DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF A CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA FOR ANALYZING THE SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS

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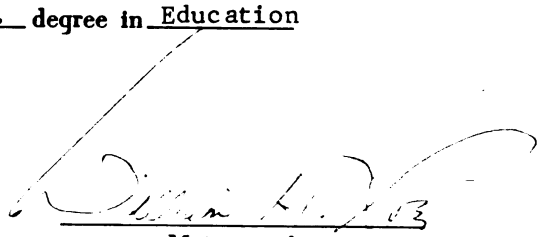

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF A CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA FOR ANALYZING THE SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS

by Sylvia Ciernick

This study has two parallel purposes: (1) to develop a conceptual schema for analyzing the school public relations process within a framework of communication theory and concepts; and (2) to determine the Schema's usefulness by using it to analyze the critical public relations functions of the school superintendent.

The study was carried out because of the increasing need for improved school public relations programs and the need for better research instruments in this field.

Methodology. The Conceptual Schema of the public relations process was conceived first through establishing a rationale for using the area of communication as the theoretical focus to be followed. An elemental model of the communication process then was constructed through a synthesis of existing models reported in the literature. Next, a model of the public relations process was constructed with its major elements comparable in most respects to the equivalent

communication model. The elements of the Public Relations Model are: Source, Content, Technique, Communication Concept, Public, and Effect.

The second phase in the development of the Schema was to expand the usefulness of the Model for analytical and classification purposes. It was conceived that the elements of the Model would form the major headings for various classification systems to be developed in the form of grids. Each grid would be tailored, in its content and form, to meet the needs of the specific phase of public relations being researched.

To test the usefulness of the Conceptual Schema in one area, the public relations functions of the superintendent were analyzed through construction of a specific grid. The critical incident technique was used to collect 364 public relations acts through personal interview of forty-eight superintendents in Michigan who were selected by random sample. It was possible to classify all of the acts under the major headings of the Model to form a Grid useful for analyzing the public relations functions of the superintendent.

Major Findings. The following are findings regarding the public relations process: (1) The theories and research in the area of communication can provide an appropriate conceptual background for an orderly and systematic study of

school public relations. (2) The Conceptual Schema conceived in this study is a useful structure for studying the public relations process. (3) The Conceptual Schema is a flexible framework adaptable to many uses, including research, evaluation, and instruction in the area of public relations.

The following are findings regarding the public relations functions of the superintendent: (1) Though no direct quantitative measurements of the awareness level of the superintendents of the communication process could be derived from the analysis, eight inferential conclusions could be and were made. (2) The analysis did provide detailed information on the effective and ineffective behavior of the superintendents in carrying out their public relations function. (3) The small size of the superintendent sample and the limited number of acts collected handicapped an analysis of relationships between the specific elements of the public relations process and the professional characteristics of superintendents.

The following are findings regarding the in-service and pre-service preparation programs in public relations for superintendents: (1) A communication focus should be considered in the teaching of public relations. (2) The flexibility and numerous uses of the Conceptual Schema are such that it should

be looked upon and developed as a teaching tool. (3) The twelve communication concepts, identified on the Grid, should be considered a substantial part of any public relations training program.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF A CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA FOR ANALYZING THE SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS

By

Sylvia Ciernick

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School public relations is still in a developmental state. In its first quarter of a century, as a recognized part of the public school program, it has made great strides in providing the tools and techniques for carrying out needed public relations practices. Throughout this first stage of its development it has tended to emphasize the pragmatic. This is in keeping with what may be considered a normal first stage of development for new practices and concepts in most any field.

It now appears that school public relations is on the threshold of its next growth stage. The demands upon public relations in recent years are causing greater attention to be given to developing and identifying the theoretical considerations upon which the practices of public relations are based. The pragmatic emphasis of yesterday is now being underscored by empirical research into related theory. Movement in this direction, however, has just begun.

At the present time, the paucity of basic research in public relations still finds educators without sufficient

awareness of the theories and concepts required to develop and guide constructively the intense cooperative interaction that is needed between the schools and their communities.

One redeeming feature is that while research in public relations itself is still scarce, great strides have been made by the behavioral sciences in providing knowledge about human action that can contribute to improvement of public relations practices. However, at this time much of this valuable information is not being brought into the mainstream of public relations activity. A conceptual framework of the public relations process is lacking that would permit systematic building upon existing knowledges with new knowledges. According to Charters, "Once an analytical model of the school public relations process is developed in broad conceptual terms, the vast array of research in the behavioral sciences can be sifted and assimilated to it."[1] Such a model, also, would permit the needed in-depth study of the public relations process as it exists today.

The relationship between school public relations and the behavioral sciences is such that it would appear fruitful

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[1]W. W. Charters, Jr., "Public Relations," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Chester W. Harris (third edition; New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1079.

to assume that not only can research in the behavioral sciences, and particularly in the area of communication, contribute substantial knowledges to the understanding and development of the public relations process, but that such research also can provide a basis for an appropriate analytical model.

The lack of a conceptual framework for analyzing and systematizing the public relations process is emphasized by the current need for increased school-community cooperation. As social, technical and economic forces require citizens with a higher educational level, the demands on the nation's educational system will increase--in both frequency and complexity. The structure of the American public school system is such that the implications of these demands must be understood and acted upon by the people in local communities in cooperation with professional educators. The extent to which action can be taken "in tandem" will determine the effectiveness of the results. However, superintendents, as the professional leaders of the schools, are, and will continue to be, handicapped in developing meaningful school-community cooperation if they must continue to rely on the current level of understanding of the public relations process.

Therefore, concurrent with this need for an analytical

model of the public relations process is an increasing emphasis upon the public relations functions of the superintendent. The review of related literature indicated that over the years the public relations of America's schools has been carefully delineated as one of the several areas of responsibility of the superintendent. Until recently, however, it has seldom received special identification as a critical area of the superintendent's job.

Within the past five years several research studies of the superintendency[2] have documented a close, vital relationship between the superintendent's competency in public relations and his over-all success or failure. Any attempt, however, to analyze this relationship in order to identify the specific elements of school public relations which are crucial to the superintendent's success is handicapped by the above-mentioned lack of a theoretically-based system of analysis of the public relations process.

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[2]Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools? (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 104-06; Hollis A. Moore, Jr., Studies in School Administration (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1957), p. II.

The Problem

Purpose of the study

It was the purpose of this study to combine the need for a conceptual framework of the public relations process with the need for a detailed analysis of the superintendent's public relations functions in such a way that one would contribute to the development and understanding of the other.

This purpose was carried out by (1) developing a conceptual schema for analyzing the public relations process based on findings of pertinent research in communication; (2) identifying superintendents' perceptions of critical acts of behavior in the area of public relations; and (3) analyzing these acts within the developed schema to establish the usefulness of the schema as a method for analyzing the public relations process.

Specifically, the problem which this study proposed to investigate may be stated in terms of several questions:

a. Can the theories and research in the area of communication provide an appropriate conceptual background for an orderly and systematic study of school public relations?

b. Can individual school public relations acts be studied

as communication acts?

c. Will the process of equating the elements of a public relations act to the elements of a communication act through a conceptual schema provide a structure for identifying and analyzing the crucial elements of the school public relations process?

d. What is the level of awareness of superintendents of the communication process as it is related to public relations and is indicated by an analysis of reported critical incidents?

e. What behaviors do superintendents report that demonstrate their effective use of the public relations process?

f. What behaviors do superintendents report that demonstrate their ineffective use of the public relations process?

g. What relationships exist between the reported public relations acts and certain professional characteristics of the superintendent?

h. Will the investigations and analyses proposed in this report produce significant inferences for improving the preparation programs in public relations for school superintendents?

Contribution

It was felt that successful execution of the research

necessary to answer the above questions would result in (1) a substantial, but admittedly first step toward the systematic analysis of the component elements of the public relations process within a communication framework; (2) an approach for conducting needed research related directly to the area of school public relations; and (3) useful recommendations for the improvement of the public relations training of school superintendents.

Basic assumptions

The basic assumptions are as follows:

1. The public relations behavior of public school superintendents is a significant factor in superintendents' job performance.

2. School superintendents will be able to recall significant incidents of effective and ineffective behavior acts related to school public relations.

Delimitations

The delimiting factors which were established to confine the scope of this study are as follows:

1. The sample for the collection of critical incidents was drawn from the 1961 Michigan superintendents of public school districts operating Class B and C high schools.

2. The critical incidents accepted for analysis were limited to those acts which were identified by the respondents as effective or ineffective when measured against an agreed upon statement of purpose of the public relations functions of the school superintendent.

3. The procedures selected for determining the use of the Conceptual Schema were confined to one aspect of the school public relations process. An attempt was made to validate the contribution and use of the Schema only in the area of the public relations functions of the superintendent when he is in the role of "source."

Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study the terms given below will convey consistently the meaning as set forth in the definitions.

Area category. A group of sub-area categories that have certain commonalities. Area categories form a part of the classification system of the grid.

Category. One or more identical specific elements form a category in the classification system of the grid. "Specific element" and "category" are interchangeable throughout the study.

Communication model. A diagrammatical outline identifying the major elements of the communication process.

Conceptual schema. A plan for analyzing the public relations process in which a model of the process is created and developed further through establishing a classification system, or grid, appropriate to the specific area being analyzed.

Critical communication concept. The specific communication concept underlying a technique which is of primary importance to the technique's effectiveness or ineffectiveness in a particular situation.

Critical incident. An observable human activity "in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and its consequences are sufficiently definite so that there is little doubt concerning its effect."[3]

Major element. A constituent part of the public relations process. For the purposes of the study the major elements are: Source, Content, Technique, Communication Concept, Public, and Effect.

Public relations act. The specific observed act

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[3]John C. Flanagan, "The Critical Incident Technique," Psychological Bulletin, LI (July, 1954), p. 327.

included in the critical incident that was considered by the respondents to be effective or ineffective in accomplishing the purposes of the superintendency in the area of public relations. A critical incident may contain one or more public relations acts.

Public relations grid. A classification system which develops the six major elements of the Public Relations Model through appropriate categories or headings for the purpose of analyzing a designated area of the public relations process.

Public relations model. A diagrammatical outline identifying the major elements of the public relations process: Source, Content, Technique, Communication Concept, Public, and Effect.

Respondent. The superintendent interviewed as part of the critical incident technique to collect data on the function of the superintendency in the area of public relations.

Specific element. An example of a major element. It is derived from a particular public relations act (i.e., "finance" is an example of the major element "Content" because it describes the kind of content of a particular act).

Sub-area category. A group of specific elements that

have certain commonalities. Sub-area categories form a part of the classification system of the grid.

Superintendent. The person who is directly responsible to the board of education for the professional administration of the school system.

In addition to the above definitions, the following definitions of communication concepts are presented as a separate group for ease of reference:

Attention. Schramm described the average person's focus of attention to a message as "decreasing swiftly as it goes out from his primary group."[4] Based on this influence of the primary group, attention, for the purposes of this study is equated to "establishing a personal relationship."

Canalization. The process by which the source or sender of a message provides a channel to direct the already existing motives in the receiver, or public, in such a way that it may be possible to then divert the pattern in the desired direction. Canalization is frequently described as "starting where the audience is." A first step in the canalizing process may be equated to "recognizing the needs or interests of individuals or groups."

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[4]Wilbur Schramm, The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p. 34.

Diffusion. The process by which an idea or practice spreads through a group over time. It involves elements of personal influence, friendship networks, social status, values, norms, attitudes, role, and cultural factors.

Dissemination. The distribution of information to a designated audience.

Empathy. The ability to project oneself into other persons' personalities so that one can arrive at expectations and anticipations of their internal psychological states. This ability permits one to predict how another will behave.

Feedback. The return message to the sender which indicates how his message is getting across. For the purpose of this study it includes both the return process from the receiver or receivers to the source, and the evaluation of the return message by the source. The feedback message may be direct communication from the receiver, the source's observations of the receiver's behavior following receipt of the communication, or it may be an indirect type of report from data-collecting instruments or persons other than the receiver.

Group dynamics. The processes involved in organizing and maintaining a group in such a way that it may complete effectively its purposes. For the purposes of this study group dynamics is limited to those groups which the superintendent

is responsible for organizing and maintaining. Community groups, such as service clubs, for which the superintendent is not responsible directly are excluded. This definition recognizes that group dynamics involves several of the other concepts on the Grid, namely, power structure, diffusion, source credibility, feedback and involvement. However, to maintain the criteria of discreteness between the specific elements of the Grid, these other concepts were identified on the Grid only when they occurred in public relations acts not involving group dynamics as defined.

Involvement. The process by which a person or persons participate overtly in a situation or event in a way that requires communicative interaction revolving around seeking and exchanging information, and re-evaluating attitudes and opinions.

Observation. The process of seeing and hearing actual situations or events so as to approximate communication through direct experience.

Power structure. The formal and informal networks of persons in a community who filter messages going to persons within their individual influence patterns and whose reactions to these messages serve as a guide to others. It includes what communication specialists refer to as gate keepers,

opinion leaders and influentials.

Source credibility. The effect of the source on the acceptance of a message by the receiver. Schramm states "a message is more likely to be accepted if the source is perceived as trustworthy or expert."[5]

Timing. The process of taking into consideration the situation into which a message is sent in order to assure the desired reception by the receiver.

Use of the term "school public relations"

Over the years a relationship has existed between the public schools and its patrons. To the observant students of the American educational system it is a precious relationship to be fostered and enhanced for the betterment of the pupils and our democratic form of government.

Many terms have been used to describe this relationship. Each representing the specific focus of a particular period in our history. These terms have ranged from "school publicity" used in the late 1920's to "social or educational interpretation" introduced in the 1930's. More recently the title "school-community relations" or more simply, "school relations" has become popular as the partnership concept becomes dominant.

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[5]Ibid., p. 212.

Throughout the momentary popularity of each of these labels the term "public relations" or "school public relations" has remained as the basic, definitive term. It has been the most widely and consistently used over the longest period of time. It is, and has been for 27 years, a part of the title of the National School Public Relations Association, a leading force in this area; the Encyclopedia of Educational Research uses this term to identify research in the area of the school and its relationship to the community; and the term is the most widely used in the related literature surveyed.

Therefore, this study will use the generic term "school public relations," even though it may be superseded at some future time. At this point in time it has not lost its role as the basic definer of the relationship between the school and the public it serves.

Methodological Overview

The previous statement of the problem indicated that before further substantial help could be given superintendents in recognizing and improving their public relations responsibilities and competencies, it would be necessary to provide a theoretical basis for analyzing the public relations process, and to collect sufficient data on the critical public relations

activities of the superintendent in a form that could be analyzed.

The procedure used for collecting data on the public relations functions of the superintendent was the "critical incident technique." This procedure as used for the purpose of this study involved collecting critical incidents in the area of school public relations through personal interviews of forty-eight superintendents.

Flanagan developed the critical incident technique in 1941 as an outgrowth of studies for the United States Army Air Forces to establish procedures for the selection and classification of air-crews. In discussing the procedure in its present form Flanagan pointed out that "the critical incident technique is essentially a procedure for gathering certain important facts concerning behavior in a defined situation" and that it "should be thought of as a flexible set of principles."[6] These principles and their application to this study will be discussed in detail in Chapter III. An historical overview and use of the technique in other research studies will be discussed in Chapter II.

The procedure for developing the structure for a systematic analysis of the public relations process, and more

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[6]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 335.

specifically, the public relations acts of school superintendents, used essentially the following steps:

1. The literature in communication and school public relations was reviewed and drawn upon heavily to develop a model of the school public relations process.

2. Public relations acts were collected through the critical incident technique and information was extracted from them and arranged under the major elements of the Public Relations Model to form a Public Relations Grid.

3. The information from the public relations acts, as classified to form the Grid, was then analyzed statistically for inferences that could be used in the development of the pre-service and in-service training programs of superintendents.

It was visualized that the Public Relations Model created in this study would serve as a master structure for comprehending the over-all school public relations process. The content of the Public Relations Grid, developed under the major categories of the Public Relations Model, would fit more specifically the public relations activities of the superintendent. Theoretically the actual content of a grid, developed in this instance around the functions of the superintendents, could vary from one developed for an analysis

of public relations acts by teachers or school board members. No attempt was made to investigate these variables in this study.

Organization of the Presentation

The foregoing presentation outlined the problem and its component parts and gave an indication of the method used to attack the problem.

Chapter II has as its purpose a review of the literature which deals with specific aspects of the study: (1) an historical perspective of public relations and the superintendency as they relate to the purposes of this study; (2) communication models and theories as they relate to the purposes of this study; and (3) the critical incident technique as a research method.

Chapter III presents the actual conduct of the study. This includes: (1) data collection procedures, (2) development of the interview plan, (3) drawing of the sample, (4) creation of the Grid, and (5) processing of the data. Particular emphasis was placed on the rational for developing the Conceptual Schema of the public relations process and the steps taken to meet the criteria of the critical incident technique.

Chapter IV covers the analysis of data. This includes a description and analysis of the complete Conceptual Schema, analysis of ineffective public relations acts, and analysis of significant relationships between specific categories in the Schema and certain characteristics of the respondents.

Chapter V presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There were three pertinent areas of literature related to this study: (1) the area of school public relations and the superintendent, (2) the area of communication, and (3) the area of methodology. The last area is included because of the uniqueness of the critical incident technique as a data-gathering procedure. Each of these three areas will be developed in this chapter.

Public Relations and the Superintendent

The paucity of basic research in the area of the superintendent and his public relations functions stood out in contrast to the large quantity of material on this subject composed by authoritative opinion and bound between the covers of professional books, periodicals, and special publications. No attempt was made to review systematically this enormous collection of authoritative opinion. But recognizing that a general orientation to the field of public relations may be helpful, appropriate references are cited in the bibliography.

Any meaningful summary of information related to school public relations is handicapped also by the wide variations of meaning given the term "public relations," and more importantly, by the diversity of labels under which public relations information is reported. By defining the specific area of school public relations to be reviewed some of the problems presented in the above statements may be mitigated.

The review of the literature was confined primarily to the following: (1) research studies concerned with the role of the superintendent in school public relations as seen against an historical perspective of changing public relations emphases and trends; (2) the relationship of competency in public relations and superintendent success; and (3) research building toward administrative leadership patterns which include public relations functions and activities.

Historical perspective

Because the superintendent's role in any area of the administrative process is influenced by the social environment and the tenor of the times in which he must operate, a brief historical review was made of the changing focus of school public relations. The superintendency was then

reviewed against this historical perspective.

One of the more complete annotated bibliographies of research concerned with public relations in elementary and secondary schools was compiled by Pearson for the period from 1917 to 1954. He analyzed 51 periodicals, 27 research reports for books and yearbooks, 2 mimeographed reports and 120 unpublished doctoral studies, and drew from them significant comparisons and contrasts.[1]

Pearson reported that in the ten years preceding 1927 the limited number of studies which he located were conducted under the terminology of "educational publicity." From 1940 through the end of his study in 1955 he traced a trend in which "research studies" emphasized the determination of public opinion, lay participation, education planning and the role of specific agents in school public relations.[2] It was during this latter period that a marked increase in interest in school public relations occurred. According to Pearson sixty per cent of the research in school public relations was done in the last ten years of the period he surveyed (e.g.,

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[1]Robert J. Pearson, "Public Relations Research Concerned with Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1956), p. 26.

