

Even though 66.7 per cent of the superintendents rated their programs of communication as good or excellent, 44.4 per cent of statements made indicated that no changes would be made in phases of the communication program and 55.6 per cent indicated improvement factors. This would seem to indicate that much improvement is still desired as a need by the superintendents.

TABLE 29

IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
IF AN IDEAL SITUATION EXISTED

Item	Personal Contacts With Citizens	Personal Contact With Staff	Written Contact With Citizens	Written Contact With Staff	Other Means of Contact With Citizens	Other Means of Contact With Staff
No Change	5	5	4	4	3	3
More of Same Type	3	4	5	4	5	6
Community School Newspaper	1					
Staff Newsletter				1		
News Conference					1	
PER CENT IMPROVEMENT	44.4	44.4	55.5	55.5	66.6	66.6

Superintendents indicated that if an ideal situation existed, they would improve their other means of contacts with citizens and staff to the greatest extent, followed by written contacts. Least improvement was indicated in personal contacts with citizens and staff.

TABLE 30

MAJOR OBSTACLES TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

Obstacles	Number
More Money is Needed	4
More Time is Needed	3
Citizens Need a Better Understanding of the Principles of Communication	2
None	2
Education of People to the Need for Paying Higher Taxes	1

The major obstacles to the improvement of communication programs as listed in Table 30 were headed by: more money is needed, more time is needed to devote to the program and citizens need a better understanding of the principles of communication.

In this study the superintendent was asked the amount of time he devoted to communication as compared to other phases of the administrative task. This was then compared to answers which determined how important the duties of the superintendent seemed to be.

As indicated in Table 31, six of the nine superintendents listed providing good teachers as the most important phase of the administrative task, followed by two

TABLE 31

COMPARISON BETWEEN THOSE PHASES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TASK
CONSIDERED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT TO BE MOST IMPORTANT, AND
MOST TIME CONSUMING

Item	Importance		Time Utilized	
	No.	%	No.	%
Providing Good Teachers	6	66.7	3	33.3
Provision of Adequate Finance	2	22.2	2	22.2
Business Management	0	0	2	22.2
Communication With Citizens	1	11.1	0	0
Constructing Buildings	0	0	1	11.1
Communication With Staff	0	0	1	11.1

who listed provision of adequate finance. One listed communication with citizens.

Three of the nine superintendents listed providing good teachers as the most time consuming phase of the administrative task, followed by two who listed provision of adequate finance, and two, business management. None listed communication with citizens but one listed communication with staff. One also listed constructing buildings.

The communication phase of the administrative task does not appear to be considered of prime importance. Also, it does not engage a high percentage of the superintendent's

time purposely devoted to the work entailed in establishing and improving the program. It also appears that, even though the superintendent is not purposely devoting much time to communication, he is spending a great deal of his time in incidental communication contacts.

In this study, the superintendents were asked if they believed that the outcome of a bond issue for building, or a request for additional operating millage was aided to any extent by the conduct of a community survey and the functioning of a citizens committee.

Table 32 shows their answers, and also the answers of those who used neither a community survey nor a citizens committee in requests for additional operating millage or building millage.

The following information can be drawn from the data in Table 32, namely: successes in requests for additional operating millage occurred in 11 out of 11 cases or 100 per cent; successes in requests for building millage occurred in 12 out of 13 cases or 92.3 per cent. Since only one instance occurred in which neither a community survey nor citizens committee was used in conjunction with operation and building millage requests, a valid comparison

of the effectiveness of these devices could not be made.

TABLE 32

SUCCESS AND NON-SUCCESS IN REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL MILLAGE FOR OPERATION OR BUILDING BY THE SUPERINTENDENTS WHO USED CITIZENS COMMITTEES, COMMUNITY SURVEYS, OR NEITHER DEVICE

Device Used	Success	Non-Success	Total
Operation			
Community Survey	3	0	3
Citizens Committees	7	0	7
Neither Device	1	0	1
Total	11	0	11
Building			
Community Survey	6	1	7
Citizens Committees	5	0	5
Neither Device	1	0	1
Total	12	1	13

Table 33 lists the reactions of the interviewed superintendents when asked what their opinions were as to the amount of assistance given in requests for operating or building millage.

TABLE 33

THE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY COMMUNITY SURVEYS OR CITIZENS COMMITTEES FOR OPERATING OR BUILDING MILLAGE AS STATED BY THE INTERVIEWED SUPERINTENDENTS

Device Used	Extent of Aid			
	Much	Some	Very Little	No. Total
Operation				
Community Survey	3			3
Citizens Committees	6	1		7
Total	9	1		10
Building				
Community Survey	7			7
Citizens Committees	5			5
Total	12			12

Superintendents seem to feel that much help was given when a community survey (10 of 10 instances) or a citizens committee (11 of 12 instances) was used in conjunction with

requests for additional operation or building millage.