[2]Ibid., p. 3.

1945-1955).[3]

Pearson's findings, which record a movement from an emphasis on "educational publicity" to "school-community interaction," are in keeping with Charter's analysis which extends the trend through 1960:

> The public-relations movement in education had its genesis soon after the turn of the century and came into its own shortly after World War I. Examination of early writings suggests that the movement was stimulated in large part by the growth of advertising in the business community of the day and by enthusiasm in commentaries, such as George Creel's, "How We Advertised America." The printed symbol was regarded as all-powerful propaganda as a means of manipulating the public sentiment at will. . . . As the public-relations movement gained momentum in succeeding years, its ideology went through a series of revisions, often described in such terms as intensive publicity campaigns, continuous publicity, education interpretations, and cooperative endeavor.[4]

Paralleling the change in emphasis in school public relations was the change in the role of the superintendent as an agent in public relations. The sparcity of research dealing with the superintendent in his role as a public relations agent during the 1920's and 1930's required that authorities in the field be consulted for information related to this topic.

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[3] Ibid., p. 3.

[4] Charters, op. cit., p. 1075.

One of the authorities, Cubberly, indicated certain leadership qualities desirable for superintendents which had direct public relations implications. These selected qualities were considered useful in molding public opinion to fit the recommendations of the superintendent. This approach emphasized the one-way direction of early school public relations activities.

> By conferences, public and private, with leading citizens; by talks to parents at meetings at the schools; by taking the leaders among the teachers into his confidence; by dealing frankly and honestly with the press and the public; by his own written and spoken word, especially in his annual printed reports, and by inciting others to write and speak; and by tact and diplomacy mold such a public opinion that the recommendations which he makes will go without serious opposition, and be readily accepted by the people of the community.[5]

Similar leadership traits were found also in the report of the Committee on Certification of Superintendents of Schools[6] which was published in 1940. This committee questioned some 503 lay people and school employees regarding traits they would desire in their next superintendent. Twelve traits were thus identified and, of these, four may be

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[5]E. T. Cubberly, Public School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), pp. 138-39.

[6]American Association of School Administrators, "The Superintendent of Schools and His Work," Final Report of the Committee on Certification of the Superintendent of Schools (Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1940), p. 47.

construed to have public relations implications. These traits were: sociability, community leadership, speaker, and writer.

Another of the early authorities in this field, Moehlman[7] contributed to the emphasis on educational interpretation which occurred during the 1930's. He cast the superintendent's responsibility for "social interpretation" within the framework of the general responsibilities of the superintendent and related it to the primary function of the educational organization of public schools--the execution of the instructional program.

Returning to the research survey of Pearson it can be reported that he was able to locate only eight studies through 1955 dealing wholly or in part with the superintendent as a public relations agent.[8] The eight studies were written by Sterrett,[9] Haring,[10] Hagman,[11] Miller,[12] Hickey,[13]

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[7]Arthur B. Moehlman, Social Interpretation (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), pp. 187-206.

[8]Pearson, op. cit., pp. 66-68.

[9]Fife K. Sterrett, "Development of Elements of Public School Relations as an Educational Function as Evidenced in School Surveys" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1953).

[10]Roy J. Haring, "The Role of the Superintendent in the Interrelation of School and Community" (unpublished Ed.D.

Brown,[14] Wiens,[15] and Frisbee.[16] Of these only Brown,[17] Frisbee,[18] and Haring[19] referred specifically to the superintendent in their titles.

Pearson drew the conclusions, summarized below, from the eight studies. (1) The superintendent has ultimate responsibility for the conduct and coordination of public relations activities. (2) Important functions of the

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dissertation, Pennsylvania State College, 1953).

[11]Harlan L. Hagman, "A Study of Theory and Some Present Practices in School Public Relations Administration" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1947).

[12]Delmans F. Miller, "An Appraisal Technique for Programs of Public School Relations" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1943).

[13]John M. Hickey, "The Direction of Public School Relations in Cities of the United States" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1945).

[14]Leroy Brown, "Public Relations, A Function of Alabama County and City Superintendents of Education" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947).

[15]Jacob F. Wiens, "An Evaluation of the Public School Relations in the High Schools of Small Cities and Rural Communities of California" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1950).

[16]Chester C. Frisbee, "Community Relations Concepts of School Superintendents" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1950).

[17]Brown, loc. cit.

[18]Frisbee, loc. cit.

[19]Haring, loc. cit.

superintendent in the area of public relations are to exercise leadership, to inform the public, to interpret the schools to the public, to integrate home, school and community, to evaluate the program, and to keep the board informed.[20] These conclusions are substantially the same as those derived by Jones who conducted a search of the public relations literature through 1952. Jones's search included research reports, books, and periodicals.[21]

An independent analysis was made in the conduct of this study of the three primary source studies located by Pearson which dealt specifically with the superintendent and public relations in their titles. More detailed comments relating to these particular studies are contained in the paragraphs which follow.

The first of the three research studies selected for more detailed review was conducted by Brown. He attempted to discover public relations practices used by Alabama county and city superintendents and endeavored to focus the attention of these superintendents upon desirable practices and standards

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[20]Pearson, loc. cit.

[21]James J. Jones, "An Analysis and Summary of Significant Research Findings Concerning Some Problems and Issues of School-Community Relations" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1952), p. 17.

in a public relations program. Through a written questionnaire to eighty-six Alabama superintendents he found that most of these superintendents estimated that they devoted about one-fourth of their time to public relations work. The majority wrote their own news releases which usually dealt with such topics as "how the schools are succeeding" and "future plans and possibilities." Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents in this study reported the use of lay committees.[22]

Frisbee, in the second research project reviewed, investigated superintendents' attitudes and approaches to the problem of public relations and compared these with the comparable recommendations found in the literature in the field. He collected his material by recording and then analyzing the oral reports of twenty-six superintendents in two California counties. These reports were unstructured and dealt with the general area of community relations practices and opinions as viewed by the respondents.[23]

This method of data collecting did not permit the author to make precise conclusions regarding his data. Instead he presented "Statements of Generalizations" which dealt with the total school public relations program. This approach

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[22]Brown, op. cit., et passim.

[23]Frisbee, op. cit., et passim.

prevented a sharp focus upon the superintendent's role.

Frisbee's "Generalizations" of significance to this study are as follows:

> 1. Personalized, face-to-face contacts and associations among primary school-community groups and individuals are considered the most important public relations avenues --- the human factor in school-community associations is recognized as having greater influence than techniques, schemes, or organized programs.
>
> 2. Formally written and adopted school district community regulations and policies are not evidenced as significant practices by the cooperating administrators.
>
> 3. It is evident that many of the administrators determine their public relations practices on an expediency basis.
>
> 4. No one set of community relations practices would be acceptable to all the superintendents . . . However, not a single administrator exhibited confidence that he practiced or understood what might be considered good community relations programs.[24]

The third study reported by Pearson as dealing with the superintendent as a public relations agent was conducted by Haring. His study was the result of an exploratory survey made by the Pennsylvania Association of District Superintendents in 1951-52 and related to the functions of superintendents. It was concluded that the most basic problem of school

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[24] Ibid., pp. 249-50.

superintendents was in the field of community relations.[25]

Haring divided 500 lay persons and educators from 84 school districts into teams. Each team met frequently during a one-year period to locate points of contact between the school and the community and to develop additional contacts that might be helpful to the community relations program. Material from these meetings formed the basis for his study.[26] Contrary to the implications contained in the title, this study focused upon the techniques of public relations rather than upon the role of the superintendent in community relations.

Relationship of competency in school public relations to superintendent success

Current studies of the public relations aspects of the superintendency have benefited recently from increased research in educational administration. Stimulating much of this research in the late 1940's was the recognition of the changing structure of public school administration. During these years there were more calls upon the superintendent for increased competency in relationships with the public. This new emphasis was exemplified best by the action of the W. W.

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[25] Haring, op. cit., p. 1.

[26] Ibid., pp. 24-27.

Kellogg Foundation in supporting research in educational administration when "foundation staff members had noted that the success of early community improvement projects frequently turned on the degree of leadership exercised through the local school system. In many cases, school administrators--key people in village affairs--were almost completely unprepared for the role demanded of them by the townspeople."[27] This observation from the Kellogg-sponsored projects was verified by exploratory regional conferences with superintendents held in 1948. At this point, the Foundation wished to determine whether or not it should support a national study of the superintendency. "Conference participants, in rating which functions were most important for superintendents, put public relations first on the list; second was staff relations."[28] These conferences, which resulted in the formation of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration (CPEA), further illustrated the increasing recognition of the centrality of the public relations functions of the superintendent.

> Now the results were in. The nation had been covered by a series of exploratory conferences. A

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[27] Moore, op. cit., p. 2.

[28] Ibid., p. 11.

> pattern was running consistently in all of them: There was indeed an urgent need to study the changing nature of public school administration in this country. Community leadership responsibilities had increased at a pace which was alarming to superintendents, most of whom felt inadequately prepared to meet these new responsibilities. Techniques for maintaining friendly constructive public relations had been missing, they said, from the preparation they had received in graduate schools across the nation. One phrase was repeated so often in conference after conference that it quickly became a professional cliche. It went something like this: "The people in our communities demand educational leadership from us, but our training has been largely in the managerial aspects of the job."[29]

One of the most comprehensive surveys of the American superintendency, released by the American Association of School Administrators in 1960, reaffirmed and provided additional information regarding the superintendent's concern about public relations. Urban superintendents in 3,812 cities of 2,500 or more population responded to the Association's periodic "reading" of its membership.[30] The following findings were significant:

Public relations ranked third, after finance and curriculum, among twenty-one courses listed as being important in advance graduate study. Public relations ranked fifth in

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[29] Ibid., p. 12.

[30] American Association of School Administrators, Profile of the School Superintendent (Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1960), p. 4.

a list of eighteen weaknesses reported by the superintendents.[31]

Emphasis on public relations, as a top-ranking concern of superintendents was reported by Young and Dillman.[32] Heagerty[33] also observed this same area of concern. This latter study is unique because the author included a time study of activities to match superintendent opinion with actual superintendent activity. Heagerty concluded that superintendents recognized the importance of public relations by both the amount of time they were spending on activities in this area and by their classification of the duties of the superintendent. These classifications were reported as being administration, supervision, and public relations.

The increasing emphasis on the public relations function of the superintendent has been reported in the foregoing paragraphs. These general studies of educational administration have made explicit the direct relationship

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[31] Ibid., p. 104.

[32] Raymond J. Young and Beryl R. Dillman, "A Study of Relationships between Importance of a School Superintendent's Functions and His Practices, Based on Authoritative Opinion," Journal of Experimental Education, XXVII (June, 1960), 321-36.

[33] Frank Heagerty, "Activities and Opinions of Superintendents of Schools in Missouri" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1950) as cited in Microfilm Abstracts, Vol. X, No. 3 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1950), 1783.

between competency in public relations and superintendent success. Within the last five years this relationship has been made even more explicit through the documentation of two extensive studies.

Kennan, in a 1960 survey of Chief State School Officers and Executive Secretaries of State Education Associations reported that:

> In 1960, as in 1958, both the State Secretaries and State Superintendents agreed that other than incompetence, the most frequent factor preventing success of superintendents is poor public and community relations. This agrees with the explanation of the N.E.A. Defense Commission and Tenure Committee in their investigations of dismissals.[34]

Kennan's conclusions were concurred in through an independent study by Gross of the superintendency. He reported that public relations was the area in which the fewest number of board of education members in Massachusetts rated their superintendent as excellent. "Only forty per cent [of the board members] say their superintendent is excellent, another thirty per cent say he is good, and the remaining thirty per cent say that their superintendent does either a fair or a poor job."[35] Even fewer superintendents in the Gross study

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[34]Richard Barnes Kennan, "Why They Got Fired," speech delivered at the American Association of School Administrators' regional conventions for 1961, p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

[35]Gross, op. cit., p. 105.

rated themselves as being excellent in public relations.

> Only eighteen per cent of the superintendents said they did an excellent job of public relations (as compared to 40% of the school board members). And furthermore, despite their general tendency to avoid the "fair" and "poor" categories in rating themsevles in general and in other areas, almost as many superintendents say they did only a "fair" or "poor" job of public relations as school board members (27% compared to 30%).[36]

Research studies building toward patterns of administrative leadership

Since the formation, in 1949, of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration, several hundred studies have been conducted in educational administration. One review of CPEA research cites more than 300 publications based on studies related to this project. Of this total, some thirty-nine studies focused on school and community problems as they related to the superintendent. In addition, most of the studies which dealt specifically with the superintendent, in contrast to the principal or other administrators, included at least some reference to the public relations aspects of administration.[37]

The consistent emphasis on public relations in the

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[36] Ibid., p. 106.

[37] Moore, op. cit., pp. 185-202.

reports of the CPEA studies has contributed to the increasing professional acceptance of the centrality of public relations in the administrative process. This acceptance is evidenced by two papers delivered at the Second Administrative Theory conference sponsored by the CPEA in 1959.[38] Further, these particular studies also identified the public relations function of the superintendent as "external administration." Hill, in one of the two papers, defined the task of "external administration" in the same terms commonly used for "public relations": "First, it [external administration] is to inform the public about the schools, and second, to establish techniques or devices for stimulating the public to take a hand in the shaping of what is to come."[39]

The series of CPEA-sponsored studies reported here were of significant interest not only because of the emphasis they placed upon public relations, but also because a number of them employed a research technique that was used in this present study.

Several of the studies of the superintendency, partially or wholly sponsored by the CPEA approached the problem of

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[38]Midwest Administration Center, Administrative Theory as a Guide to Action, report of a conference of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1960), pp. 143-67.

[39]Ibid., p. 165.

improving administrative leadership through "behavior" studies of the superintendent. These "behavior" studies made use of the critical incident technique, and, in turn, stimulated other studies. Four of these studies of administrative leadership were reviewed because each of them included analyses of the critical job requirements for the superintendent in the area of school-community relations or public relations. A more detailed analysis of this particular methodology is given in a later section of this chapter which reviewed the critical incident technique as one of the basic methodologies for this study. The studies of Sternloff,[40] Robson,[41] Kirk,[42] and Schwei[43] are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Sternloff derived a list of critical requirements for school administrators through an analysis of mail questionnaires

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[40]Robert E. Sternloff, "The Critical Requirements for School Administrators Based Upon an Analysis of Critical Incidents" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1953).

[41]Howard N. Robson, "Success and Failure of Small-School Superintendents" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Wyoming, Laramie, 1956).

[42]George V. Kirk, "Critical Requirements for Public School Superintendents" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959).

[43]Joseph Paul Schwei, "Critical Requirements for Effective Performance of School Administrators" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1955).

which had been returned by superintendents and school board members. Robson collected critical incidents through a mail questionnaire from school personnel, community members and graduate students to obtain information on the success or failure of small school superintendents in Wyoming. Kirk used the personal interview to collect critical incidents of the superintendent's behavior from teachers, principals, board members and citizens. Schwei mailed questionnaires to school personnel. All of these studies derived essentially the same list of major categories, but different sub-categories, to sort the critical incidents which had been collected into a meaningful report form. One major category of the five categories, common to all studies, was titled "Directing School-Community Relationships" or "The Superintendent in His Relationships With the Public." The following percentages of critical job requirements were classified under this category in the four studies: Sternloff, 7.7; Schwei, 3.8; Robson, 5.3; and Kirk, 22.1. Kirk noted the high percentage of incidents in this category resulting from his tabulations and stated that:

> Citizens and school board members were primarily responsible for reporting incidents in this major category, and it is noticed that Sternloff who used school board members did find a considerable percentage of incidents in this major category.[44]

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[44]Kirk, op. cit., p. 110.

Each of these four studies warranted more detailed comments.

The following critical job requirement for school superintendents cited in Sternloff's report was the one most frequently mentioned in his total study: "Effectively interprets to the community educational needs, problems, policies and plans."[45] In Kirk's study, a similar critical requirement was the second most frequently mentioned: "The superintendent keeps the community informed about the schools. His statements (oral and written) are clear."[46]

A more detailed statement taken from Sternloff's report is that 16 of 128 critical requirements, derived from a total of 1,076 behavior acts, dealt with "Directing School-Community Relationships." These are listed below as follows:

Directing School-Community Relationships

Category A. Interpretation of school policy, planning and program.

40. Effectively interprets to the community educational needs, problems, policies and plans.

41. Makes use of community communication agencies in order to interpret the school to the community and cooperates with such agencies.

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[45]Sternloff, op. cit., p. 160.

[46]Kirk, op. cit., p. 128.

42. Encourages interested people of the community to visit the schools and school board meetings.

43. Demonstrates knowledge of community reactions to his suggestions or proposals.

Category B. Community participation in educational planning activities and the school program.

44. Develops school-community cooperative planning.

45. Utilizes community individuals and other resources for school program enrichment.

46. Organizes and cooperates with citizen advisory groups toward the solution of education problems.

Category C. Providing leadership to the people of the community and cooperating with them.

47. Encourages orderly conduct on the part of school visitors.

48. Participates in community activities, and cooperates with community organizations and agencies.

49. Organizes the school to provide community services, and encourages the staff to participate in community activities.

Category D. Personal effectiveness in dealing with the public.

50. Demonstrates effective speaking ability, tact, and social bearing in resolving school-community problems.

51. Acts courageously for the good or safety of the community, in spite of outside influences which may jeopardize his personal position.

52. Sets a good example to the people of the community by his personal behavior.

53. Demonstrates ability to weather community criticism and avoids being drawn into personal quarrels.

54. Defends himself ably; confronts, and effectively deals with, persons in the community who are responsible for initiating malicious, false rumors concerning himself or the school.

55. Willingly devotes extra time to problems of school-community relations and suspends judgment on these problems until the pertinent facts have been considered.[47]

In another section of his study, Sternloff classified five of the critical job requirements under a category entitled "Administration and Organization of Instruction and Pupil Services." These critical job requirements also have direct public relations implications:

Category F. Administrator-parent relationships.

124. Demonstrates skillful and tactful handling of parent complaints and gives unfailing support to parents in time of grief.

125. Organizes and cooperates with the Parent-Teachers Association, school father's or mother's club, etc., toward the development of better parent-school relations and understandings.

126. Invites parents to the school and arranges for parent-teacher conferences to resolve grievances or complaints.

127. Arranges for parent-teacher conferences or group meetings to develop cooperatively understandings and procedures for the reporting of pupil progress.

128. Effectively interprets the needs and problems of the school to parents.[48]

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[47] Sternloff, op. cit., p. 168.

[48] Ibid., p. 170.

In his study of critical job requirements for school superintendents Schwei reported that 9 critical requirements from a group of 104 extracted from a total of 1,192 critical incidents dealt with "Directing School-Community Relations." His summary was reported by Kirk as follows:

Directing School-Community Relations

Category A. Leadership in Community Affairs.

44. Assumes leadership role in organizing civic undertaking for the promotion of educational, health, and safety activities in the community.

45. Makes school resources available to community.

46. Sets a fine example in the community by his personal conduct and behavior.

47. Avoids being drawn into petty community jealousies.

48. Actively participates in community organizations.

49. Encourages the staff and students to participate in community affairs.

Category B. Public Relations and Interpretation of School Program.

50. Makes maximum use of community resources and agencies in interpreting the school program.

51. Seeks to improve public relations between the board of education and other community agencies.

52. Encourages local community leaders to participate and contribute their services to the school program.[49]

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[53]Kirk, op. cit., p. 201.

The third study in this series was conducted by Robson. He reported forty-eight critical requirements of which four dealt with "Administrator School-Community Relationships." These four are reported as follows:

A. Exertion of leadership and cooperation with the people of the community.

B. Community participation in planning the school program.

C. Employment of public school relations techniques.

D. Personal success in dealing with the public.[50]

The last of this series of investigations concerned with this topic was conducted by Kirk. He reported that 5 of 41 critical requirements, derived from 1,028 critical incidents, dealt with "The Superintendent and his Relationship with the Public." These are reported as follows:

1. The superintendent is one of us--he joins our churches and attends our community affairs.

2. The superintendent encourages community-school planning.

3. The superintendent keeps the community informed about the schools.

4. The superintendent's door is open--the public can get to him--he talks with you when you do see him.

5. The superintendent has tact and understanding in handling parents and citizens.[51]

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[50] Robson, op. cit., p. 155.

[51] Kirk, op. cit., pp. 143-44.

Kirk's study had one additional value not found in the other three studies. He included several pages of actual incidents and summarizations of incidents which gave the reader a "feel" for the study of the behavior of the superintendent.

Other lists of "critical behavior requirements" for superintendents in the area of school-community relations were reported in the "Competency Pattern" studies in educational administration developed by the Southern States Cooperative Program in Educational Administration. These Competency Pattern studies organized the superintendent's behavior into eight critical task areas one of which dealt with "community school leadership." The methodology employed in the Competency Pattern studies was an outgrowth of the critical incident technique.[52]

Fountain developed the concept of Competency Patterns to help classify the critical behaviors, job activities, and operational beliefs of North Carolina superintendents in the area of school-community relations. This Competency Pattern became the basis of six of the identified tasks and activities

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[52] Toward Improved School Administration, A Decade of Professional Effort to Heighten Administrative Understanding and Skills (Battle Creek: The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 1961), pp. 46-47.

of superintendents. The remaining six tasks used in this analysis were established on the basis of professional texts, the public relations experience of the writer, and through consultation with field authorities. The superintendents ranked nine of the twelve tasks as being of critical importance in their professional work. Their ranking produced the following list:

> (1)Evaluate continuously, education services and policy designed to help improve the community; (2) Plan and organize for effective interpretation of the schools to the community; (3) Determine and undertake educational services necessary for common improvement; (4) Administer special public relations events and special campaigns; (5) Determine how education services are conditioned by community forces; (6) Cooperate in state and national efforts to improve the public schools; (7) Administer a continuous public relations program to inform all the publics of the community; (8) Utilize each available means of communicating with the public; (9) Evaluate the public relations program.[53]

The superintendent and his various publics

A recent approach to the study of the superintendency has been to analyze the activities of the superintendent in his working relationships with several of his "publics." The use of this approach may be seen as part of the general rise

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[53]Benjamin E. Fountain, "A Study of the Role of Selected North Carolina School Superintendents in School-Community Relations" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1958), pp. 134-35.

in the popularity of "role theory" and the increasing interest of sociologists in the school as a social institution. Although studies in this area did not employ the term "school public relations," the very nature of their content made them meaningful to an understanding of the public relations functions of the superintendent. Because these studies used the conceptual and methodological tools of the behavioral sciences they usually went beyond the scope of studies mentioned earlier which were primarily descriptive in nature.

One of the most extensive studies of school superintendents done by a sociologist was carried out by Gross.[54] He interviewed, in Massachusetts, nearly half of the superintendents and their school board members to gather data which would present an empirical analysis of the job of the school superintendent in terms of the social structure in which it is involved. The methodology used to collect the data permitted him to examine the areas of role and role-conflict.

Two other studies appropriate to the substance of this current study are Hencley's[55] study of conflict between the

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[54]Gross's study is reported in two volumes: Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason and Alexander W. McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency Role; and Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools? (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958).

[55]Stephen P. Hencley, "The Conflict Patterns of School Superintendents," Administrators Notebook, VIII (May, 1960), 1-4.

school administrator and his reference groups, and DeGood's[56] investigation of the relationship between the capacity of school superintendents to perceive the values of certain community "sub-publics" and superintendents' effectiveness as administrators.

Major patterns

An analysis of the research studies reviewed in this section indicated the following major patterns involving school superintendents and school public relations:

1. The change in the function of the superintendent in the area of public relations paralleled the change in public relations ideology. Example: The literature reviewed indicated that the shift of interest in the studies of the superintendency from an emphasis on the superintendent's tasks to an emphasis on the superintendent's behavior paralleled the dethroning of the impersonal printed symbol as the prime means of influencing the public in favor of more direct person-to-person contact between school personnel and citizens.

2. With very few exceptions research in the area of the superintendent and public relations has been descriptive in

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[56]Kenneth C. DeGood, "Can Superintendents Perceive Community Viewpoints?" Administrators Notebook, VIII(November, 1959), 1-4.

nature. Such research has contributed primarily to an understanding of the status quo and to the dissemination of information on what was considered at that time to be the better practices.

3. One contribution of this descriptive research was to document the importance of the superintendent's public relations function and the inadequacy of present professional training programs.

4. More recent studies in this field (as illustrated by the work of the CPEA) indicated a trend towards attempts to develop a theoretical rationale for the educational administrative process. Because these studies have emphasized the centrality of the public relations function it may be possible that a theoretical framework for public relations will be developed as part of theory for the total administrative process.

5. The recent interest of the behavioral scientists in the school as a social institution is resulting in a theoretical approach towards specific areas of the superintendent's functions which may be considered to be within the province of public relations.

Communication

The related literature in the area of communication was reviewed from two points of focus: (1) public relations and communication, and (2) models of the communication process.

Public relations and communication

During the past five years school public relations has been viewed frequently from a communication focus by boards of education. This new focus was made evident through a recent appraisal of the kinds of criteria used by school boards in selecting superintendents. Further evidence of the interest of school boards in the concepts of communication was the more recent practice of evaluating the effectiveness of school superintendents in terms of their skill in communicating.[57] This new emphasis by boards of education appeared to parallel the increased interest of social scientists in the process and effects of communication in human relationships. Thus, the literature indicated an increasing awareness on the part of professional educators that the communication process between the general public and the school now goes beyond the

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[57] Robert Olds (ed.), Trends, a newsletter (Washington, D.C.: The National School Public Relations Association, October 1, 1961), pp. 1 and 4.

narrow, one-way intent and purpose of the school publicity programs which characterized the earlier decades of 1920 and 1930.

Several recent research studies illustrated the close relationship between communications and public relations. These included Pfau's[58] study of the parts that oral and written communication have played in school public relations programs in Michigan, Pernert's[59] study of certain aspects of communication programs in small school districts in Michigan, Van Winkle's[60] study of various channels of communication from the school to the parent and Merrill's[61] study of the informal channels of communication within the school-community.

In addition to these studies by individuals, two major communications studies, sponsored by research grants

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[58]Edward Pfau, "A Study of Selected Aspects of Oral and Written Communication as These are a Part of School Public Relations Programs" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1955).

[59]Earl Maurice 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).

[60]Harold Van Winkle, "The Crux of Parent School Relations: Communications," School Executive, LXXVI (December, 1956), 45-47.

[61]Edward C. Merrill, Jr., "How the Word Gets Around," American School Board Journal, CXXX (February, 1955), 29-31.

and conducted on a staff group basis, have contributed greatly toward a communication focus on public relations.

The Michigan Communications Project conducted three areas of study:

1. A newspaper Content Analysis. To appraise and study school news now being written in Michigan dailies and weeklies.

2. A community Survey Study. To determine what people know and think about their schools and how opinions are created.

3. A Collection of Effective Procedures. For improving communication between newspapers and the public, and the school and the public.[62]

The Stanford Communications Study[63] currently entering its second phase of an eight-year program represents one of the most energetic attempts to analyze school-community relations through a communications focus. This study is being conducted by the Stanford School of Education and the Center for Communications Research under financial sponsorship of the U.S. Office of Education. In the first four-year phase, completed in 1961, communication theory was used as a base

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[62]William H. Roe, Leo A. Haak, Earl A. McIntyre, "Michigan Communications Study," Michigan Education Journal, XXXI (November, 1954), p. 118.

[63]Results of the first phase of this research project were given in two reports: Richard F. Carter, Voters and Their Schools, a Technical Report (Stanford: Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1960); and Richard F. Carter and John Sutthoff, Communities and Their Schools, a Technical Report (Stanford: School of Education, Stanford University, 1960).

for determining the relationship of public understanding of its schools and the public's willingness to support them. Carter explained:

> Communication theory gave us a base from which to attack this problem. Two or more persons who are in communication with each other have a measurable degree of co-orientation toward any part of their mutual environment--including themselves. Thus we could take as a measure of understanding the extent to which persons see similarly various parts of their environs relevant to the local schools. We exclude from this definition any implication that the person would agree on what to do about the situation they viewed. We said only that we had a way to measure the degree of co-orientation among them on the situation as it exists.[64]

Carter's definition and procedures which involved "co-orientation" were based on work done by Newcomb who developed a "balance theory" which "points toward the possibility that many of those phenomenon of social behavior which have been somewhat loosely assembled under the label of 'interaction' can be more adequately studied as communication acts."[65] The value of being able to analyze systematically interaction is particularly significant to school public relations because of the emphasis on interaction between school and community as

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[64]Richard F. Carter, "Memorandum on Current Status of CAST Project," Report prepared for the Long Island School-Community Relations Association meeting held at Teachers College, Columbia University, March 23, 1962, p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

[65]Theodore Newcomb, "An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts," Psychological Review, LX (April, 1960), 361-66.

a basic public relations tenet.

Carter is currently conducting communication pattern studies to trace the flow of a given message from one person to another in a community, and to locate and study the mediating agencies that normally tend to operate between the school and its public.[66]

Models of the communication process

A survey of the literature indicated that there appeared to be no major area of the study of communication that did not have implications for school public relations. For the purposes of this study, however, the literature actually reviewed was limited to that which dealt with structural descriptions of the communication process. These descriptions usually are made through communication models which attempt to interpret visually the communication process. The purpose of the following general review of some of the major models was to provide a background for Chapter III which describes the selection of a communication model and subsequent development of a public relations model. Specifically, this section presents a review of the (1) general purposes and functions of communication models, and (2) some of the major communication

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[66] Carter, op. cit., p. 10.

models.

General purposes and functions of communication models. A model, as most commonly used in the field of communication is a verbal or graphic form representing as accurately as possible, within the limits of its specific purpose, the communication process, or some specific aspect of the process. Bettinghaus pointed out that a model is not substitutable for the process itself because "the limitations of the graphic arts, and the automatic imposition of stasis that visualization carries, means that dynamic, on-going processes cannot be reproduced with perfect fidelity."[67] That is, the relationship cannot be isomorphic.

The lack of perfect fidelity between a model and the actual process it represents, though important, is not necessarily invalidating. According to Bettinghaus, the criterion of "usefulness" rather than the criterion of "fidelity" is usually the primary reason for selection of a particular model.

> If the desire of an individual is merely to identify the elements of a process which are meaningful to a particular task, a descriptive model is all that is necessary. Furthermore, the task to be accomplished

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[67] National Project in Agricultural Communication, Research, Principles, and Practices in Visual Communication (East Lansing: The Project, Michigan State University, 1960), p. 16.

> also determines the level of fidelity which may be necessary. If the process is difficult to understand, a low fidelity model may induce more understanding with fewer repetitions than a high fidelity model which is far more complicated.[68]

In another survey of communication research done by Johnson and Klare[69] further clarity regarding an understanding of communication models was achieved by identifying two main divisions of communication models. They characterized models pertaining to the personal or physiological side of communication as face-to-face and those which lie in the technical or mechanical side as place-to-place. Place-to-place or mechanistic communication models were illustrated by the "telecommunication" system, such as the telegraph of Morse and the wireless telegraphy of Marconi. The face-to-face or humanistic communication models were described as having their roots in speech, semantics, journalism, and social psychology.

Although they divided the approach to communication model development along humanistic and mechanistic line for discussion purposes, Johnson and Klare did point out that since 1950 these two main streams have come together so that the

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[68] Ibid., p. 16.

[69] F. Craig Johnson and George R. Klare, "General Models of Communication Research: A Survey of the Developments of a Decade," The Journal of Communication, XI (December, 1961), 13-14.

most recent models recognize the interrelationships that exist between the human and mechanical elements.[70]

Major communication models. The communication models selected for review in this section illustrate the major types of communication models and indicate the pattern of model development. No attempt was made to review all of the communication models that have appeared in communication literature.

The following models are presented, to a reasonable degree, in chronological order rather than according to their emphasis on mechanistic or humanistic concepts. It may be noted, however, that the first two models tended toward a complete humanistic approach. Aristotle reflected the focus of the speech-maker in his model. Lasswell approached his model from a journalistic orientation. The third model reviewed, the Shannon and Weaver model, presented a completely mechanistic approach. The next twelve models illustrated the development of models leading from the Shannon-Weaver approach to the most recent emphasis on both the people directly involved in the communication process and the social environment which impinges upon them.

The communication literature contained broad quantities

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[70] Ibid., p. 20.

of material pertaining to the construction and use of communication models. Since one of the recent publications in this field contained a more than adequate review and appraisal of communication models, the pertinent information in this publication has been condensed in the next five paragraphs. The condensation relies upon citations quoted in the original material.[71]

Reference to a verbal model of the communication process has been traced as far back as the Rhetorica by Aristotle in which he delineated the three elements in speech-making as the speaker, subject, and person addressed.

Aristotle's traditional view provided the core of Lasswell's much-quoted formulation of the main elements of communication: "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?" This verbal model has stimulated much research in communication and especially in the construction of various kinds of communication models.

The Shannon and Weaver Model attempted to reduce the communication process to a mathematical formula. Its major elements were (1) an information source, (2) a transmitter, (3) the channel, (4) the receiver, and (5) the

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[71]National Project in Agricultural Communication, op. cit., pp. 4-37.

destination. Though it was intended to apply to all communication, including mechanical communication systems, it did not provide for dealing with the psychological aspects of communication. Thus answers to questions of the order: "What role does the attitude of the receiver play in communication?" were not immediately derivable from this model.

Three different models attempted to make up for the above weakness in the Shannon-Weaver Model by focusing on the receiver to show the relationships between observable stimuli and observable responses of individual receivers. They were (1) the Ogden and Richards Model which showed a triadic relationship between the "symbol" the "thought of the reference" and the "referent," (2) the Osgood Model based on learning theory, and (3) the Minnick Model which illustrated the perceptual fields of a hearer.

These three models may be described as concentrating on one person in the communication process. The majority of models, to date, however, have attempted to show the process nature of communication and have limited themselves to oral communication between two persons. Models of this type are illustrated by the Wendell Johnson Model which attempted to describe the ways in which the main elements of communication would appear from a physical point of view, and the Gully

Model which attempted to combine the physical elements of the Johnson Model with Osgood's emphasis on learning theory.

The Bryant Wallace Model combined both the emphasis on one person in the process and the process itself by emphasizing the fact that there is a process at work not only between the speaker and the listener, but within both speaker and listener.

The SMCR model by Berlo attempted a taxonomic approach to the study of the communication process. In this model Berlo developed a description of the physical and psychological properties for the main elements of communication as he identified them: Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver.

Gerbner's Interaction Model was regarded as possibly the most useful and developed approach to communication, though it also is limited because it illustrated communication only between a specific source and receiver. Its ten basic elements were described in a single sentence definition: Someone/ perceives an event (or statement) / and reacts / in a situation / and through some means / to make available materials / in some form / and context / conveying content / with some consequence.

An attempt to expand the structure of the communication process to more than two people was undertaken recently

in two models: (1) The Westley-MacLean, Jr. Model which is applicable to the mass media situation; and (2) the Riley and Riley Model which applied a sociological base to the explanation of the communication process. This latter model emphasized the effects that the culture and the group affiliation of the communicator and the receiver have on the message.

Bettinghaus, in the above description of communication models did not include the several models by Schramm which are widely recognized and used. Schramm developed separate models to illustrate the following: (1) the major elements of the communication process; (2) the psychological factors affecting the sender or encoder and receiver or decoder; (3) feedback or interaction between the communicator and receiver, and (4) the process of mass communication.[72]

The above brief description of different models of various aspects of the communication process was included in this report to indicate the variety of communication models and the current stage of model development, as well as to give some indication of the scope of the communication area from which this study has attempted to evolve a model for the public relations process. Further references to communication models are included in Chapter III in which the creation of the

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[72]Schramm, op. cit., pp. 3-26.

actual model used in this study has been described in detail.

The Critical Incident Technique

The method of research used in this study to collect data on the superintendent is the critical incident technique. Because this technique is of comparatively recent origin it is desirable to describe the technique before reviewing specific studies in which it was employed. Thus, this section presents (1) a description of the critical incident technique, (2) a review of studies using the technique that infer its applicability to this study and (3) different applications made of the basic principles to meet the needs of specific studies.

Description

"The critical incident technique is essentially a method of collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles."[73] The methodology calls for an observer to report specific behaviors which he judges to be critically effective or ineffective according to a predetermined purpose

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[73]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 327.

established for a particular activity or occupation. These behaviors are then analyzed in some convenient classification system which will provide data that are as valid, comprehensive and objective as possible. According to Flanagan the essence of the technique is that:

> Only simple types of judgments are required of the observer, reports from only qualified observers are included, and all observations are evaluated by the observer in terms of an agreed upon statement of the purpose of the activity.[74]

Jensen described the critical incident technique as unique in that:

> It deviated from the common practice of referring to effectiveness or ineffectiveness in abstract terms or with broad generalizations; critical requirements are described in terms of specific observable behaviors.[75]

The critical incident technique is an outgrowth of studies in the Aviation Psychology Program of the United States Army Air Force during World War II. It has since undergone many minor changes until it reached its present form in 1953. As described by Flanagan, the procedure has five steps. These are summarized as follows:

1. Determine the general aim: This should be a statement of the purpose of the activity or occupation acceptable to the

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[74] Ibid., p. 335.

[75] Alfred C. Jensen, "Determining Critical Requirements for Teachers," Journal of Experimental Education, XX (September, 1951), 80.

person reporting the critical incidents.

2. Specify the observers, persons to be observed and observations to be made: Whenever possible, observers should be selected on the basis of familiarity with the activity. They should be given a review of the general aim of the activity and an explanation of the judgments they will be required to make.

3. Collect the data: The data may be obtained by individual or group interviews or by written questionnaires. In some instances an observer may be trained to observe the act as it occurs and to record the act immediately. The more common practice is to ask the observer to recall an incident which occurred previously.