Miscellaneous comments given for successes were: "We presented the need honestly without threat"; "People were satisfied with the educational progress"; "We had the ability to communicate and convince people that there was a need and that the money would be properly supervised".

In this study, the interviewed superintendents who had experienced a considerable drop in the number of tuition students during their tenure as superintendents were asked why this reduction occurred. Six of the nine had experienced this. Two stated that the reason was annexation of primary districts; one, districts built their own high schools; one, reorganization with other districts; and one, refusal to accept tuition students. One superintendent gave several reasons including annexations of primary districts, consolidation with another district, property transfers, refusal to accept tuition students, and reorganization with other districts.

The most effective communication techniques seemed to be persistently and consistently meeting with the people and working through the board on the basis of not having enough facilities.

Summary

In this chapter evaluative processes have been applied to the communication programs of the superintendents involved in this study. The interviewed superintendents were asked their opinions about the amount of citizen participation in their school systems, and what kind of citizen interest was demonstrated. The superintendents were asked to rate their communication programs as to quality, possible improvement, and what major obstacles blocked improvement. They then compared their programs with what they thought was an ideal program. The major obstacles to the improvement of communication programs were lack of time needed to devote to the program and lack of money. The superintendents compared those phases of the administrative task considered by them to be most important, and most time consuming. The interviewed superintendents felt that the amount of assistance given by community surveys or citizens committees for operating or building millage was great.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was directed toward an exploration of the communication processes of superintendents with citizens and staff members in their particular school-community. A structured interview schedule was used in personal contacts with a sample composed of the nine Class A public school superintendents in Michigan Education Association Region 10.

Communication in an education setting

The present day public school superintendent needs to recognize and understand the role that the various elements of communication play in effecting success in the total process. The elements include: the communicator or sender, communicatee or receiver, the vehicle or medium of message transmission, and the effect or reception of the message. An important function of the superintendent is to establish

effective communication with citizens and school staff members.

The interviewed superintendents usually agreed that citizen and staff participation in selected phases of recommendation making was desirable.

Superintendents' contacts with citizens and staff members

In this section an investigation of three types of contacts utilized by superintendents with citizens and staff members was made. The three types of contacts include personal, written, and other means.

An examination of specific contacts that appeared under each general contact heading showed that personal contacts were considered the most important, and other means of contact the least important. Some of the specific means of contacts that were agreed upon by the superintendents as being very important were: use of the telephone with citizens, staff meetings with staff members, current school news released through school newsletter to both citizens and staff, newspaper releases to citizens, written reports to citizens on need for passing bond issues for building, and radio releases to both citizens and staff members.

Community surveys

The community survey is discussed as a communication technique. It is thought that community surveys can function as devices to aid in the improvement of communication processes.

Community surveys are designed to gather information about communities. The conduct of surveys, in this study, most often involved superintendents, research experts, lay citizens, and school staff. Information was usually obtained from community interviews, examination of school and other records, and incidental methods. Superintendents listed eighteen purposes from survey data recently completed or planned for completion in the near future. Some of the purposes are related more directly to a program of communication than others, but all aid the superintendent in utilizing those opinions, attitudes, and facts in a school-community that are so important to an effective communication program.

Five of the nine superintendents interviewed stated that a community survey had been completed recently or one would be completed in the near future.

Community surveys have come to be considered important techniques to be included in an effective communication

program for the public school superintendent.

Citizens committees

Citizens participation in education has become an accepted practice that is encouraged by educators and laymen. Through citizens committees many personal contacts are possible that would otherwise not exist in situations devoted to the solution of educational problems. Citizens committees may result in the creation of excellent opportunities for superintendents to increase the quality and scope of their program of communication with citizens and staff members.

Eight of the nine superintendents interviewed in this study had, were having, or planned to have in the near future, a citizens committee organized and functioning in their school-community. The superintendents stated that they had much more success than failure with citizens committees.

Seven of the eight superintendents having or planning to have citizens committees indicated that the school board approved the selection of citizen committee members. This agrees with recognized good practice in this field. Sociometric means were quite often used in selecting members of

citizens committees.

Membership usually included the superintendent, lay **c**itizens, school board members, and staff members. The **m**ost frequently mentioned purposes included: to gather **f**acts, to advise the board of education, and to a lesser **d**egree to serve as a sounding board for the board of education. Another purpose mentioned several times was the **s**tudying of school problems. Building and finance headed the specific study topics.

Communication program evaluation

In this study all of the interviewed superintendents **f**elt that citizen interest in education in their school-**c**ommunity was desirable or very desirable. Six of the **n**ine superintendents thought that there was about the **r**ight amount of citizen participation.