4. Analyze the data: A category system must be developed empirically by the researcher.

5. Report and interpret: The results of the study should be reported and the researcher should render judgment concerning the degree of credibility which should be attached to his findings.[76]

Studies in fields other than education

The flexibility of the critical incident technique as a "set of principles which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand"[77] is indicated by the varied and wide applications of the technique for different purposes. Robins grouped research studies which used this technique into seven categories to illustrate the different kinds of applications. They were as follows: (1) to measure

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[76]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 327-58.

[77]Ibid., p. 335.

typical performance, (2) to measure proficiency, (3) to measure training, (4) to establish selection and classification procedures, (5) to aid in equipment design, (6) to identify acts important to motivation and leadership, (7) to determine change which accompanied counseling and psychotherapy.[78]

The types of persons which have been observed by the critical incident technique included commercial airline pilots, Air Force pilots, dentists, industrial workers, psychologists, and school personnel.[79]

One study utilized the critical incident technique in the field of communication. Dudgeon collected descriptions of critical communication incidents from operative employees and compared the content of these incidents with 199 propositional statements about business communication classified under thirteen headings. The propositional statements were drawn from principles of business communication based on a search of the literature and a collection of over 400 statements about business communication. The information from the study was used as a base for writing communication policies and a

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[78]Gerald Burns Robins, "Critical Requirements for the Principalship: A Study of Observed Behavior of Principals in Georgia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Georgia, 1954), pp. 21-25.

[79]Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 346-54.

communications program for the employer company's internal, middle and external publics.[80]

Studies in the field of education

The critical incident technical technique has been used with increasing frequency in the field of education. Within the past ten years educational researchers have employed the technique to study grading practices, school board membership, administrative acts influencing teacher behavior, instructional methods, school board-community relationships, job requirements for teachers, job requirements for elementary and high school principals, behavior requirements for heads of college departments, and requirements for services of a state department of education. Bibliographic information on research studies in the above areas of education has been included in the "Dissertation" section of the Bibliography for this study.

Studies of the superintendent

Four studies using the critical incident technique

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[80]Henry Dudgeon, "Some Business and Political Communication Policies and Procedures" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1961), as cited in Dissertation Abstracts, XXII (January, 1962), 2508.

in connection with school superintendents were located. The content of these studies as they relate to the public relations functions of the superintendent were reported in the section of this study titled, "Research Studies Building Toward Patterns of Administrative Leadership." The following presentation describes "in general" these studies of Sternloff,[81] Schwei,[82] Robson,[83] and Kirk.[84]

The objective of each of the four studies was basically the same: To determine effective and ineffective behaviors of school superintendents and to develop a set of critical requirements which might contribute to the improved competency and leadership on the part of the superintendent. However, some of the procedures used and the groups interviewed varied. Each researcher was aware of the study or studies that had preceded his own and each did make comparison references.

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[81]Robert E. Sternloff, "The Critical Requirements for School Administrators Based Upon an Analysis of Critical Incidents" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1953).

[82]Joseph Paul Schwei, "Critical Requirements for Effective Performance of School Administrators" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1955).

[83]Howard N. Robson, Success and Failure of Small-School Superintendents (Laramie, Wyoming: Curriculum and Research Center, College of Education, University of Wyoming, 1956).

[84]George Vallance Kirk, "The Critical Requirements for Public School Superintendents" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1959).

Sternloff mailed 2,279 questionnaires to school board members and administrators throughout Wisconsin. The "administrator" is defined by Sternloff as "the person who is directly responsible to the board of education for the professional administration of the school system."[85] A total of 439 (19.30 per cent) were returned. This represented a 14.04 per cent return from school board members and 42.20 per cent return from school administrators. The returned questionnaires contained 811 incidents which Sternloff divided into 1,076 critical behaviors. Some 653 were classified as effective and 423 as ineffective.[86] Each respondent was asked to submit only one effective incident and one ineffective incident. However, as many as six behavior acts were abstracted from one incident.

Sternloff reported two sets of critical requirements. One was a list of 128 job-oriented requirements separated into 5 major areas of administrative responsibility. The other list divided twenty-seven basic behavior requirements into five categories. These are given below.

Job-oriented requirements: (1) Administration of Staff Personnel, (2) Administrator-School Board Relationships,

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[85] Sternloff, op. cit., p. 8.

[86] Ibid., p. 67.

(3) Directing School Community Relationships, (4) Managing the Fiscal and Business Aspects of the School System, and (5) Administration and Organization of Instruction and Pupil Progress.

Basic behavior requirements: (1) Developing and Supporting Educational Policy, (2) Promoting Cooperative Study and Activity, (3) Accepting Responsibility for Initiating and Directing Action Toward Educational Improvement, (4) Displaying Personal Effectiveness, and (5) Administering Personnel Effectively.[87] Under job-oriented requirements Sternloff found that 43.49 per cent of all behaviors fell in category five, and 26.67 per cent of all behaviors fell in category one. Business and Fiscal Responsibilities, School-Community Relationships, and School-Board Relationships were in third, fourth, and fifth places respectively.[88]

Schwei mailed questionnaires to 13 assistant superintendents, 186 supervisors, 283 principals, and 1,965 teachers. Superintendents were not included in the respondent group. Returns were obtained from 525 persons (21.45 per cent). The number of incidents accepted was 1,192. Forty-eight per cent of the incidents were effective and 52 per cent were

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[87] Ibid., pp. 195, 197.

[88] Ibid., p. 167.

ineffective. The large number of ineffective incidents was heavily weighted by the returns from the teachers. All of the other groups submitted more effective than ineffective incidents. The incidents averaged more than two per respondent. Schwei used essentially the same job-oriented major categories as had Sternloff and his results duplicated the rank order for the categories reported by Sternloff.[89]

Robson used mail questionnaires and personal solicitation and interview to collect critical incidents. He sent questionnaires to 82 superintendents, 23 county superintendents, 23 high school principals, 30 elementary principals, 1,438 teachers, 400 school trustees and 137 parent-teacher association members. In addition, he interviewed 123 laymen and 119 graduate and undergraduate students. Usable returns were obtained from 555 (23.4 per cent) of those who had been queried by mail. A total of 795 respondents (questionnaire and interview) produced 1,644 usable incidents--slightly more than two per respondent.[90]

Robson[91] reported forty-eight job-oriented requirements separated into the five major areas of administrative responsibility used by Sternloff and Schwei plus one additional

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[89]Schwei, op. cit., pp. 59-84.

[90]Robson, op. cit., p. 35.

[91]Ibid., p. 47-157.

category: "Instructional Efficiency as a Teacher." Unlike Schwei and Sternloff, he found the largest number of incidents in "Administrative-Staff Relationships," with forty-three per cent of all incidents in this category. Twenty-six and three-tenths per cent of all incidents were classified in the category "Instructional and Pupil Personnel Services" while the categories "Administrative-School Board Relationships," "Fiscal and Plant Management," and "Administrative-Community Relationships" were in third, fourth and fifth places respectively. The category "Instructional Efficiency as a Teacher" contained only 8 of 1,810 behaviors. Robson noted the possible effect of his sample on the results stating:

> In the Wyoming project the results may be biased somewhat in favor of the school personnel viewpoint because of the heavy concentration of employees involved in the sampling procedure used.[92]

Kirk conducted 185 personal interviews of 20 to 45 minutes duration in 22 school districts in Delaware. At least two school board members, two teachers, two principals and two citizens in each district were interviewed. A total of 1,028 usable incidents were gathered--661 effective and 267 ineffective. The average number of incidents per interviewee was 5.31.[93]

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[92] Ibid., p. 159.

[93] Kirk, op. cit., p. 176.

Kirk reported forty-one job-oriented requirements separated into seven major categories, each describing a specific relationship of the superintendent: (1) The Superintendent and his Relationship to the Staff, (2) The Superintendent and his Relationship to the Public, (3) The Superintendent Himself, (4) The Superintendent and his Relationship to Educational Programs and Students, (5) The Superintendent and Administration of Buildings and Finance, (6) The Superintendent and the School Board, and (7) Miscellaneous.[94] Though phrased differently, five of the major categories equated to those used by Sternloff, Robson and Schwei.

Kirk established as one of his objectives "To investigate the similarities and differences in the categories of effective and ineffective behaviors reported by the four interviewed groups,"[95] in order to provide superintendents with information on how their actions may be evaluated differently by those above and below them in position. A large portion of his analysis of data was pointed toward this end.

An analysis of the similarities and differences of the four studies according to the eight major categories

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[94] Ibid., p. 170.

[95] Ibid., p. 21.

appearing in them was made by Kirk in both table and graph form. Two of the categories were found only in Kirk's study and did not lend themselves to comparison. They were "The Superintendent Himself" and "Miscellaneous." One category was found only in Robson's study: "Instructional Efficiency of the Superintendent." Kirk found differences between the frequency of mention of the major categories and drew this conclusion:

> In general, the categories, incidents, and conclusions of Schwei, Robson, and Sternloff differ from the present study only in emphasis. When there are contradictory findings, the reasons may sometimes be found in the differences in the groups interviewed, the methods of data collection, the methods of category formation, the size of districts, or the duties of the superintendents.[96]

Kirk's emphasis on the basic similarity in the results of the four separate studies is reinforced by Hough who reviewed research on the criteria of educational administrative success which used the following methodologies: critical incident technique, direct observation, case study, and descriptive survey of the literature. Hough concluded:

> In further research the critical incident technique, case study, direct observation, and descriptive survey of literature methodologies, as employed in the available studies designed to determine the criteria of

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[96] Ibid., p. 112.

> success for educational administrators are not likely to contribute additional data beyond that already established.[97]

Different applications of the critical incident technique

The variety of applications and procedures already reported presented many examples of specific adaptations of the basic principles of the critical incident technique. Though some possibly are open to question (for instance, the lack of a stated purpose of the superintendent's job in the Sternloff, Robson, Schwei and Kirk studies), the variations do indicate the flexibility of the technique.

Other variations reviewed included the following:

Campbell and Gregg reported that Greever used the critical incident technique to test the hypothesis that:

> Behavioral characteristics of effective school superintendents would be the same as those identified and described in the Tennessee Rating Guide. . . . One hundred and seventy-eight descriptions of critical incidents of administrator behavior were abstracted. Of this number, 137 were consistent with the rating guide, while 55 were not.[98]

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[97]Wendell M. Hough, Jr., "A Documentary Study of Research on the Criteria of Educational Administration Success" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1960), p. 155.

[98]Roald Campbell and Russell T. Gregg, Administrative Behavior in Education (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 338.

King interviewed 72 vocational rehabilitation counselors in Georgia to determine critical requirements for their job. The interviewees were encouraged to report as many critical incidents as they could recall from self-observation or observation of other counselors. Eight-hundred-and-eight behavior acts were extracted from the critical incidents reported. Of these, 163 were reports of observations of other counselors and 645 were self-observation. The other-observation behavior acts appeared in 65 of the 90 sub-categories. King drew no distinctions between the incidents derived from the two types of observation.[99]

Hanlon used the critical incident technique to help determine the possible usefulness of a construct he developed to explain authority and power in administration. He asked two questions to determine usefulness: "Could the construct be used as a classification system?" and, "Would it help in studying administrative phenomena?"[100]

To test whether the construct would be useful in

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[99]William B. King, Certain Critical Requirements for the Job of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Georgia (Atlanta, Georgia: State Department of Education, October, 1960), p. 42.

[100]James Mortimer Hanlon, "An Analysis of Authority and Power in Administration" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, The University of Buffalo, 1961), p. 54.

studying administrative phenomena, Hanlon applied the null hypothesis that there would be no difference in the proportion of desired or approved style of behavior as reported by the teachers in the three areas of relationship represented by the construct. Chi-Square was used to test the null hypothesis. Because the null hypothesis was rejected well beyond the .01 level and therefore, there were differences, Hanlon concluded:

> Since the construct appears to have aided in the study of the administrative phenomenon of subordinate approval of administrator behavior, it was thought that there was definite possibility for the study of other administrative phenomena through its employment.[101]

From the studies reviewed in the preceding paragraphs regarding the critical incident technique it would appear that this technique can be used effectively in analyzing behavior acts of school superintendents and others. Thus, later sections of this report will describe how the critical incident technique was woven into the methodology of this study.

Summary

In this chapter a review was presented of literature pertinent to the purposes of this study. In the area of the superintendent and public relations, first, research studies

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[101] Ibid., p. 60.

were reviewed that placed the superintendent's public relations functions in historical perspective. Next, the critical relationship between competency in school public relations and the superintendent's success on his job was documented. Finally, the recent emphasis on public relations as an integral function of administration was indicated through the numerous studies carried out under the sponsorship of the Cooperative Program in Educational Administration.

In the area of communication, a review of research studies pointed out a close relationship between communication and school public relations. This was followed by a brief description of various models of the communication process as a background for the development of a model of the public relations process presented in Chapter III.

The last section of the chapter reviewed the methodology of the critical incident technique and presented various uses of the technique that indicated its adaptability and usability in this study.

CHAPTER III

CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

For clarity, the procedures followed in the conduct of this study have been reported in three parts: (1) the creation of a Conceptual Schema as a plan for analyzing the public relations process; (2) the data-collecting, validating, and processing procedures; and (3) the application of the data collected in the Conceptual Schema.

Creation of a Conceptual Schema for Analysis of the Public Relations Process

The need for a conceptual framework for analyzing the elements and process of school public relations was established in Chapter I. The task of developing a specific framework was approached first by establishing a rationale for the theoretical focus to be followed.

Rational for selecting a communication focus

The term "public relations" has become an ominous concept often serving as "all things to all people." This umbrella aspect, however, does not and should not detract from its value. If anything, it bespeaks of the increasing

importance being placed upon public relations as an integral concept of school administration. It is because of the many facets of public relations that there is a need to identify and analyze its basic elements from a specific focus, even though such an attempt may have the characteristics of a theoretical exercise: Public relations is a process[1] and thus, to arrest the dynamics of a process for analytical purposes tends to obliterate the interrelationships between its elements.

The particular focus selected as the basis for developing a model of the elements that make up the school public relations process is based upon established theories of the communication process. Communication was selected for two reasons. First, it, like public relations, must be studied as a process. Therefore, the same problems and cautions are involved in attempting to do a molecular analysis of either one. Second, communication shares with public relations the same general purpose in their broadest dimensions, "To establish a commonness with someone."[2]

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[1]"Process" is defined as "any phenomenon which shows a continuous change in time." Merriam Webster, Collegiate Dictionary (fifth edition; Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1944), p. 790.

[2]Wilbur Schramm, "Educators and Communication Research," Educational Leadership, XIII (May, 1956), 503.

A further discussion of the philosophical base for the selection of a communication focus may be illustrated best by quoting Schramm, an authority in the area of communication, and by contrasting his statements with the philosophical concepts underlying definitions of school public relations. The similarities between public relations and communication become readily evident.

Schramm states:

> By communication we mean the process by which information is transmitted from a source to a destination. The word comes from communis, common, and communication implies a degree of commonness of in-tune-ness between the systems which are communicating. . . .
>
> Human communication is a--perhaps the--fundamental social process. It is the glue that holds society together. It is the homeostatic fluid that flows among the dynamic organs of society, keeping them in balance. It makes possible for men to live in groups, and for groups to deal with each other. It makes possible for society to get quick reports from watchers on the horizon, to reach concensus on what to do about these reports, and to transmit funded culture to new members of society.[3]

Editors of the A.A.S.A. Yearbook, Public Relations for America's Schools, discuss what is meant by school public relations by stating, "Public relations seeks to bring about a harmony of understanding between any group and the public

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[3] Ibid., p. 503.

it serves and upon whose goodwill it depends."[4] Both the A.A.S.A.'s statement and Schramm's first paragraph emphasize harmony, or in-tune-ness as the fundamental goal for both public relations and communication.

The A.A.S.A. Yearbook editors go on to state:

> "Harmony of understanding," at least in the case of school public relations, involves far more than "publicity" or "interpretation." It means genuine cooperation in planning and working for good schools, with the public giving as well as receiving ideas. It becomes a two-way process, a two-way flow of ideas between school and community which provides the basis for mutual understanding and effective teamwork.[5]

Basic to achieving this genuine cooperation through a two-way flow of ideas is "human communications" as described in Schramm's second paragraph. This is illustrated further by the Yearbook Editors' suggestions that simply by orienting to methodology the following statement on communication by Elton Mayo it can serve quite well as a definition of public relations:

> I believe that social study should begin with careful observation of what may be described as communication; that is, the capacity of an individual to communicate his feelings and ideas to another, the capacity of groups to communicate effectively and intimately with

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[4]American Association of School Administrators, Public Relations for America's Schools (Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1950), p. 12.

[5]Ibid., p. 12.

> each other. This problem, is beyond all reasonable doubt, the outstanding defect that civilization is facing today.[6]

These basic similarities, however, are not by themselves sufficient reason for utilizing a communication approach to school public relations. There is a second reason. By adopting a communication focus for the study of the public relations process a convenient framework is provided for utilizing the knowledges of the behavioral scientists. It provides the structure for an interdisciplinary view of school public relations. This is possible because the same aspects of sociology, psychology and the other behavioral sciences that relate to communication also relate to public relations. To date, these aspects of the behavioral sciences have been synthesized, identified and structured into usable forms by research in communication theory and process to a greater degree than has been done in the field of research in public relations.

Utilizing the behavioral sciences in the study of school public relations is in keeping with the interdisciplinary approach to pre-service and in-service education of school administrators as advocated and followed by the Committee for the Advancement of School Administration.

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[6] Ibid., p. 13.

Campbell and Gregg reported that an interdisciplinary approach to school administration is one of the major emerging trends in the training programs for school administrators. They defined the interdisciplinary approach as drawing upon theory, research, and practice from many fields.[7]

It is interesting to note that a natural outgrowth of this interdisciplinary approach to administrator training programs was the awareness that school-community relationships composed the most pressing school problem.[8]

The origin of the Conceptual Schema

Through the preceding discussion of communication theory and its possible relation to school public relations the area of communication was identified as the theoretical focus for developing a conceptual framework for analyzing the public relations process. This line of thought was then pursued through reviewing the pertinent literature in the fields of both school public relations and communication. Particular efforts were focused upon the identification of

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[7]Campbell and Gregg, op. cit., p. 443.

[8]Moore, op. cit., p. 115.

comparable relationships and concepts between the public relations process and the communication process.

During the search into the literature related to the communication field, it became evident that an appreciable amount of study and research has been done in analyses of the communication process. Many of the studies of the act of communication had been done within the purvue of knowledges in the behavioral sciences.[9] Several of these latter studies had produced models of the communication process applicable to various analytical purposes in communication research and conceptual development. Other references were located that inferred that fundamental relationships and similarities were thought to exist between the communication process and the public relations process.[10]

These intimations led to the thought that, as the

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[9]Carl I. Hovland, Irving L. Janis and Harold K. Kelley, Communication and Persuasion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959); Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955); Daniel Katz and Others (eds.), Public Opinion and Propaganda (New York: Dryden Press, 1954); and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Communication Research and the Social Psychologist," in Wayne Dennis (ed.), Current Trends in Social Psychology (University of Pittsburgh, 1948), pp. 218-73.

[10]Charters, op. cit., pp. 1075-79; Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 1-169.

first step in creating a conceptual schema, an effort should be made to select a likely and creditable model of the communication process, and with it as a guide, to construct a comparable model of the public relations process.

Creation of a model of the public relations process

A number of communication models were examined to determine similarities among their component parts. Finally, a model of the communication process was synthesized from those reviewed. This model presented the communication process in its most simple yet basically complete form. It reflected the specific intent to view communication as a two-way process, even though recent research frequently presented it as a multi-faceted process with many variables impinging upon both the sender and the receiver at all times.[11]

A descriptive communication model in its simplest form was selected so that the comparable public relations model, to be constructed, would identify the fundamental elements of the public relations process without having to

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[11]For an excellent discussion of the multi-faceted dimensions of communication see: John Riley and Matilda White Riley, "Communication and the Social System," in Robert K. Merton, et al. (eds.), Sociology Today--Problems and Prospects (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), pp. 537-78.

introduce more complicated relationships, based on these fundamental elements. However, cognizance was taken later in the study, of the more complicated multi-directional interaction in the public relations process through many of the specific concepts and techniques that were identified through use of the Model.

No model of the school public relations process was located so that it was necessary to construct one without reference to previous work. This project was carried out and a model of the public relations process was constructed with its major elements comparable in most respects to the equivalent communication model. This relationship between the two models is illustrated in Figure 1 which presents the Communication Model and the comparable Public Relations Model. Both of the models will be described in detail and their similarities will be pointed out in the following paragraphs.

The Communication Model contained five major elements: Source, Message, Channel, Receiver, and Response. The first four major elements duplicated the elements in the SMCR Model (Source-Message-Channel-Receiver) developed by Berlo.[12] The fifth major element "Response" was frequently referred

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[12]David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 72.

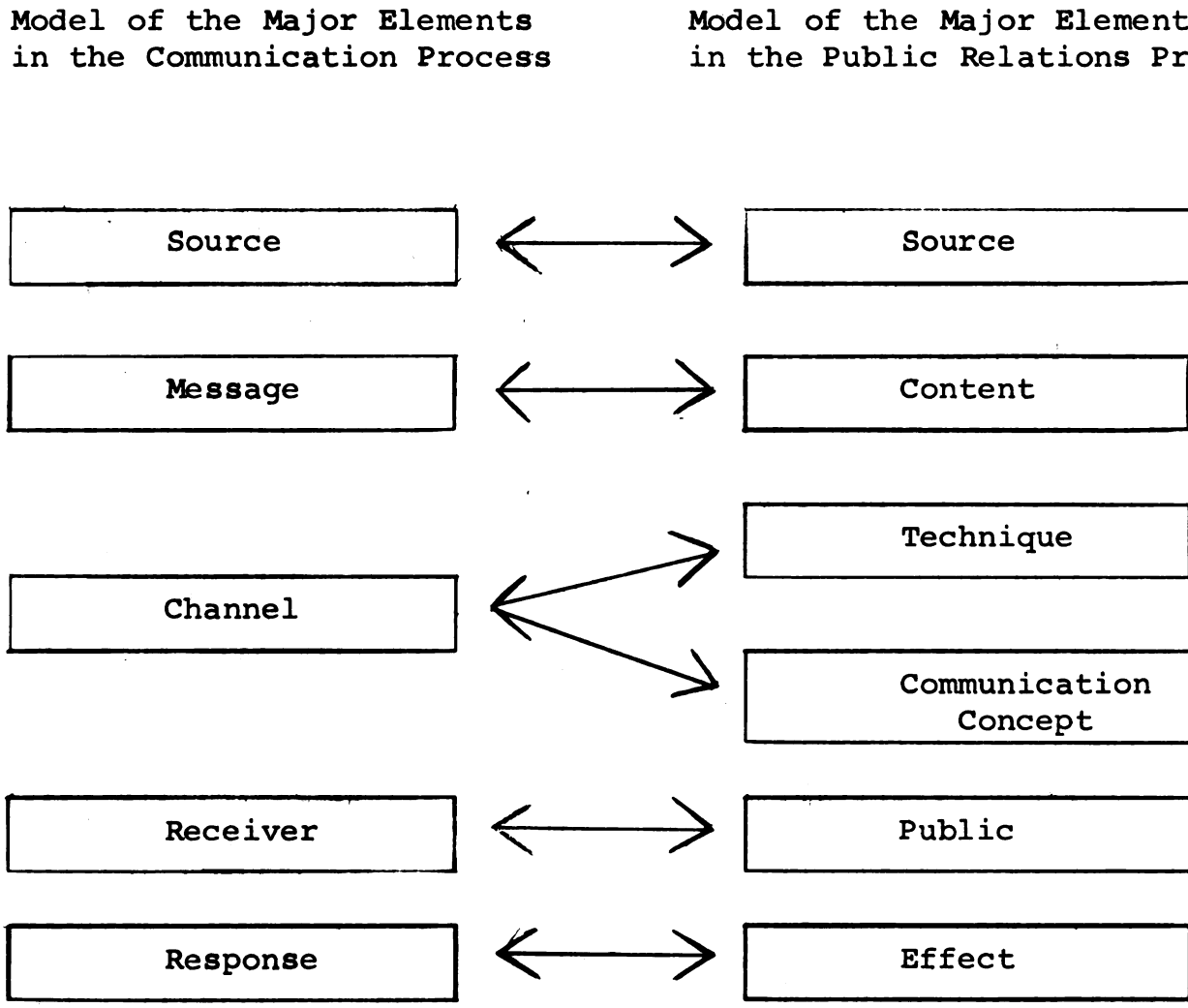

Figure 1. Relationship of the major elements in the model of the communication process to the major elements in the model of the public relations process.

to in the literature as "Effect." It was used in Hovland's description of the communication process consisting of "Communicator-Stimulus-Audience-Response."[13] Hovland's model differed primarily from the Model in Figure 1 in that the category "Stimulus" combined both the elements "Message" and "Channel." "Response," or "Effect," is used also by Lasswell in his well-known formula, "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?"[14]

The Public Relations Model contained six major elements: Source, Content, Technique, Concept, Public and Effect. The addition of one more element than was included in the Communication Model was a refinement that added substantially to the eventual usefulness of the Public Relations Model as a tool for the analysis of the public relations process.

The significant relationships among the major elements of the Communication Model and the major elements of the Public Relations Model were identified through the operational definitions presented in the following paragraphs.

Source in both models is the person or persons who

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[13]Hovland, op. cit., p. 12.

[14]Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," in Lyman Bryson (ed.), The Communication of Ideas (The Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1948), p. 37.

originate the communication. This person, or persons, who serves the source function may serve also as the receiver, depending on the direction of the message.

Message in the Communication Model is synonomous with "Content" in the Public Relations Model, in that both refer to what the source is attempting to transmit to the receiver. The term "Content" is more widely used in the school public relations field and has a broader meaning in that it may refer to interaction between several related messages that make up a specific public relations act.

Channel in the Communication Model is interpreted to mean the various methods of transmitting the message. It is equated to two terms in the Public Relations Model: "Technique" and "Concept." "Technique"describes the numerous methods the school utilizes to transmit and receive messages from the community. It includes both mass media and person-to-person channels. Because of the large number of diverse techniques used in school public relations the need for some method of identifying meaningful relationships between them became apparent. A procedure for identification was provided through the major element "Concept" which classifies each technique according to the theoretical construct underlying it.

Receiver in the Communication Model refers to the

person or persons for whom the message is intended. The term "Public" in the Public Relations Model limits the receiver to those persons or groups with whom the school has or desires contact. The person or persons who serve the receiver function may also serve a source function depending on the direction of the message at a particular instant.

Response in the Communication Model indicates the effect the message sent by the source has upon the receiver. Without some form of response there can be no communication. In the public relations model the major element "Effect" is used. This major element serves the same purpose as does "Response" in that it indicates that the message has been received. It also serves as an evaluative measure to indicate to what degree, if at all, the source's message had the desired effect, or a negative or negligible effect.

Development of the concept of a public relations grid

After the Public Relations Model was created efforts were made to use it in analyses of specific public relations acts. These efforts appeared to have some success when used in independent "trial runs" on hypothetical examples of public relations acts. It was evident, however, that in order to conduct more detailed analyses and research studies of the

public relations process a more sophisticated instrument was needed.

Therefore, as the second phase in the development of a conceptual schema as a plan for analyzing the public relations process, efforts were made to expand the usefulness of the Model. It was visualized that the Conceptual Schema would utilize the major elements of the Public Relations Model as a basic framework into which could be built a series of categorical subdivisions to be used for detailed tabulations, analyses or comparisons of public relations data. Further, it was visualized that the titles, topics, or names to be used in establishing categories within the six major elements of the Model were to be drawn from the area of communication concepts and public relations knowledges and techniques.

The details for this second phase of the Conceptual Schema were kept sufficiently flexible to permit suitable variations in accordance with the obvious needs of a particular research project. Thus, as was done to fit the needs of this particular study of the superintendent's public relations functions, a tailored "grid" could be created for each particular research study. It was assumed that in all instances, the major elements of the Model would remain constant as the framework for all grids, while the content of the grids would

change according to the categorical subdivisions needed for a particular use of the Conceptual Schema.

The preceding description of how the Conceptual Schema was conceived for analyzing the public relations process partially fulfilled one of the purposes of this study, which was to develop a conceptual schema for analyzing the public relations process based on findings of pertinent research in communication.

It was necessary, next, to test the Conceptual Schema's usefulness. It was proposed to do this by collecting public relations acts in which the superintendent served the source function and analyzing them within the framework of the proposed Schema in such a way as to provide useful information for the pre-service and in-service preparation of superintendents.

To carry out this test of usefulness it was necessary to develop a Public Relations Grid, using the major elements of the Public Relations Model, tailored specifically to the public relations functions of school superintendents. The development of this Grid was guided by the method selected for collecting data on the superintendent and his public relations activities. Therefore, before describing in detail the construction of this specific Grid, the data collecting

procedures will be reviewed.

Data-Collecting, Validating, and Processing Procedures

Procedures for collecting data were established in accordance with the critical incident technique. In employing the critical incident technique it is necessary to adapt it to the specific purpose of a particular study. This section describes the use of the technique and the adaptation of it that was necessary for the purpose of this study. It deals specifically with (1) the development of a statement of the general purpose of the superintendent in the area of public relations, (2) selection of the population and sample of superintendents as respondents, and (3) the collection of the data and safeguards employed.

General statement of purpose

The first step in the critical incident procedure, as described by Flanagan,[15] is to determine the general aim and purpose of the activity to be considered. The activity considered in this study was the public relations functions of the superintendent. In order that the respondents could identify and report critical behaviors in the area of

[15] Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 336-37.

public relations it was necessary that they understand the purpose of the activity and that this understanding be common to the viewpoint of the study.

The purpose of the superintendent's functions in the area of public relations, believed to be specific and yet sufficiently general to be commonly acceptable, was conceived by referring to statements in the literature. Special note was made of Pearson's synthesis of seven major research studies which had been concerned with the principles of public relations. He reported that five purposes were generally accepted by school administrators: informing the public, gaining support, establishing confidence, promoting the partnership concept, and furthering the educational program.[16]

The purpose finally developed was stated as follows:

> The purpose of the superintendent in the area of school public relations is to create interaction between the school and the community which will: (1) broaden citizen interest in and understanding of the purpose, value, conditions and needs of education; and (2) produce intelligent support in maintaining and improving the school program.

To assure agreement with and understanding of this purpose by each respondent, a copy was presented to the respondent at the beginning of each interview on a typed card and was followed by an explanatory discussion which

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[16]Pearson, op. cit., p. 4.

ended with the question, "Do you agree or disagree with this stated purpose of the superintendent's functions in the area of public relations?" All respondents agreed to the statement and expressed their understanding of it.

Selection of the population and sample of respondents

The second essential step in the critical incident procedure is to specify the observers to be selected because of their familiarity with the activity, and with the persons to be observed. It was a basic assumption of this study that school superintendents were well-qualified as observers and were able to make self-observations. In this study they were called "respondents."

The population from which data was collected was limited to a random sample of superintendents of school districts with a Class B or Class C high school in the lower peninsula of the State of Michigan.[17] A Class B school is any Michigan high school with an enrollment of 400 to 899 students. Class C high schools have an enrollment between 200 and 399 students. These designations were made originally

[17]Charles E. Forsythe (ed.), "Michigan High School Directory 1960-61 School Year," Michigan High School Athletic Association Bulletin, November, 1960, pp. 1-4.

for athletic purposes in scheduling games between schools and now are used commonly in discussions involving Michigan school districts.

The selection of these categories was made because observation indicated that districts with Class B and C high schools were large enough to support a variety of public relations activities and were still small enough to require the superintendent to be in contact directly with the social forces in the community.

Size of the sample. The size of the sample for the critical incident technique is determined by the number of critical incidents required to provide an adequate statement of requirements for the activity being studied. Flanagan stated that "if the activity or job being defined is relatively simple, it may be satisfactory to collect only 50 to 100 incidents. On the other hand, some types of complex activities appear to require several thousand incidents for an adequate statement of requirements."[18]

In this study a random sampling of twenty per cent of the population was selected as being sufficient to meet this requirement of exhaustiveness of categories if all

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[18]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 343.

superintendents in the sample were interviewed and several incidents were obtained from each respondent. To insure a maximum number of usable critical incidents from each respondent the personal interview was selected as the medium for data-collecting.

Validation of the sample size. Procedures also were adopted to measure exhaustiveness of categories by periodically inspecting the content of the critical incidents as they were being collected to determine if new categories were still being added to the classification system.

The first 25 interviews of the total of 48 produced 161 incidents; these were analyzed and 202 public relations acts were extracted and classified into appropriate categories according to procedures outlined in the next section. The next 10 interviews produced 64 incidents from which 76 public relations acts were extracted. These were classified without major changes into the categories derived from the first 202 public relations acts. However, several minor adjustments were necessary, as sufficient acts were accumulated, to move categories originally mentioned only once out of the "other" classification to form their own categories. The final 13 interviews produced 74 critical incidents and 86 public relations acts and required no major changes in the classification

system. At this point the sample was determined as being sufficient and the categories as being exhaustive for the population selected.

Selection of the sample. To insure that twenty per cent of the superintendents in the population would be interviewed a random sample of twenty-five per cent of the superintendents with B and C high schools was made according to standard statistical procedures. Letters explaining the study and an invitation to participate was sent to all superintendents selected (see Appendix A). Of the fifty-nine superintendents queried, fifty responded affirmatively, four stated that they did not desire to participate, and five did not answer. A random selection of the affirmative answers was then made to provide an interview group of twenty per cent (N = 20) of Class B superintendents and twenty per cent (N = 28) of Class C superintendents. These figures are presented in Table 1.

Collection of the data and safeguards employed

Personal interview was selected as the medium for data-collecting. To insure uniformity of interview procedures an interview schedule (see Appendix B) and a basic data sheet (see Appendix C), which obtained information about the

superintendent, were developed.

Table 1. Population and initial and final samples of respondents.

Superintendents by high school class	Total Population	Number in Initial Sample (25 Per Cent)	Number in Final Sample (20 Per Cent)
B	100	25	20
C	138	34	28
TOTAL	238	59	48

Testing of interview procedures. Two interviews, not included in the data reported in this study, were conducted as exploratory studies of the interview schedule and basic data sheet. These resulted only in minor changes. In addition, the first five interviews were conducted as pilot interviews. No further changes appeared necessary, nor desirable, in the interview procedures.

Conduct of the interviews. Forty-eight interviews lasting from one to one-and-one-half hours were conducted over a four-month period. Of these, twenty-eight were conducted at the College of Education Building, Michigan State University; eleven were conducted at the Winter meeting of the Michigan Association of School Administrators; and nine were conducted during personal visits to the superintendents' school districts. All interviews were conducted by the

investigator.

Six considerations of data collection established by Smit[19] were taken into account. These are listed below, followed by the application of each to this study.

1. The respondent must understand that the data being collected are behavioral, and that the important information is an accurate and complete description of what the person was observed to do.

Each respondent's attention was directed to the fact that critical incidents were specific, observed acts. In addition, one of the specific questions on the interview schedule was, "What actually happened?"

2. The objective of the area being observed must be clearly in front of the person making the judgment.

The purpose of the superintendent's functions in the area of public relations was defined and presented on a card to the respondents so that they were able to refer to it during the interview. The respondents were then asked to recall specific acts of their own that, in their opinion, were outstandingly effective or ineffective in accomplishing the public relations functions of their jobs.

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[19]JoAnne Smit, A Study of the Critical Requirements for Instructors of General Psychology Courses (The University of Pittsburgh Bulletin, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1948), cited by William D. King, Certain Requirements for the Job of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Georgia (Atlanta, Georgia: State Department of Education, 1960), pp. 12-13.

3. Special care must be taken so that questions orient the respondents to make their judgments of behavior toward the purpose of the superintendent's job, and not the interviewer's opinions.

On occasion during the interview, the respondent was referred to the purpose stated on the card. The interviewer was careful also not to express opinions.

4. An important factor in observer orientation is his evaluation of the behavior as effective or ineffective in terms of its most usual results.

The respondent was asked to state the reason he judged each behavior reported to be effective or ineffective. If no specific reason was given the incident was not recorded.

5. Maximum cooperation of respondents will be assured only if the anonymity of all parties is protected and the methods insuring safeguards to maintain anonymity are explained.

Respondents were informed that the information they supplied would be held in confidence and that no individual would be identified in any way.

6. The inclusion of sample incidents in the instructions may tend to restrict the number of different kinds of behaviors reported, as observers tend to report similar incidents.

Special care was taken to refrain from giving any sample incidents to the respondents.

Data-processing

As the incidents were gathered each one was typed on a 5 x 7 card. Handling the material soon indicated that the I.B.M. tabulating process would be helpful in analyzing the data. An I.B.M. information card was designed (see Appendix E) which provided space for each incident to be copied and boxes for the coding numbers assigned to the data taken from the basic data sheets and the categories of the classification system.

Each incident was checked against the following criteria, adapted from King, to determine its usability:

1. It was a first-hand report of actual behavior.
2. The behavior was actually observed or experienced by the respondent.
3. The relevant factors in the situation were given.
4. The respondent made a definite judgment regarding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the act in the accomplishment of the stated purpose of the superintendent in the area of public relations.
5. The behavior or behaviors intended as critical by the respondents were identifiable.
6. The respondent indicated his reason for considering the act effective or ineffective in the accomplishment of the stated purpose of the superintendent in the area of public relations.[20]

The incidents which met the above stated criteria were then designated as a critical incident and the specific critical behavior, called the public relations act in this

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[20]King, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

study, was identified in the margin of the card. In the instances in which a critical incident contained more than one public relations act a separate card was used for each and a code letter was assigned to correspond with the critical incident from which it was derived.

An example of an acceptable critical incident which contained two public relations acts is given below. This incident is also an example of effective behavior. The superintendent's evaluation that his action was effective is given in the last paragraph.