Two of the superintendents rated their communication **p**rograms as excellent, four good, and three fair. Super-**i**ntendents indicated that if an ideal situation existed, **t**hey would improve their other means of contacts with citi-**z**ens and staff to the greatest extent. They indicated that **l**east improvement would be in personal contacts with citi-**z**ens and staff. The same number of improvement contacts

were noted with citizens and staff members.

The major obstacles that kept the ideal from being attained seemed to be: lack of money, lack of time, and a need for better understanding of communication principles.

Even though 66.7 per cent of the superintendents rated their programs of communication as good or excellent, 44.4 per cent of statements made indicated that no changes would be made in phases of the communication program and 55.6 per cent indicated improvement factors. This would seem to indicate that much improvement is still desired as a need by the superintendents.

In this study the superintendents were asked to select those phases of the administrative task that seemed most important to their position. They were then asked to compare these phases with parts of the administrative task that seemed most time consuming. Most of the superintendents considered communication with citizens and staff members neither very important nor time consuming on a comparative basis.

The interviewed superintendents believed that the conducting of community surveys and the functioning of citizens committees provided assistance in the passage of financial issues for building and operation.

They also felt that personal contacts, particularly, were of much assistance in reducing the number of tuition students enrolled in their schools.

Conclusions

The interviewed superintendents in this study indicated that community surveys and citizens committees were helpful in causing better financial support of schools by citizens of the school-community. Since only one instance occurred in which neither a community survey nor a citizens committee was used in conjunction with operation and building millage requests, a valid comparison of the effectiveness of these devices could not be made. However, successes in requests for additional operating millage occurred in 100% of the cases and successes in requests for building millage occurred in 92.3% of the cases.

The superintendents' communication techniques with citizens and staff members are in partial agreement with advocated principles. Citizens and staff members, to some degree, participate in the formulation of educational policy. Superintendents indicated, in most cases, that citizen and staff participation in certain phases of the

administrative task was desirable. However, to be in complete harmony with advocated principles by recognized writers in this area, participation by citizens and staff members should be even more completely received.

Personal contacts were considered the most important type of communication contacts with citizens and staff members. This is confirmed by recognized writers in the field. Most of the interviewed superintendents stated that carrying out a program of communication with citizens and staff members was not as important as some other phases of educational administration. The use of citizens committees and community surveys were in general agreement with recognized writers.

The interviewed superintendents stated, if an ideal situation existed, that they would use more of the same type of communication techniques. Major emphasis would be given to an enlargement of other means of contacts as contrasted to personal and written contacts. Other means would include such items as radio and television appearances and releases, open-houses for dedicatory purposes and parades to sell bond issues. Lack of money, lack of time, and a need for better understanding of communication

Principles were the major obstacles that kept the ideal from being attained.

The communicator, to be effective, needs to understand the principles that make this process effective.

Face-to-face relationships are effective means of Communications.

Written communication techniques are often "one-way" means of communication.

Educators need to develop skills and techniques which will assist in building favorable community attitudes toward public education.

Educators should encourage public and staff member Participation in the formulation of educational policy.

The communication phase of the administrative task does not appear to be considered of prime importance. It does not engage a high percentage of the superintendent's time purposely devoted to the work entailed in establishing and improving the program. It appears that, even though the superintendent is not purposely devoting much time to communication, he is spending a great deal of his time in incidental communication contacts.

Recommendations

Communication problems constantly confront the public school superintendent. The problems of effective communication have become more acute and complex with the move of our country toward a mass society setting.

More citizen participation in school activities should be encouraged by the superintendent. If this takes place the superintendent will become better informed about community attitudes and thoughts concerning existing educational problems and programs as a result of the two-way communication process. Also, as the citizens discuss educational problems in a logical manner they will become teachers of other citizens. Some categories with specific recommendations follow:

General Communication as a Process

1. The amount of time given to communication processes should be increased.
2. Face-to-face communications are so common and universal that their primary and massive importance is too frequently overlooked, especially by teachers and administrators who feel urgent needs for more communication with people they seldom or never meet. This tendency is particularly common among those who feel a need for making better use of the mass media such as press, radio, and television. However, thorough understanding of the tremendous role played by person-to-person messages in our communications structure is especially useful to superintendents.

3. Communication between the superintendent and both citizens and staff members should be a continuous process. Attitudes toward schools evolve slowly from response to many experiences and no short time span is sufficient for any person or group to assimilate all of the experiences and facts requisite to a constructive attitude toward a matter so complicated as education.