(Illustration I)

I spent considerable time preparing a community newsletter. We always included major articles on curriculum, especially changes that we were making. One day I stopped in the local barber shop and asked the barber what he thought of our change in
act 1 history. The newsletter describing the change was on a table nearby. He didn't seem able to answer. Later at a card party I asked a man and his wife the same question. They had no idea what the change was. I asked them why they didn't know. They said that they read the newsletter but didn't understand it. I then asked the principal if we were getting any reaction to the program and he said people didn't seem interested.

For the next issue of the newsletter I invited
act 2 several PTA mothers to help us prepare the curriculum story. We gave them the basic information and they wrote it. There was no comparison with the first story.

evaluation I again went about town asking people to comment and this time they had comments to make. The principal reported that he was getting reactions from parents.

The following is an example of an incident with one ineffective public relations act:

(Illustration II)

Accepting the job as superintendent, I asked the current superintendent for a list of 10 to 15 key individuals in the community. I knew we had a small deficit and a millage election would be needed. I asked this group to become a finance committee and to help me study the school's finances. We ended up locating a deficit much larger than we anticipated. This confused all of us.

act — The size of the amount made me feel that it was necessary to go to the people very quickly for money to replace the deficit and to operate the new high school. I scheduled an election for the next month. In the meantime we kept locating small discrepancies.

evaluation — We held the election and it failed. One committee member reported to me that I scheduled the election too soon. They did not have enough time to feel comfortable with the problem.

The forty-eight respondents contributed 299 critical incidents which met the criteria of the critical incident technique. From these incidents 364 public relations acts were derived. The number of acts reported by each respondent ranged from one to twenty-eight.

Forty-one (11.3%) of the public relations acts were reported as ineffective. The remaining 323 (88.7%) were designated effective by the respondents. It was possible to identify the 6 major elements of the public relations process in each of the 364 acts.

Application of the data collected to the Conceptual Schema

According to the procedures of the critical incident technique the data collected is ready for some form of analysis once the critical behaviors, or public relations acts, are identified. The latitude provided the user of the technique in developing a meaningful organization of the data he collects is indicated in the following statement by Flanagan:

> The induction of categories from the basic data in the form of incidents is a task requiring insight, experience, and judgment. Unfortunately, the procedure is, in the present stage of psychological knowledge, more subjective than objective. No simple rules are available, and the quality and usability of the final product are largely dependent on the skill and sophistication of the formulator.[21]

The method for analyzing the public relations acts was designed so that it would (1) develop the public relations model further in the form of a grid, (2) offer potential usefulness in studying specific phases of the public relations process, and (3) provide information useful for the pre-service and in-service training of superintendents in the area of public relations.

Essentially, the method called for extracting from each public relations act the specific source, content,

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[21] Flanagan, op. cit., p. 344.

technique, concept, public, and effect involved, and then classifying each in some meaningful form under the appropriate major element of the Public Relations Model to form the Public Relations Grid.

This approach cast the Model into the role of providing the major headings for the classification system, or Grid, and the public relations acts became the source of material to be classified.

The above procedure for preparing the collected data for analysis was established in accordance with Flanagan's statement that "The aim is to increase the usefulness of the data while sacrificing as little as possible of their comprehensiveness, specificity, and validity."[22]

The following observations were made in utilizing the Public Relations Model as the framework for the Grid or classification system:

1. The six major elements of the Public Relations Model could be identified as the elements of a public relations act. This made it possible to identify the specific source, content, technique, concept, public and effect involved in each act and use these to construct the classification system.

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[22] Ibid.

2. For the purposes of this study the first element in the Model "Source" was the superintendent in all of the public relations acts. The last element "Effect" was either effective or ineffective as designated by the respondent.

3. The specific designations for the remaining four major elements--Content, Technique, Concept, Public--differed according to the specific public relations act. Therefore, a more detailed classification system needed to be developed for these four elements.

The four elements requiring a detailed classification system for the purpose of analyzing the public relations acts were defined as follows: Content - What the act was concerned about; Technique - the product of the skills involved in the act; Concept - the specific communication or theory underlying the technique; and Public - the person or persons towards whom the act was directed.

As the incidents were collected each public relations act was identified and tentative categories were derived for each of the four major elements requiring a detailed classification system. For instance, the first public relations act in Illustration I was classified as follows: Content--curriculum, Technique--personal contact, Concept--feedback, Public--total community. Because this act was designated as

an effective act by the respondent, each of the categories were recorded, "effective." The second public relations act in Illustration I was classified: Content--curriculum; Technique--using individual abilities of citizens, Concept--involvement; Public--total community. Each of the categories were identified, "ineffective."

As more acts were analyzed commonalities began to appear between the specific categories of each major element so that they could be grouped under tentative sub-area categories. The sub-area categories were further grouped under area categories. Additional data produced some changes in this tentative classification structure. Such changes, however, tended to be minor in that they represented refinements rather than complete revisions.

The grouping of the specific elements under area and sub-area categories contributed to a logical classification schema for "Content," "Technique" and "Public." Only twelve specific communication concepts were identified, each discrete from the other. This made area categories unnecessary for the major element, "Communication Concept." However, certain procedures for identifying the communication concepts were followed that did not apply to the other elements. These are described below.

Criteria for establishing the "critical" concepts. The major elements "Communication Concept" and "Technique" in the Grid are closely related to each other. Each technique is based on specific concepts. Because more than one concept might form the underlying basis of a specific technique, depending on the complexity and use of the technique, it was necessary to identify the one "critical" concept for each technique according to its use in the particular public relations act. The importance of one concept over another in a specific technique depended, in part, on the reason for using the technique in a particular incident.

To identify the critical concept used in each public relations act, first the specific technique was named. In most instances the specific concept underlying the technique was then readily identifiable. For instance, one incident emphasized the need for finding out what the people thought of their schools. The superintendent prepared a questionnaire to obtain community opinion. The results provided the school board with useful information for future action. The concept underlying the use of the questionnaire was identified as "feedback." However, if the point being made by the respondent had been that the superintendent distributed the questionnaire during vacation time in August, and consequently did not obtain

significant returns, the critical concept would have been "timing."

The identification of different critical concepts for the same technique, depending on the specific situation in which the technique was used, prevented an absolute one-to-one relationship between techniques and the related concepts. However, certain techniques did retain the same critical concept in all of the public relations acts, and many more related to the same concept for a significant number of its acts. For instance, the technique "personal contact" was used seventy-seven times by the respondents, and "empathy" was identified thirty-five times as the critical communication concept for this technique. Seven other concepts were identified as critical for the remaining forty-two techniques. None were identified more than eight times.

Identifying the use of a specific concept by a respondent did not give automatic assurance that he understood it nor deliberately selected it. The concept involved in the public relations act lacked the obvious identification cues of the other elements of the public relations process. In most instances, the respondent identified verbally the specific public by naming the individual or group in the incident which he was attempting to reach. The specific

content of each act and the technique used also were stated verbally by the respondent as he related an incident. However, the specific concept underlying the technique seldom was stated verbally. The method of collecting data did not provide for indicating if the use of a specific concept resulted from the superintendent's understanding of the principles involved or from his familiarity with the particular technique. He may well have used a technique without any theoretical knowledge of the reason why the technique may produce a certain desired effect.

Validation of the classification process. When the tentative classification structure was determined it was subjected to view by a person independent of the study. Thirty-three acts were independently classified on 4 criteria resulting in 132 decisions. There was ninety-seven per cent agreement between the judge and the investigator.

Limitation of the classification system. Developing the Public Relations Grid from the content of the public relations acts meant that the list of categories under each element was complete in terms of the reported behavior of the superintendents, but was not necessarily complete in terms of the professional literature. Lack of obvious categories in some areas of the Grid became apparent as it was

reviewed for internal consistency. In those instances where the outline structure would be inconsistent the "obvious category" was listed and a zero entered to record that no public relations acts contributed to it.

Summary

The first section of this chapter presented the procedures that were followed in creating a Conceptual Schema for analyzing the elements and process of school public relations. The steps described in this procedure included: (1) the development of a Public Relations Model comparable, in most respects, to a model of the communication process; and (2) the establishment of the concepts to be followed in constructing specific grids, within the framework of the Model. These grids were visualized as a method for conducting detailed analyses of public relations elements and processes.

The second section presented the procedures followed in collecting, validating, and processing the data necessary to develop a specific grid which would test the usefulness of the proposed Schema. Descriptions were given of (1) how the data were collected in the form of incidents, using the critical incident technique; (2) how the incidents were obtained through personal interview of forty-eight superintendents

randomly selected; and (3) how public relations acts, which described the public relations functions of the superintendent, were derived from the incidents.

The third section described how the specific grid was constructed. This description included how specific elements of the public relations process were identified in the acts and classified under the major elements of the Public Relations Model to form the Grid which met the intent of the Conceptual Schema.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The previous chapter described the process by which specific categories for the major elements of the Public Relations Model were derived from the public relations acts and grouped under common area and sub-area categories to form the Grid. This chapter will present: (1) an analysis of the complete Grid; (2) an analysis of specific elements according to effectiveness and ineffectiveness; (3) relationships between specific categories in the Grid and certain characteristics of the respondents; and (4) a summary of analyses and interpretations made from the data.

The Grid

In its complete form the Grid, illustrated in Figure 2, consisted of: (1) the Public Relations Model which identified the six major elements of the public relations process--Source, Content, Communication Concept, Technique, Public and Effect; and (2) the specific elements of the Grid developed for the six major elements.

The Grid was made up of the specific elements of the

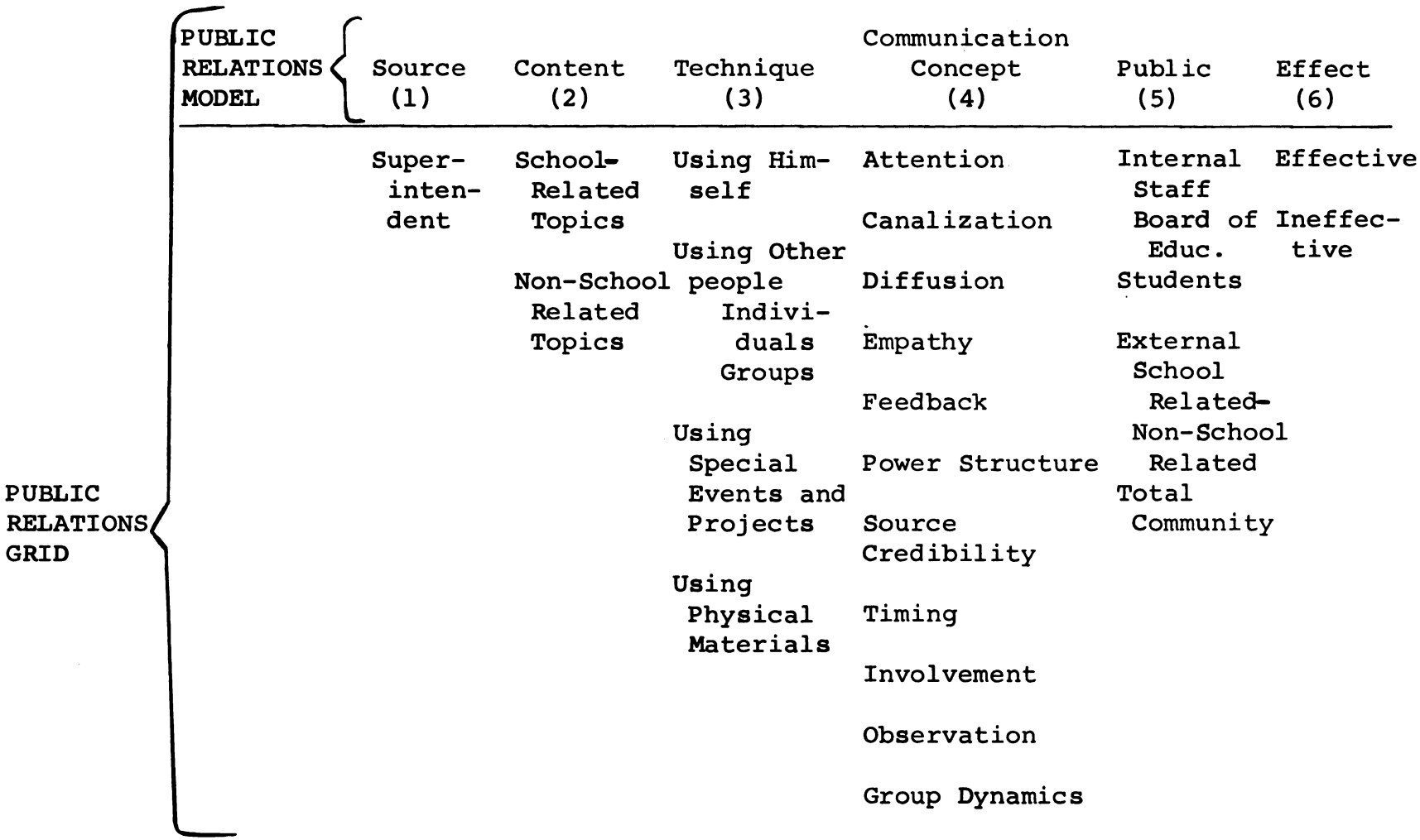

Figure 2. Outline of the Conceptual Schema for the analysis of the public relations functions of the superintendent.

public relations acts, sub-areas under which these specific elements were grouped, and the areas under which the sub-areas were grouped. This organization permitted analysis of the public relations acts of superintendents at the level of the smallest unit of the public relations process--the specific element; and at the levels of the larger units of the public relations process--the sub-area and area categories.

Procedures for analysis

Analysis of the parts of the Grid was conducted in the following manner. Each of the six major elements was viewed, first, on the basis of frequency of classification of each of its specific elements. These total frequencies provided a measure of their gross importance. The information next was analyzed on the basis of the number of respondents reporting a specific element. In this way duplicate use of the same specific element by one respondent was eliminated. The data provided in the second step was then analyzed according to relationships with specified professional characteristics of the respondents.

The analysis and interpretation of the data was not intended to be exhaustive. It was conducted to ascertain usefulness of the Conceptual Schema in studying specific

aspects of the public relations process, and to provide information useful in the in-service and pre-service preparation of superintendents. Also, the information on the Grid was recorded as reported by the respondents. No attempt was made to evaluate the "goodness" or "badness" of the acts in terms of authoritative opinion on good and bad public relations practices. The only evaluative measure that was applied to the acts and any part of the specific information in them was the respondents' own judgment of effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

A description and brief discussion of each section of the Grid is given below. This description provides an account of each item in the Grid. In addition two groups of percentage figures are given: (1) the percentages of public relations acts which include a specific element are reported when deemed especially meaningful to the purposes of this study; and (2) the percentages of respondents reporting a specific element are noted for all elements reported by fifty per cent (N = 24), or more, of the respondents.

Analysis of the Major Element "Source"

The source in all of the 364 public relations acts reported was identified as the "superintendent." This

classification was in keeping with the intent of the study to analyze those aspects of the public relations process in which the superintendent served as the focal point. The section of the Grid for the major element "Source" is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Public relations acts classified according to "Source" under Section 1 of the Grid.

Source	Total - 364 (100%)
Superintendent	364 (48) (100%)

Key: The first number of the pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element.

The second number (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific concept.

The third number gives the percentage of all acts reported.

Analysis of the Major Element "Content"

The content of the 364 public relations acts was divided into two areas: School-Related Topics--345 acts (94.2%), and Non-School-Related Topics--19 acts (5.8%). The section of the Grid for the major element "Content" is presented in Table 3.

School-related topics

The "School-Related Topics" were divided into 8 specific

Key: The first number of each pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element. These numbers total upward to the sub-area and area categories.

The second number of each pair (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific element. These numbers cannot be totaled upward because the same respondent may have reported acts involving more than one of the specific elements in the parallel categories.

Table 3. Public relations acts classified according to "Content" under Section 2 of the Grid.

Content	Total - 364 (100%)
SCHOOL-RELATED TOPICS	345 (94.2%)
Administrative operation 23 (18)	
Finance 91	
General school funds . . 18 (13)	
Special tax elections . . 73 (34)	
Instructional program 62	
Interpretation 43 (24)	
Change and/or improvement 19 (17)	
Athletics . . 2 (2)	
Other (academic) .17 (15)	
Plant (including equipment) 13 (9)	
Personnel 34	
Employees 14 (9)	
Students 20 (14)	
Reorganization 21 (12)	
Transportation 9 (8)	
General (Includes several of above) 92 (33)	
NON-SCHOOL-RELATED TOPICS	19 (5.8%)
Problems of a local business . . . 4 (4)	
Problems/projects of community groups 7 (7)	
Problems/interests of individuals . 8 (6)	

topic elements: general (a combination of several of the topics) reported in 92 acts, finance--91 acts, instructional program--62 acts, personnel (employee and student)--34 acts, administrative operation--23 acts, school district reorganization--21 acts, plant (including equipment--13 acts, and transportation--9 acts.

"Finance" was the most frequently mentioned individual topic and reflected the widest range of concern of the respondents. Twenty-five per cent of the acts involved money and were reported by 38 respondents (79.2%).

The finance topics were further classified according to public relations acts concerned with "general school funds" and "special tax elections." The general finance topic was derived from 18 acts reported by 13 respondents. The 73 public relations acts involving tax elections were reported by 34 respondents (70.8%). In the above percentages some superintendents reported acts in both finance categories. This duplication was removed in determining that 72 per cent of the respondents reported an act involving the total area of finance.

Though the category "special tax election" was classified under the logical topic, finance; in many of the public relations acts this topic was presented in relationship

to instructional and plant needs. It was not possible to indicate this relationship through the classification system. Inspection of the incidents reported indicated that the periodic tax elections which face most Michigan school districts provided one of the major vehicles and reasons for superintendents communicating with the public about the instructional program and school plant.

The "instructional program" followed "finance" closely in the number of respondents who indicated that it was a critical area of public relations. Thirty respondents (62.5%) reported 62 acts (17%) involving instruction.

Superintendents apparently spent more time attempting to interpret the existing instructional program than in attempting to bring about change or improvement. A subclassification of "instructional program" indicated that 24 respondents (50%) reported 43 acts dealing with "interpretation of the curriculum." Seventeen reported 19 acts involving "change or improvement."

Of the 19 acts which interpreted the curriculum 2 dealt with the "athletic program," as contrasted with 17 which dealt with the academic program and were classified under "other." This distinction was made on the Grid because popular views hold that athletics is a dominant subject of

school information to a community.

An analysis of the category "personnel" indicated that the respondents reported more public relations acts concerning students than acts concerning school employees. Fourteen respondents reported 20 acts about "students" and 9 respondents reported 14 acts about "employees."

The remaining school-related topics were reported by the following numbers of respondents: general--33 respondents (68.8%), administrative operation--18 respondents, school district reorganization--12 respondents, plant--9 respondents, and transportation--8 respondents.

Non-school-related topics

The specific content classified under "Non-School-Related Topics" included 4 public relations acts concerned with "problems of a local business," 7 concerned with "projects of community groups," and 8 concerned with "problems and interests of individuals." Each act in the first 2 categories was reported by different respondents. Six respondents reported the 8 acts in the third category.

The wide variety of topics covered by these three non-school-related categories is illustrated by the examples below.

Three respondents reported the same content for acts revolving around "problems of a local business." In each instance the superintendents organized a student committee to promote a subscription drive to aid a local editor faced with low circulation of his newspaper.

The 7 acts involving "problems and projects of community groups" ranged from a superintendent accepting the chairmanship of the annual Potato Festival sponsored by farmers in the area, to the superintendent making school facilities available for the Kiwanis Pancake Supper.

An example of public relations acts involving "problems and interest of individuals" was the incident in which the superintendent sent a congratulatory letter to parents of a boy in the Navy who received a special award. The boy was a high school dropout and the parents blamed the schools.

Analysis of the Major Element "Technique"

The examples of specific techniques derived from the 364 public relations acts were divided into 5 area categories which indicated use of the techniques by the superintendent. This approach permitted each technique to be considered from the focus of the superintendent. These areas categories were as follows: Using Himself, reported in 131 acts (35.7%),

Using Other People--91 acts (22.5%), Using Special Events and Projects--47 acts (15.7%), and Using Physical Materials--95 acts (26.1%). The section of the Grid for the major element "Technique" is presented in Table 4.

Techniques using himself

The most frequently reported technique involving "Using Himself" was "personal contact" reported in 77 acts by 38 respondents (79.2%). This was followed by: administrative act--21 acts, 12 respondents; prepared presentation--19 acts, 14 respondents; participation in community and group projects--7 acts, 7 respondents; preparation of news releases--4 acts, 4 respondents; and teaching about education to high school classes--3 acts, 3 respondents.

Four of the above six types of techniques brought the respondent into contact with other people in face-to-face relationships. The two remaining techniques "administrative act" and "news release preparation" did not necessarily require person-to-persón relationships.

Techniques using physical materials

The next most frequently reported techniques involved the respondent "Using Physical Materials." These techniques divided among "printed/written materials prepared by the school,"

Key: The first number of each pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element. These numbers total upward to the sub-area and area headings.

The second number of each pair (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific element. These numbers cannot be totaled upward because the same respondent may have reported acts involving more than one of the specific elements in the parallel categories.

*Establish personal relationship with editor that will effect school news coverage.

Table 4. Public relations act classified according to "Technique" under Section 3 of the Grid.

Technique	Total - 364 (100%)
USING HIMSELF (superintendent)	**131 (35.7%)**
Participation	7 (7)
Administrative act	21 (12)
News release preparation	4 (4)
Teaching about education	3 (3)
Prepared presentation	19 (14)
Personal contact	77 (38)
USING OTHER PEOPLE	**91 (22.5%)**
Individuals - local	36
Teachers	19
As speakers	5 (4)
As writers of news releases	7 (5)
For knowledge and status in community	5 (5)
Other	2 (2)
School district residents	17
Newspaper editor's position*	11 (10)
Citizen's individual abilities	6 (6)
Individuals - Outside resource persons	2 (2)
Groups	53
School personnel	9
For parent-teacher conferences	8 (8)
As get-out-the vote workers	1 (1)
Students	6
As newspaper subscription committee	3 (3)
As school news page committee	3 (3)
School district residents	30
As members of school needs committee	17 (16)
As members of continuing advisory committee	7 (6)
As members of other committees.	6 (6)
Community organizations	2(2)
Board of education	6(5)

Table 4. Continued.

USING SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROJECTS			**47 (15.7%)**
In-service class		2 (2)	
Meeting		21	
Open public meeting	9 (9)		
Small group meeting	10 (9)		
School board-teacher meeting	2 (2)		
Professional meeting attendance*		5 (4)	
Visitation*		5 (4)	
School committee (internal)		5 (5)	
Staff social affair		4 (3)	
Other		5 (5)	
USING PHYSICAL MATERIALS			**95 (26.1%)**
Printed/written materials prepared by schools		73	
Written administrative policies	24 (15)		
Letters	17 (8)		
Reports	3 (3)		
School publications	19		
Annual report	1 (1)		
Newsletter--parent/community	6 (6)		
Newsletter--staff	2 (2)		
Newsletter to school board	4 (4)		
Millage brochure	2 (2)		
Board agenda	1 (1)		
Teacher handbook	1 (1)		
Folder describing taxes	1 (1)		
Teaching guide on education	1 (1)		
Survey-opinionnaire	10 (6)		
Mass media		20	
Newspapers (editorial space)	12		
School news stories	11 (8)		
School news page prepared by students	1 (1)		
Newspapers (advertising space)	3		
Board of education minutes	1 (1)		
Progress report of school system	1 (1)		
Tax election endorsement	1 (1)		

Table 4. Continued.

USING PHYSICAL MATERIALS, Continued.	
Radio--school program broadcast . . .	4 (2)
Professional magazine articles by staff	1 (1)
Object--school facilities	2 (2)

*Planned by the superintendent for others.

reported in 73 acts; "mass media," reported in 20 acts; and "school facilities," reported in 2 acts.

The "printed/written materials" further divided as follows: written administrative policies--24 acts, letters (written by the superintendent)--17 acts, school publications--19 acts, school surveys (in the form of opinionnaires to the community)--10 acts, and reports (prepared by the superintendent)--3 acts.

"Administrative policies," though most frequently mentioned as a written material, was reported by only 15 respondents. This indicated that certain respondents relied heavily upon written policies in carrying out their public relations activities. The same relationship was found in the technique "administrative act" which respondents reported under the area, "Using Himself."

Letters and surveys, as techniques, also reflected repeated use by certain respondents. Eight respondents reported the 17 acts involving "letters," and 6 respondents reported the 10 acts involving using "surveys or opinionnaires."

On the other hand, 19 respondents reported the 19 acts involving "school publications." There was no duplication of respondents in the following breakdown of types of school publications: Parent or community newsletter--reported in

6 acts, newsletter to the school board--4 acts; staff newsletter--2 acts; millage brochure--2 acts, and one each of the following--annual report, board agenda, teacher handbook, folder describing taxes, and a teaching guide on education.

The 20 acts involving the use of the "mass media" as a technique were reported by 14 respondents. These acts were divided as follows: use of the newspaper--15 acts, radio--4 acts, and professional magazines--1 act. "Newspaper" further divided between "school news stories" (in the editorial space of the paper) reported in 12 acts, and "board of education minutes," "progress report" and "tax election endorsement" (in the advertising space of the paper) reported in one act each.

Techniques using other people

Under the area category of techniques "Using Other People" the respondents reported 53 acts involving using "groups" of people and 38 acts using "individuals." However, this difference was narrowed when the number of respondents who reported acts in these two areas was recorded. Thirty-five respondents (72.9%) reported the 53 acts involving "groups." Twenty-nine (60.4%) reported the 38 acts involving "individuals." Both the individual and group categories

consisted of teachers, citizens, and students. Analysis of the two categories by each of these types provided interesting information.

"Using individual teachers" and "using individual school district residents" appeared to be equally popular as a means for reaching other segments of the public. Nineteen acts using teachers were reported by 16 respondents; and 17 acts involving residents were reported by 16 respondents.

Individual teachers were used as "speakers" in 5 acts by 4 respondents, as "writers of news releases" in 7 acts by 5 respondents, for "their knowledge and status in the community" in 5 acts by 5 respondents, and for "other" reasons in 2 acts by 2 respondents.

The newspaper editor was the only individual in the community singled out by several respondents as a person whose position was useful or detrimental to the schools. Ten respondents cited 11 acts involving "using the newspaper editor's position." Six acts reported by 6 respondents, involved "using the individual abilities of citizens." Two respondents reported "using outside resource persons" in 2 public relations acts.

Though teachers were used frequently as individuals, they were seldom used as a group by the respondents. Nine

respondents reported 9 acts involving teachers in a group. Eight of these acts used the teachers in "parent-teacher conferences," and 1 act used them to "get-out-the-vote" during a millage election. Even in these instances the teachers acted on an individual basis.

Twenty-eight respondents (58.3 per cent) reported "using school district residents as a group" in 30 acts. In all instances, these groups were school committees. Residents used as "members of school needs committee" were reported in 17 acts by 16 respondents, residents used "as members of continuing advisory committee" were reported in 7 acts by 6 respondents, and as "members of other school committees" in 6 acts by 6 respondents. The school needs committees were usually established to determine needs of the schools and to conduct tax elections to meet these needs.

"Community organizations" were used in 2 acts by 2 respondents. The "board of education" was used in 6 acts by 5 respondents.

No acts were reported in which students were used as individuals. Six public relations acts, reported by 6 respondents, used them as a group. In 3 of these acts they served as a "newspaper subscription committee," and in the other 3 acts they served as a "committee to prepare the

school news page" for a local newspaper.

Techniques using special events and projects

The 47 techniques classified under the area category "Using Special Events and Projects" primarily revolved around events which involved persons in school problems and issues, rather than in events which provided programs of an entertaining or general information nature.

The most frequently used technique was "meetings." "Open public meetings" were reported in 9 acts by 9 respondents. "Small group meetings" were reported in 10 acts by 9 respondents, and "school board-teacher meetings" were reported in 2 acts by 2 respondents.

"Internal school committees," consisting of teachers and administrative staff, were reported used in 5 acts by 5 respondents.

Eight respondents reported using events that provided first-hand experience for citizens or staff members. "Attendance at professional meetings" was arranged by 4 respondents for other individuals in 5 acts. "Personal visitation" to other school districts and to schools within the district also was arranged for individuals in 5 acts by 4 respondents.

Two respondents reported 2 acts using "in-service

classes" in curriculum to raise the competency level of the teachers thereby hoping to reduce citizen criticism and a negative image of the teacher.

"Staff social affairs" were reported used by 3 respondents in 4 acts.

The final specific category "other" was used to classify 5 miscellaneous events as projects used by the respondents. These were, career day, mailing tickets to community persons for school events, providing music instruction for parochial school children, arranging a recreation program for young married adults, and scheduling a school library project.

The most frequently used techniques

An analysis of the total Grid for the major element "Technique" indicated the following five most frequently reported techniques: personal contact by the respondent, reported in 77 acts by 38 respondents; administrative written policies--24 acts, 15 respondents; administrative acts of the respondent--21 acts, 12 respondents; prepared presentation by the respondent--19 acts, 14 respondents; and the use of residents on school needs committees--17 acts, 16 respondents.

The importance of administrative practices and policies in the public relations process was highlighted further by combining the public relations acts involving written administrative policies and acts involving administrative acts of the superintendent for a total of 45 or 12.4% of all acts.

Analysis of the Major Element "Communication Concept"

Before presenting an analysis of the communication concepts on the Grid, two procedures which were followed in determining the classification of these concepts will be reviewed. Procedure one: Because of the interrelatedness of the parts of the communication process, specific operational definitions were written for each concept to insure that the requirement of discreteness among the specific elements of the Grid was met. These definitions were used in identifying and classifying each concept. They were reported in Chapter I. Procedure two: Because more than one concept was frequently involved in carrying out a technique, a procedure was established for identifying the one "critical" concept related to the technique in each public relations act. This procedure was presented in Chapter II.

Following the above procedures, the 364 public relations acts were classified according to the "critical" concept

underlying the technique identified in each act, and the operational definitions prepared specifically for this study.

"Empathy" was the most frequently reported communication concept. Sixty-five acts (17.5%) involving empathy were reported by 35 (73.9%) respondents. It was closely followed by "dissemination" reported in 51 acts (14%) by 26 respondents (54.2%). "Involvement" and "canalization" were each reported in 44 acts (12%). However, 29 respondents (60.4%) reported acts utilizing involvement and 21 reported acts utilizing canalization.

The remaining communication concepts reported in order of frequency were as follows: observation, reported in 38 acts by 25 respondents (52.1%); group dynamics--26 acts, 21 respondents; feedback--23 acts, 14 respondents; attention--22 acts, 18 respondents; diffusion--16 acts, 12 respondents; timing--13 acts, 10 respondents; power structure--12 acts, 9 respondents; and source credibility--10 acts, 10 respondents. The section of the Grid for the major element "Communication Concept" is reported in Table 5.

Analysis of the Major Element "Public"

The 364 specific elements derived from the public relations acts for the major element "Public" were classified

Table 5. Public relations acts classified according to "Communication Concept" under Section 4 of the Grid.

Communication Concept*	Total - 364 (100%)
Attention	22 (18) (6.0%)
Canalization	44 (21) (12.0%)
Diffusion	16 (12) (4.2%)
Dissemination	51 (26) (14.0%)
Empathy	65 (35) (17.5%)
Feedback	23 (14) (6.2%)
Power Structure	12 (9) (3.4%)
Source Credibility	10 (10) (2.7%)
Timing	13 (10) (3.4%)
Involvement	44 (29) (12.0%)
Observation	38 (25) (10.3%)
Group Dynamics	26 (21) (7.1%)

Key: The first number of each pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element.

The second number of each pair (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific concept.

The third number gives the percentage of all acts reported.

*No area headings were derived for "Communication Concept." The twelve specific elements stand as their own headings.

under three areas: Internal Public, defined as persons within the school system--77 acts (21.2%); External Public, defined as specific persons or groups within the community--187 acts (51.4%), and Total Community--100 acts (27.4%). The section of the Grid for the major element "Public" is presented in Table 6.

Internal publics

The "Internal Publics" divided into three sub-areas: school staff--31 acts, board of education--40 acts, and students--6 acts. The specific elements for each of the above sub-areas were then classified according to "individuals," "formal groups," and "informal groups" in the following manner:

School staff--individual instructional personnel--7 acts, reported by 6 respondents; individual non-instructional personnel--1 act, formal instructional sub-groups--4 acts, 4 respondents; formal non-instructional sub-groups--1 act; informal instructional sub-groups--3 acts, 2 respondents; informal non-instructional sub-groups--1 act; all staff members in a formal group--4 acts, 3 respondents; and all staff members in an informal group--10 acts, 10 respondents.

Board of education--individual board members--8 acts, 6 respondents; board members as a group--32 acts, 23 respondents.

Table 6. Public relations acts classified according to "Public" under Section 5 of the Grid.

Public	Total - 364 (100%)
INTERNAL	77 (21.2%)
Staff	31
Individuals	8
Instructional	7 (6)
Non-instructional	1 (1)
Sub-groups	9
Formal groups	5
Instructional	4 (4)
Non-instructional	1 (1)
Informal groups	4
Instructional	3 (2)
Non-instructional	1 (1)
All staff members	14
Formal groups	4
Instructional	4 (3)
Non-instructional	0
Both	0
Informal groups	10
Instructional	7 (7)
Non-instructional	3 (3)
Both	0
Board of education	40
Individuals	8 (6)
Group (all board members)	32 (23)
Students	6
Individuals	2 (2)
Sub-groups	4
Formal	3 (3)
Informal	1 (1)
All students	0
TOTAL COMMUNITY	100 (27.4%)

Key: The first number of each pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element. These numbers total upward to the sub-area and area headings.

The second number of each pair (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific element. These numbers cannot be totaled upward because the same respondent may have reported acts involving both of the specific elements in the parallel categories.

Table 6. Continued.

EXTERNAL	**187 (51.4%)**
School Related Publics	83
Local school district	65
Individuals--	
Parents of students	12 (8)
Groups	53
Formal	14
Parent-teacher club	4 (4)
Citizens committee	9 (9)
Other	1 (1)
Informal	39
Parents of students	33 (24)
Interested lay citizens	6 (6)
Neighboring school districts	18
Groups	18
Formal--school board . . .	4 (3)
Informal	14
Citizens	13 (9)
Teachers	1 (1)
Non-School-Related Publics	104
Individuals	51
Business and professional . . .	11 (8)
Editor	17 (16)
Lay citizens	15 (9)
Government employees, local . .	8 (7)
Groups	53
Formal	32
All groups	8 (6)
Specific groups . . .	24
Service and civic	11 (7)
Social-fraternal .	3 (2)
Religious . .	6 (5)
Business . .	2 (2)
Retiree . . .	1 (1)
Farm	1 (1)
Informal	21
Business and professional	7 (6)
Farm interests	3 (3)
Government interests, local	2 (2)

Table 6. Continued.

EXTERNAL, Continued.	
Minority groups	2 (1)
Groups with no single interest	4 (4)
Other	3 (3)

Students--individual students--2 acts, 2 respondents; formal groups--3 acts, 3 respondents; and informal groups--1 act. No incidents were reported involving the total student body.

The general uniformity and small numbers in most of the above frequencies indicated that the respondents were only casually aware of the persons within the school system as publics to be reached. The board of education as a group, which was identified by almost 50 per cent of the respondents, was the only exception.

External publics--school related

The "External Publics"were divided between two sub-areas: School-Related Publics--83 acts, and Non-School-Related Publics--104 acts. "School-Related Publics" were further divided between "local school district"--reported in 65 acts, and "neighboring school district"--reported in 18 acts. The latter category reflected the respondents' reports of school district consolidation activities which required interaction with neighboring school districts.

The "local school district" public further divided into "individuals," "formal groups," and "informal groups." The "individuals"were all "parents of students" reported in

12 acts by 8 respondents. The "formal groups" consisted of: parent-teacher clubs, 4 acts, 4 respondents; and citizens committees--9 acts, 9 respondents. The "informal groups" consisted of: parents of students--33 acts, 24 respondents (50%); and interested lay citizens--6 acts, 6 respondents.

The public relations acts classified under "neighboring school district publics" were divided between "formal groups" consisting of the "school board" reported in 4 acts by 3 respondents; and "informal groups" consisting of "citizens" reported in 13 acts by 9 respondents, and "teachers" reported in 1 act. The attempts to reach the neighboring school districts all centered around school district reorganization.

External publics--non-school related

The acts in the sub-area category "Non-School Related Publics" were divided between "individuals" reported in 51 acts and "groups" reported in 53 acts.

The "newspaper editor" was identified as the most important single individual to be taken into account. Sixteen respondents reported 17 acts in which the editor was identified as the public. Other individuals reported by the respondents included: lay citizens reported in 15 acts by 9 respondents; business and professional men--11 acts, 8

respondents; and local government employees--8 acts, 7 respondents.

The groups were divided between "formal groups" reported in 32 acts, and "informal groups" reported in 21 acts. Eight public relations acts, reported by 6 respondents involved "all formal groups" in the community. Twenty-four acts involved "specific formal groups": service clubs--11 acts, 7 respondents; social-fraternal clubs--3 acts, 2 respondents; religious groups--6 acts, 5 respondents; business groups--2 acts, 2 respondents; retiree clubs--1 act, and farm groups--1 act.

The "informal groups" consisted of persons who met together or carried out common activities without benefit of formal organization, charter, constitution or other legal procedures. These groups were divided as follows: business and professional interest--7 acts reported by 6 respondents; farm interests--3 acts, 3 respondents; local government interests--2 acts, 2 respondents; minority groups--2 acts, 1 respondent; groups with no single interest--4 acts, 4 respondents; and other--3 acts, 3 respondents.