Communication With Staff And Citizens

1. Written communication and other mass media techniques should be utilized in an effective program of communication.
2. Educators should encourage public and staff member participation in the formulation of educational policy.
3. Organized citizens committees can often be effective means of developing community understanding and support for public education through the communication which takes place between citizens and the professional staff.
4. Important messages need to be repeated. Usually only a small percentage of adults receive any one message and few give any one message much attention. Few people give any one message sufficient attention to grasp all of its intended meaning, and even those who do are likely to forget it if it is not repeated.

The Superintendent as a Communicator

1. Superintendents should communicate with citizens with a well defined long range purpose in mind.

2. Superintendents should encourage citizen participation in school activities.
3. One of the most important functions which a public school superintendent can perform is to establish an effective communication program with citizens and staff members in a school-community.
4. It is the responsibility of the superintendent to provide participative experiences so that citizens will become factually equipped to be teaching partners with the professional staff.
5. The superintendent, in order to be an effective communicator, needs to understand the principles that make the communication process effective.
6. One of the duties of a superintendent should be to strive for development of high morale in the area of personnel relationships.
7. Superintendents should consider increasing their personal contacts with the public through more extensive use of school visits, demonstrations, etc.
8. Preparation programs for school administrators should provide potential school administrators with the necessary knowledge with which they can develop skills of community study.

Much research remains to be done in the field of communication, particularly in the area of effect where the knowledge of the principles of perception is important.

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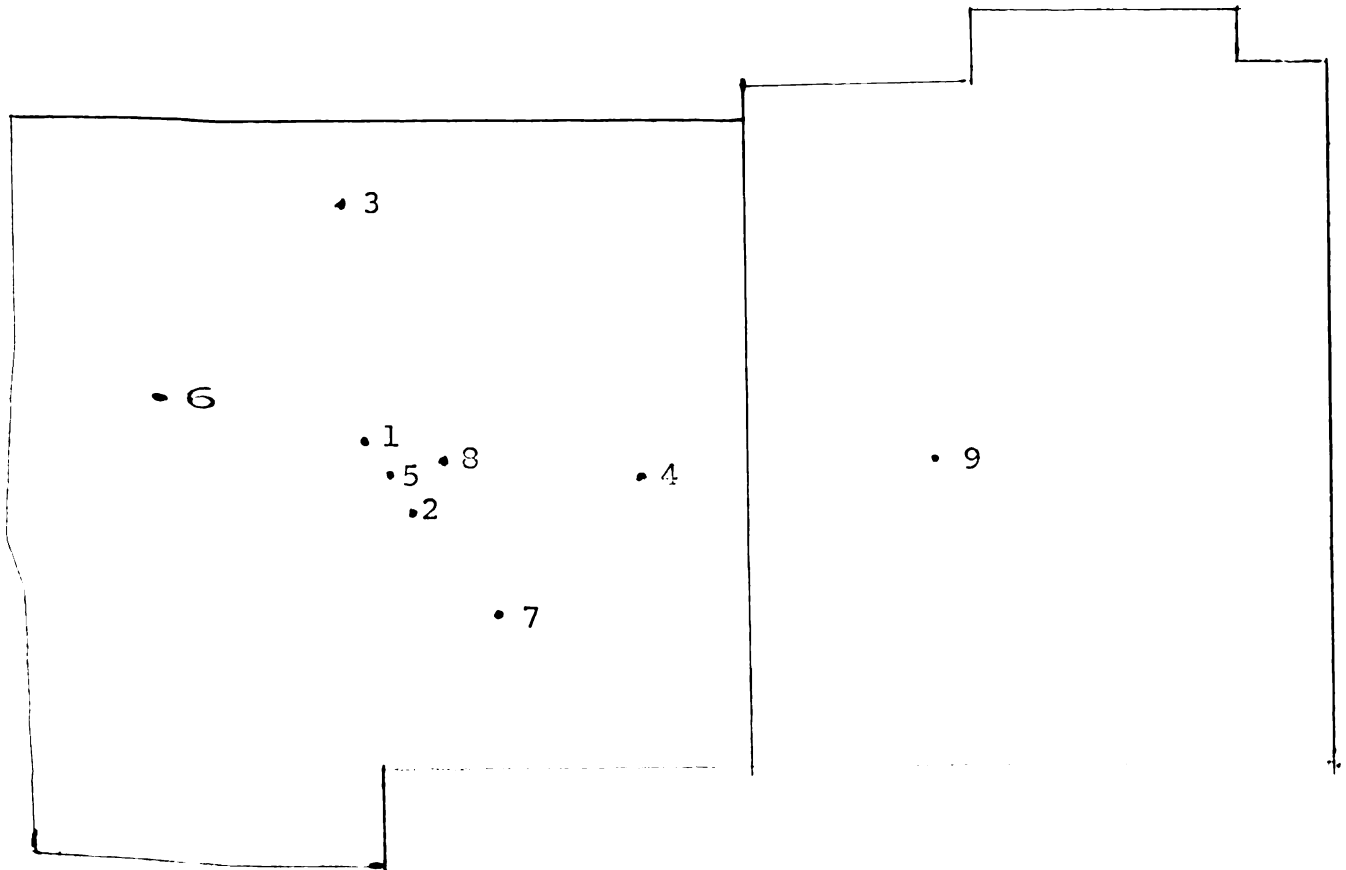
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Beecher | 6. Flushing |
| 2. Carman | 7. Grand Blanc |
| 3. Clio | 8. Kearsley |
| 4. Davison | 9. Lapeer |
| 5. Flint City | |

FIGURE I. Location of Class A public school districts in Michigan Education Association Region 10 in which the superintendent was interviewed.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Structured Interview Schedule

Introduction

Since this is a study of certain communication processes of superintendents in your type of public school track answers can help arrive at some answers to problems concerning communication and public relations. The greatest help you can give is to answer the questions very candidly. All information gained in this interview will be treated confidentially.

Date of interview _____

1. Informational data.

- 1.1 Name of the school _____
- 1.2 Person being interviewed _____
- 1.3 Total enrollment _____
 - 1.31 Grades K-6 _____
 - 1.32 Grades 7-12 _____
- 1.4 Total number of tuition students _____
 - 1.41 Grades K-6 _____
 - 1.42 Grades 7-12 _____
- 1.5 Years Superintendent in this school _____
- 1.6 Total years superintendent _____
- 1.7 Type of school-community _____
- 1.8 Geographic location in the state _____

2. Communication Media and Techniques.

Superintendents in public schools communicate in one way or another with various people in their school-community. Some techniques are used more often than others, and are considered to be more important than others. The following questions concern a phase of school administration.

- 2.1 There are three parts to this question, which can be answered in sequence. It concerns the communication you have with lay citizens in your school-community.
 - 2.11 (Part I) Do you use any of the communication techniques which I will list? See pages 2 & 3
 - 2.12 (Part II) How often do you use them? Is it daily (d), weekly (w), monthly (m), annually (a), quarterly (q), occasionally (o)?
 - 2.13 (Part III) How important do you consider them? very important (v), important (i), unimportant (u), very unimportant (x)?
- 2.2 There are three parts to this question which can be answered in sequence. It concerns the communication you have with staff members in this school-community.
 - 2.21 (Part I) Do you use any of the communication techniques which I will list?
 - 2.22 (Part II) How often do you use them? Is it daily (d), weekly (w), monthly (m), annually (a), quarterly (q), occasionally (o)?
 - 2.23 (Part III) How important do you consider them? Very important (v), important (i), unimportant (u), very unimportant (x)?

Personal Contacts.

[illegible]

1. Athletic booster meetings.
2. Fan booster meetings.
3. Child-study club meetings.
4. Incidental contacts at meetings at school.
5. Incidental contacts at non-school type meetings.
6. Incidental contacts at school.
7. Incidental contacts down-town.
8. Make home visits.
9. Make telephone calls.
10. P.T.A. meetings.
11. Staff meetings.
12. Vocational group meetings.
13. Other
- 14.
- 15.

[illegible]

1. Annual reports.
2. Current school news released through the school newsletter.
3. Letters describing "trouble" educational situations.
4. Letters "directing" the receiver to take some specific "action".
5. Letters of condolence.
6. Letters of congratulation concerning educational achievement.
7. Letters of inquiry.
8. Newspaper releases.
9. Written adult education announcements.
10. Written curriculum study reports.
11. Written reports on need for additional funds for operation.
12. Written reports on need for passing bond issues for building.
13. Written school transportation information.
14. Written testing results information
15. Other
- 16.
- 17.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

[illegible]

1. Open-houses for dedicatory purposes.
2. Parades to sell a bond issue.
3. Radio appearances by citizens.
4. Radio appearances by school personnel.
5. Radio news releases.
6. Television appearances by citizens.
7. Television appearances by school personnel.
8. Television news releases.
9. Other
- 10.
- 11.

- [] No effort made to communicate.
- [] Do not know.
- [] No comment.

A matter of some concern to school superintendents is whether or not a community survey serves as a logical starting point for planning a successful communication or a public relations program. Such a survey can be quite inclusive. For example, certain factual information about the school can be determined, or opinions of citizens can be obtained. In method, it can be highly organized, or it can be incidental in approach. May I have your frank opinion about this matter as it concerns you in this school-community?

3.1 Has any kind of a community survey been made here recently?

 a. Yes.
 b. No.

INTERVIEWER - ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS 3.21, 3.22, 3.23 SHOULD ALSO BE RECORDED HERE.

3.11 If answer to 3.1 is yes, what information were you looking for?

See page 4 also

3.21 3.11

- a. To assist in bringing about annexations to the school district.
- b. To assist in bringing about school district reorganization.
- c. To create interest in some specific school issue.
- d. To get publicity for the school.
- e. To help improve the school curriculum.
- f. To help to sell a building program in the school district.
- g. To determine communication channels.
- h. To determine community customs.
- i. To determine community traditions.
- j. To determine expected results of a bond issue.
- k. To determine expected results of a vote for additional operating funds.
- l. To determine if, and what social tensions exist.

3.21 3.11

- ___ m. To determine population characteristics.
- ___ n. To determine the leaders in the school-community.
- ___ o. To determine the history of community efforts for education.
- ___ p. To determine the nature of organized groups in school-community.
- ___ q. Other

3.22 3.12 Who conducted the survey?

- ___ a. Lay citizens
- ___ b. Research experts from outside the school-community.
- ___ c. The school staff.
- ___ d. The superintendent
- ___ e. Others.

3.23 3.13 How was the survey conducted? What was length of survey period?

- ___ a. Community interviews.
- ___ b. Examination of other records.
- ___ c. Examination of school records.
- ___ d. Incidental method.
- ___ e. Other

3.2 Do you plan a survey in the immediate future?

- ___ a. Yes.
- ___ b. No.

3.21 What will you be looking for in this survey?

3.22 Who will conduct the survey?

3.23 How will the survey be conducted?

3.3 If you do not believe that community survey is a desirable practice, what reasons do you offer?

- ___ a. Community doesn't believe in it.
- ___ b. Don't know anything about such a device.
- ___ c. Have seen no need for one.
- ___ d. It hasn't been done because of a lack of training.
- ___ e. Personal disbelief in its value.
- ___ f. Results would not warrant the expense involved.
- ___ g. Results would not warrant the time involved.
- ___ h. Not good to arouse the citizens of the community by using such a device.
- ___ i. Other

3.4 How do you try to sense the feeling of citizens in the school-community?

- ☐ a. By the use of citizens' committees.
- ☐ b. By the use of the local newspaper.
- ☐ c. From the data obtained in a community survey.
- ☐ d. Knowledge that any individual has of the school-community.
- ☐ e. Knowledge that certain key individuals have of the school-community.
- ☐ f. Knowledge that school-board members have of the school-community.
- ☐ g. Knowledge that students have of the school-community.
- ☐ h. Personal knowledge of the school-community.
- ☐ i. Other

4. Citizens' Committees.

There is still much to be learned about the role of citizens' committees as they are concerned with a public school. They may be composed of many different categories of citizens. Lay citizens, school board members, school staff members, and superintendents may all be found on certain citizens' committees. Some people think citizens' committees are advisable, and others feel that they are not.

4.1 Do you have, or do you plan to have in the near future, or did you have in the past, citizens' committees in the school-community?

- ☐ a. Do have now.
- ☐ b. Will have in the immediate future.
- ☐ c. Have had in the past.
- ☐ d. Do not plan to have.

INTERVIEWER - IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS USE EXTRA SHEETS, IF NECESSARY. IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 4.1 IS NO GO ON TO QUESTION 5.

4.2 Name of the citizens' committee? _____

4.3 Degree of activity?

- ☐ a. Have one now, which meets _____
- ☐ b. Will have one in the future, which will meet _____
- ☐ c. Did have one in the past, which met _____

4.4 Who is represented on this citizens' committee?

- ☐ a. Superintendent
- ☐ b. Lay citizens, occupations _____, _____, _____
- ☐ c. School board members, number _____.
- ☐ d. Staff members, number _____.
- ☐ e. Students.
- ☐ f. Others

4.5 How were (or will) the members of this citizens' committee be selected?

☐ A. By the board of education.

4.51 ☐ a. Authorized community vote.

☐ b. By another committee authorized by the board of education.

☐ c. Sociometric techniques.

☐ d. By the superintendent's recommendation to the board of education.

☐ e. Direct selection.

☐ f. Invitation to all citizens to recommend names.

☐ g. Other

☐ B. By the superintendent.

☐ C. Self appointed

☐ D. Volunteer

☐ E. Other

4.6 What (is, was, or will be) the purpose of this citizens' committee?

☐ A. To gather facts.

4.61 What facts?

☐ a.

☐ b.

☐ c.

☐ B. To advise the board of education.

4.62 What (advice?)

☐ a.

☐ b.

☐ c.

☐ C. To serve as a sounding board for the board of education.

4.63 On what topics?

☐ a.

☐ b.

☐ c.

☐ D. To study school problems with school personnel.

4.64 What problems?

☐ a.☐ b.☐ c.☐ E. To register complaints about the school system.☐ F. Other

4.7 To whom is (was) this citizens' committee responsible?

☐ a. The board of education.☐ b. The superintendent.☐ c. Staff members.☐ d. Lay citizens.☐ e. Others

INTERVIEWER - QUESTIONS 4.8 and 4.9 DO NOT APPLY TO FUTURE STATUS.

4.8 What would you say were (are) the major accomplishments of this citizens' committee?

☐ a.☐ b.☐ c.☐ d.

4.9 Have you noticed anything that could be classified as a failure of this citizens' committee?

☐ a.☐ b.☐ c.☐ d.

INTERVIEWER - THIS QUESTION IS TO BE ASKED OF THOSE WHO DID HAVE CITIZENS' COMMITTEES IN THE IMMEDIATE PAST, BUT WHO DO NOT NOW HAVE NOR CONTEMPLATE HAVING SUCH COMMITTEES.

5. You have indicated that at one time there were citizens' committees in this school-community, but at present there are none.

5.1 Why are there no citizens' committees in this school-community at this time?

☐ a. Another public school had unhappy experiences.

- ☐ b. Citizens became disinterested.
- ☐ c. Disbanded after serving its purpose.
- ☐ d. Failed to accomplish its purpose.
- ☐ e. Met with failure because it infringed on the rights of the board of education.
- ☐ f. Met with failure because it infringed on the rights of the school-community.
- ☐ g. Met with failure because it infringed on the rights of the staff.
- ☐ h. Met with failure because it infringed on the rights of the superintendent.
- ☐ i. Other reasons

INTERVIEWER - THIS QUESTION IS TO BE ASKED OF THOSE WHO NEVER HAVE HAD A CITIZENS' COMMITTEE IN THEIR SCHOOL.

5.2 Why have you never had a citizens' committee in this school?

- ☐ a. Infringes on the rights of the board of education.
- ☐ b. Infringes on the rights of the school-community.
- ☐ c. Infringes on the rights of the superintendent.
- ☐ d. Infringes on the rights of the staff.
- ☐ e. Personal experiences in another school were undesirable.
- ☐ f. Too much unnecessary effort involved.
- ☐ g. Too much unnecessary time involved.
- ☐ h. Other reasons.

6. Importance of Communication Programs.

Of all the various duties and responsibilities that a superintendent has, some are listed below.

6.1 Which three of these do you consider to be the most important? In what order?

6.2 Which three of these do you feel take the most of your time? In what order?

6.1 6.2

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. Constructing buildings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. Business management. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. Classroom teaching. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Communication with lay citizens in the school-community. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Communication with school staff. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. Curriculum study and improvement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. Provision of adequate finance. |

- ___ h. Providing good teachers.
- ___ i. Supervision of building maintenance.
- ___ j. Supervision of instruction.
- ___ k. Supervision of transportation.
- ___ l. Talking with salesmen in the role of a purchasing agent.
- ___ m. Other.

7. Some people think staff and lay citizens should take an active part in the following areas of public school operation. Other people think that staff and lay citizens should not take an active part in these areas of school operation. Will you give your honest opinion in answering the following questions.

Please tell me which category fits each of these questions.

- 7.1 Curriculum study by lay citizens.
- 7.2 Curriculum study by the staff.
- 7.3 Participation in bond drives by lay citizens.
- 7.4 Participation in bond drives by the staff.
- 7.5 Recommendations by lay citizens on school board policy.
- 7.6 Recommendations by the staff on school board policy.

	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6
Very desirable	___	___	___	___	___	___
Desirable	___	___	___	___	___	___
Undesirable	___	___	___	___	___	___
Very undesirable	___	___	___	___	___	___
Do not know.	___	___	___	___	___	___
No opinion	___	___	___	___	___	___
Other	___	___	___	___	___	___

8. Citizens do participate in public education activities in a school-community in varying amounts and in different ways.

- 8.1 What do you think of the amount of citizen participation in public education in this school-community?

- ___ a. Not enough participation.
- ___ b. About the right amount.
- ___ c. Too much participation.
- ___ d. No opinion.
- ___ e. Do not know.
- ___ f.

- 8.2 What do you think of the kind of citizen interest in public education in this school-community?

- ___ a. Very desirable.
- ___ b. Desirable.
- ___ c. Undesirable.
- ___ d. Very undesirable.
- ___ e. No opinion.
- ___ f. Do not know.
- ___ g.

8.3 How do you react to the citizen interest in public education in this school-community?

- ☐ a. Very favorably.
- ☐ b. Favorably.
- ☐ c. Unfavorably.
- ☐ d. Very unfavorably.

8.4 Why?

- ☐ a.
- ☐ b.
- ☐ c.
- ☐ d.

9. Usually in a school-community an ideal situation for the operation of a public school by the superintendent does not exist. If an ideal situation did exist, how would you answer the following questions?

INTERVIEWER - PLACE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS 9.11, 9.12, 9.13 AND 9.21, 9.22, 9.23 IN CORRECT COLUMN ON PAGES 2 and 3.

- 9.1 There are three parts to this question which can be answered in sequence. It concerns the communication you would have with lay citizens of your school-community if an ideal situation existed.

9.11 REPEAT QUESTION 2.11.

9.12 REPEAT QUESTION 2.12.

9.13 REPEAT QUESTION 2.13.

- 9.2 There are three parts to this question which can be answered in sequence. It concerns the communication you would have with staff members of your school-community if an ideal situation existed.

9.21 REPEAT QUESTION 2.21.

9.22 REPEAT QUESTION 2.22.

9.23 REPEAT QUESTION 2.23.

9.3 If the ideal situation for a superintendent to operate a school does not exist in this school, what are the major obstacles to the improvement of the communication program in your opinion?

- ☐ a. None.
- ☐ b. A better understanding of the principles of communication is needed by _____.
- ☐ c. More money to operate the program is needed.
- ☐ d. More time to devote to the program is needed.
- ☐ e. There is no need for a communication program.
- ☐ f. The school-board does not cooperate.
- ☐ g. The staff does not do its part.
- ☐ h. Other.

9.4 How do you rate your communication program, excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- ☐ a. Excellent.
- ☐ b. Good.
- ☐ c. Fair.
- ☐ d. Poor.

10. Evaluation

INTERVIEWER - THESE QUESTIONS ARE TO BE ASKED OF THOSE WHO HAVE INDICATED THE COMPLETION OF A COMMUNITY SURVEY AND/OR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CITIZENS' COMMITTEE. RECORD ANSWERS IN THE TABLE ON PAGE 12. INFORMATION GAINED EARLIER IN THE INTERVIEW WILL DETERMINE IF ALL PARTS OF THE QUESTION SHOULD BE ASKED.

10.1 You indicated earlier this school had completed a community survey. Since the completion of the community survey, have you requested additional financial support for the school from the citizens of the school-community?

10.11 For operation?

10.12 Was the request granted?

10.13 Was the community survey of any help in this request?

See P. 12

10.2

10.21 For building purposes?

10.22 Was the request granted?

10.23 Was the community survey of any help in this request?

10.3 Since the establishment of citizens' committees have you requested additional financial support for the school from the citizens of the school-community?

10.31 For operation?

10.32 Was the request granted?

10.33 Was the work of citizens' committee of any help in this request?

12. Communication with Non-Residents.

Some public schools in Michigan serve not only the students in their own districts but non-residents from other districts also. I am wondering if you feel the communication program from the viewpoint of the superintendent differs where these people are concerned.

INTERVIEWER - THIS QUESTION IS TO BE ASKED OF THOSE SCHOOLS WHICH ARE CLASSIFIED IN THIS SCHEDULE AS "TUITION" SCHOOLS.

12.1 Do you communicate differently with non-resident citizens than with resident citizens?

- ☐ a. Yes.
- ☐ b. No.

12.11 In what ways?

- ☐ a.
- ☐ b.
- ☐ c.
- ☐ d.

12.2 Are non-resident citizens eligible to be members of citizens' committees in this school?

- ☐ a. Yes.
- ☐ b. No.

12.21 If not, why?

- ☐ a.
- ☐ b.

12.3 Are non-resident citizens eligible for leadership positions in the community survey?

- ☐ a. Yes.
- ☐ b. No

12.31 If not, why?

- ☐ a.
- ☐ b.
- ☐ c.

INTERVIEWER - THIS QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THOSE SCHOOLS WHICH ARE CLASSIFIED IN THIS STUDY AS "NON-TUITION" SCHOOLS.

13. Have you, within your tenure here, had a considerable drop in enrollment of tuition students, percentage wise?

- ☐ a. Yes.
- ☐ b. No.

13.1 If yes, what were the reasons for this drop?

- ☐ a. Annexations of primary districts.
- ☐ b. Consolidation with another district.
- ☐ c. Property transfers.
- ☐ d. Refusal to accept tuition students.
- ☐ e. Reorganization with other districts.
- ☐ f. Other

13.2 If answer to 13 is yes, how much did the school communication program help this?

- ☐ a. A great deal of help.
- ☐ b. Some help.
- ☐ c. Little help.
- ☐ d. No help.
- ☐ e.

INTERVIEWER - ASK THIS QUESTION IF IT IS APPROPRIATE. PLACE ANSWERS IN CORRECT COLUMN ON PAGES 2 and 3.

13.3 What communication techniques were most effective?

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