The classification "Total Community" included those public relations acts in which the investigator determined that the respondent was attempting to reach a generalized

public. Inferences from the 100 acts classified under this category were made with caution because the lack of identification of a more specific public may have been due to the limited amount of information included in the public relations acts, as reported. Notwithstanding this caution, the large number of acts (27.4%) raised a question regarding the respondents' knowledge or concern for identifying the specific public for whom a message is intended.

Publics as individuals, formal groups, and informal groups

Arrangement of the elements according to "individuals," "formal groups," and "informal groups" permitted analysis of the operational patterns of the respondents. This information is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Specific publics reported by respondents according to individuals, formal groups, informal groups (N - 264).

Publics	Formal and Informal Groups	Individuals
External Public (N=187):		
School-related	71	12
Non-School-related	53	51
	124	63
Internal Public (N=77):		
Staff	23	8
Students	4	2
Board of education	32	8
	59	18
Grand total	183	81

Analysis of the 187 acts involving the "External Public" indicated an emphasis on communicating to formal and informal groups (124 acts) rather than to individuals (63 acts). A difference was noted, however, between acts classified under "School-Related Publics" and under "Non-School-Related Publics." The 51 acts involving non-school-related individuals and the 53 acts involving non-school-related formal and informal groups indicated that the respondents divided their attention almost equally between the two publics. On the other hand, the 71 acts involving school-related formal and informal groups indicated that this public received more attention than did the school-related individuals who were reported in 12 acts.

An analysis of the 77 acts involving internal publics indicated that the respondents emphasized working with the staff and board of education in groups. Thirty-three acts involved formal and informal staff groups, as contrasted with 8 acts which involved individual employees. The board of education was reached as a group in 32 acts and as individuals in 8 acts. Students were not considered important publics in groups or as individuals. Four acts involved students as a group and 2 acts involved them as individuals.

Analysis of the Major Element "Effect"

The 364 public relations acts were divided into two categories according to the type of "effect" reported for

each act. These categories were "effective" reported for 323 acts (88.7%) by 48 respondents, and "ineffective" reported for 41 acts (11.3%) by 23 respondents. The section of the Grid for the major element "Effect" is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Public relations acts classified according to "Effect" under Section 6 of the Grid.

Effect	Total - 364 (100%)
Ineffective	41 (23) (11.3%)
Effective	323 (48) (88.7%)

Key: The first number of the pair gives the number of public relations acts containing the specific element.

The second number (in parentheses) gives the number of respondents reporting the specific concept.

The third number gives the percentage of all acts reported.

This division of "effective" and "ineffective" was in keeping with the method used to collect the data for the Grid. As a part of the critical incident technique each respondent was asked to identify each incident he reported as effective or ineffective. No further kind of measure of "effect" was obtained from the respondents. Therefore, the two categories completed the classification system under the major element "Effect."

It should be noted that the difference between the large number of effective incidents reported, as contrasted with the small number of ineffective incidents reported occurred even though each respondent was specifically requested to attempt to recall both ineffective and effective incidents.

Analysis of Specific Elements According to Effectiveness and Ineffectiveness

Each specific element on the Grid was recorded as effective or ineffective according to the designation given the public relations act in which it occurred. This identification of each specific element did not effect the element's classification in forming the Grid. The effective and ineffective specific elements were treated identically and collectively. Cognizance, however, was taken of the "effect" designation in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Identification of each public relations act as effective or ineffective by the respondents as a part of the data-collecting procedure provided a way of measuring if the incident was critical to the purposes of the public relations functions of the superintendent. Flanagan states, "An incident is critical if it makes a significant contribution either positively or negatively to the general area of the activity."[1]

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[1]Flanagan, op. cit., p. 338.

As a part of the analysis of data, the "effect" designation provided a means for determining areas of the public relations process in which the superintendent needed to improve his competency. It also identified areas of the process needing more detailed study.

The analysis of the specific elements according to their "effect" designation was carried out by processing, in detail, only the ineffective data. This was done in such a way that inferences could be made regarding the effective data without having to do a separate analysis and interpretation. Therefore, all of the analysis and interpretations presented in the following paragraphs will be of the ineffective public relations acts and their specific elements.

Twenty-three (47.9%) of the respondents reported 38 incidents from which the 41 ineffective public relations acts were derived. These 41 ineffective acts accounted for 11.3 per cent of the total of 364 acts. Eleven respondents reported 1 ineffective incident, 8 reported 2, 3 reported 3 and 1 reported 5.

The specific elements designated as ineffective five or more times are reported below, and in Table 9. The complete summary of ineffective elements is given in Appendix F.

Table 9. Specific elements designated as ineffective five or more times.

Specific Element Under Major Elem.	Total	Ineffective Specific Elements	Per Cent of Total	Per Cent of All Ineffective Elements Under Major Element (N-41)	Per Cent of All Specific Elements (N-364)
Content:					
Finance	91	21	23.0%	56.0%	5.7%
General	92	10	10.8%	24.0%	3.6%
Concept:					
Empathy	65	9	13.8%	22.0%	2.5%
Dissemination	51	7	13.7%	17.0%	1.9%
Attention	22	5	22.7%	12.0%	1.3%
Timing	13	5	38.0%	12.0%	1.3%
Observation	38	5	13.0%	12.0%	1.3%
Group Dynamics	26	5	19.0%	12.0%	1.3%
Technique:					
Using-					
Personal contact	77	7	9.0%	17.0%	1.9%
General adm. policy	24	6	25.0%	14.0%	1.6%
Residents as members of school committees	30	6	20.0%	14.0%	1.6%
Newspaper editor's position	11	5	45.0%	12.0%	1.3%
Public:					
Total Community	100	18	18.0%	44.0%	4.9%
Editor	17	5	29.0%	12.0%	1.3%

Content presented ineffectively

The respondents reported that their most frequent ineffectiveness was in handling public relations acts involving "finance." Twenty-one ineffective acts were reported in this area. These accounted for 23 per cent of the 91 acts dealing with finance; 56 per cent of the 41 ineffective acts classified under "Content," and 5.7 per cent of all effective and ineffective acts.

Ten ineffective public relations acts were reported in which the respondent dealt at one time with more than one topic regarding the schools (Content-General). These accounted for 10.8 per cent of the 92 acts reported, and 24 per cent of the total ineffective acts classified under "Content."

Publics reached ineffectively

The second most frequent area of ineffectiveness dealt with acts in which the respondent attempted to reach the "total community." Eighteen of the 100 acts involving the "total community" were ineffective. This was 44 per cent of the total ineffective acts classified under "Public," and 4.9 per cent of all acts.

The respondents reported a significant number of ineffective incidents in only one other area concerned with

the public. Five ineffective incidents dealing with "the editor" accounted for 29 per cent of the 17 reported, and 12 per cent of the total ineffective attempts to reach the public.

Communication concepts used ineffectively

Ineffective acts dealing with the various concepts showed the widest distribution. Ineffective use of "empathy" was reported in 9 acts, accounting for 13.8 per cent of the 65 acts involving this concept, and 27 per cent of the total ineffective uses of concepts. "Dissemination" was reported ineffectively used 7 times, accounting for 13.7 per cent of the 51 acts reported and 17 per cent of the total ineffective uses of concepts.

"Attention," "timing," "observation" and "group dynamics" each were reported in five ineffective public relations acts. Thus each accounted for 12 per cent of the 41 ineffective uses of concepts reported.

The five reports of ineffective acts using "timing" accounted for 38 per cent of the 13 acts involving timing. The ineffective use of "attention" accounted for 22.7 per cent of the 22 acts using attention. "Group dynamics" was reported ineffective for 19 per cent of the 20 acts reported. "Observation" was reported ineffective for 13 per cent of the

38 acts reported.

Techniques used ineffectively

The most frequent ineffective technique reported was "personal contact." The seven ineffective uses of personal contact accounted for 9 per cent of the 77 reported, 17 per cent of the total of 41 ineffective uses of techniques, and 1.9 per cent of all acts.

Six ineffective uses of the technique "general administrative policy" accounted for 25 per cent of the 24 reported and 14 per cent of all ineffective uses of techniques. Respondents reported also 6 ineffective uses of "residents as members of school committees." These accounted for 20 per cent of the 30 reported and 14 per cent of all ineffective uses of techniques. Five ineffective attempts to develop and utilize the "position of the newspaper editor" regarding schools accounted for 45 per cent of the 11 reported, and 12 per cent of the total ineffective uses of techniques.

Ineffective Specific Elements by Area Categories

General areas of ineffectiveness on the part of the respondents were identified by analyzing the ineffective specific elements according to how they grouped under the area categories. This information is presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Ineffective specific elements grouped according to area categories.

Area Category Under Major Element	No. of Total Specific Elements in Area Category	No. of Ineffective Specific Elements in Area Category	Per Cent of Ineffective Specific Elements Under Area Category	Per Cent of Ineffective Specific Elements in Area Category Under Major Element (N-41)	Per Cent of Specific Elements in Area Category of All Elements (N-364)
Content:					
School-Related Topics	345	41	100.0%	100.0%	11.3%
Non-School-Related Topics	19	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Technique:					
Using Himself	131	14	10.6%	34.0%	3.8%
Using Other People	91	11	12.0%	26.8%	3.0%
Using Special Events and Projects	47	2	4.0%	4.8%	.05%
Using Physical Materials	95	14	14.7%	34.0%	3.8%
Concept:					
(No area categories)					
Public:					
Internal	77	8	10.0%	19.5%	2.0%
External	187	15	8.0%	36.5%	4.0%
Total Community	100	18	18.0%	43.9%	4.9%

All forty-one ineffective specific elements dealing with "Content" grouped under "School-related topics." None of the nineteen "Non-School-Related Topics" were reported as ineffective.

The five area categories for "Technique" were divided as follows:

Fourteen ineffective techniques involving the superintendent "Using Himself" accounted for 10.6 per cent of the 131 reported, and 14 ineffective techniques involving "Using Physical Objects" accounted for 14.7 per cent of the 95 reported. Both of these area categories contained 34.0 per cent of the ineffective techniques and 3.8 per cent of all techniques. Eleven techniques "Using Other People" accounted for 12 per cent of the 91 reported, 26.8 per cent of the ineffective techniques and 3.0 per cent of all techniques.

The smallest number of ineffective techniques were reported in the area of "Using Special Events and Projects." Two ineffective techniques accounted for 4 per cent of the 47 reported, 4.8 per cent of the ineffective techniques and .05 per cent of all techniques.

The respondents reported the "Total Community" as frequently the most difficult public to reach. This was followed by the "External Publics" and the "Internal Publics."

Eighteen ineffective acts involving the "Total Community" accounted for 18 per cent of the 100 reported, 43.9 per cent of the acts involving ineffective publics, and 4.9 per cent of all publics.

The 15 ineffective acts involving "External Publics," both school-related and non-school-related, accounted for 8.0 per cent of 187 reported, 36.5 per cent of the acts involving ineffective publics and 4.0 per cent of all publics.

The 8 ineffective acts involving "Internal Publics" were fewer in number than the acts with "External Publics" but accounted for a larger portion of the area total. They accounted for 10.0% of the 77 reported. In addition, they were 19.5 per cent of the total ineffective publics and 2.0 per cent of all acts.

The major element "Concept" was not divided into area categories so no analysis could be made above the specific element level.

Relationships between Specific Categories in the Schema and Certain Characteristics of the Respondents

Up to this point, the Grid, as completed for analyzing the public relations functions of the superintendent, has been described in full. In addition, interpretations were made

regarding the various categories of the Grid.

The following section will present statistical findings of significant relationships between certain areas of the Grid and certain characteristics of the respondents. These relationships were sought in terms of possible implications for the pre-service and in-service programs for superintendents in the area of school public relations.

Superintendent characteristics

A random sample of 48 superintendents was selected from 238 superintendents of school districts with a high school classified as B or C according to enrollment. This superintendent sample was identified according to the following three characteristics: (1) years as a superintendent, (2) years as a superintendent in the current district, and (3) the number of superintendencies held. A summary of these characteristics is presented in Table 11.

These characteristics were selected because of the possible implications they might have for understanding the public relations process in relation to the needs of superintendents in various types of job situations. It was hoped that these data might answer such questions as the following: Do experienced superintendents in a new position emphasize

Table 11. Characteristics of respondents according to years as superintendent, years as superintendent in current district, and number of superintendencies (N-48).

Characteristics	Number of Respondents
Years as superintendent:	
0-4 years	6
5-9 years	12
10-19 years	23
20-plus years	7
Years as superintendent in district:	
0-4 years	14
5-9 years	14
10-plus years	20
Number of superintendencies:	
1	21
2	15
3	9
4	3

any particular types of public relations activities as more critical when compared with established superintendents? Do superintendents who have had experiences in several different communities emphasize different kinds of public relations

activities than those who have served in only one community? What public relations functions do experienced superintendents identify as critical that are not identified by new superintendents?

Statistical procedures

The specific hypothesis to be tested was stated in the null form: There is no difference in the use of specific public relations elements by superintendents paired according to the following characteristics; (1) respondents with 0-4 years experience and respondents with 20-plus years experience, (2) respondents with 0-4 years as superintendent in current district with respondents with 20-plus years in current district and (3) respondents in their first superintendency with respondents in their third or fourth superintendency. In viewing this hypothesis in relation to the numbers in Table 11 it will be noted that relationships were tested using extreme groups. The Chi-square and Fisher Exact Probability tests were used to test the null hypothesis.

All of the specific public relations elements reported by ten or more respondents were selected for statistical analysis. In addition, the one communication concept "power structure" with a frequency of less than ten was included.

Twenty-eight of the 115 specific elements met this criteria. The twenty-eight elements and the results of the statistical analyses are presented in Table 12.

A total of eighty-four statistical analyses were required. The quantity of analyses to be performed on the same data meant that it would be possible to have a certain number of significant statistics occur by chance. Therefore, in addition to establishing a level of significance for each test it was necessary also to take into account the number of significant statistics needed out of the total of eighty-four tests before they actually might be considered significant. A .05 level of significance was established for both.

Results of the statistical analyses

Tests of four specific elements attained or exceeded a significance level of .05. The four tests were conducted between superintendents of 0-4 years experience and 20-plus years experience. The specific elements were as follows: empathy--the ability to put oneself in the other person's position and anticipate his feelings and reactions; attention--the ability to establish a personal relationship; timing--taking into consideration the situation into which a message is sent; and personal contact--by the superintendent. In

Table 12. Relationship of specific elements with a frequency of ten or more and use by superintendents of specified professional characteristics.

Element	No. of Respondents Reporting Element	Respondent Characteristics: 0-4 Yrs. Exp.; 20- + Yrs. Exp.	Respondent Characteristics: On Job 0-4 Yrs.; 20- + Yrs.	Respondent Characteristics: 1st Job; 3rd-4th Job
Content:				
Administrative operation	18			
Finance	38			
Instruction - Interpretation	24			
Instruction - Change and/or improvement	17			
Reorganization	12			
General	33			
Technique:				
Administrative act	12			
Prepared presentation	14			
Personal contact	38	.025[a]		
Using People - Editor's position	10			
Using People - Residents on school needs committee	16			
Using Physical Materials - General administrative policies	15			
Using Physical Material - School publications	19			

Table 12. Continued.

Element	No. of Respondents Reporting Element	Respondent Characteristics: 0-4 Yrs. Exp.; 20- + Yrs. Exp.	Respondent Characteristics: On Job 0-4 Yrs.; 20- + Yrs.	Respondent Characteristics: 1st Job; 3rd-4th Job
Public:				
Board of Education - Group	23			
External - Informal group, parents	24			
External - Individual, editor	16			
Concept:				
Attention	18	.025[b]		
Canalization	21			
Diffusion	12			
Dissemination	27			
Empathy	35	.05[b]		
Feedback	14			
Power Structure	14			
Source credibility	9			
Timing	10	.05[a]		
Involvement	10			
Observation	25			
Group dynamics	23			

Note: Only those tests which attained or exceeded a level of .05 are reported. The significant differences, in the four instances recorded in this table, indicated that the superintendents with 20-plus years of experience used the elements specified more than superintendents with 0-4 years of experience. However, these results are to be interpreted only as possible trends. When analyzed for the probability of four significant statistics occurring by chance out of 84 statistical analyses, the results were significantly below the .05 level.

[a]Fisher Exact Probability test [b]Chi-square test.

each instance, "empathy," "attention," "timing," and "personal contact" were utilized significantly more by respondents with 20-plus years of experience as a superintendent than by respondents who were new superintendents.

The four significant analyses, however were well below the number required from a total of eighty-four tests to be significant at the .05 level.[3] Therefore, the null hypothesis of "no difference" was accepted for the twenty-eight specific elements measured against specific professional characteristics of the respondents.

A study of the four specific elements with values at or below the .05 level of significance indicated that they contained common characteristics. Each of the four elements emphasized development of the personal attributes of the respondents to a greater extent than their professional competencies. These elements might be considered personal abilities or attributes more than professional or mechanistic competencies. The clustering of these four elements around a common trait appeared to indicate that though they could not be considered significant on the basis of the data in this study, they did point up a possible trend that might prove significant if subjected to future research.

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[3]Bryan Wilkinson,"A Statistical Consideration in Psychological Research," Psychological Bulletin, XLVIII (March, 1951), 156.

Limitations of analysis

The entire analysis of the elements of the Grid according to characteristics of the respondents was limited by the size of the respondent sample and the number of public relations acts reported. Both were sufficiently large to permit interpretations when the respondents and the specific elements were treated as a total group. However, the interpretation was limited when viewing respondent types in relation to the small totals for some of the specific elements.

In addition to the small sample size, two other variables may have biased the statistical analysis. In the analysis of specific elements used by superintendents in their first superintendency, as contrasted with superintendents in their third or fourth superintendency, both groups included respondents with twenty or more years of experience. This homogeneity of years of experience may have been significant in maintaining the similarity of use of elements by the two groups. In the analysis of the respondents with 0-4 years experience in contrast to superintendents with 10-plus years experience, the span of years assigned to the "new" superintendent classification may have been too great. By the third or fourth year a superintendent may no longer have any "new"characteristics. The limited sample size did not provide

sufficient cases to analyze superintendents in the 0-2 year experience range.

Summary of Analyses and Interpretations Made From the Data

The following interpretations are based specifically on the data presented in the previous sections. In most instances the items are restatements of inferences presented in the analyses of data. In others, the items are new inferences based on the data.

Three criteria contributed to the formulation of these interpretations: (1) the frequency in which a specific element was mentioned; (2) the number of superintendents who reported public relations acts involving a specific element; and (3) the relationship of these elements to what is already known in the field regarding effective public relations.

Content

1. The respondents' public relations activities appeared to center around the finance of the school district more than any other area of the schools' operation. Finance was also the area in which the respondents reported themselves as the least effective.

(Data - Public relations acts concerned with "finance"

were reported by 38 (79.2%) of the respondents. These 91 acts accounted for 25 per cent of all acts reported. The 21 ineffective acts involving "finance" accounted for 5.7 per cent of all acts reported. The content of 56 per cent of the ineffective acts was concerned with "finance.")

2. Millage elections, as a specific finance topic, were usually presented in the context of curriculum and plant needs. Finance, therefore, frequently served as the major vehicle for informing the public regarding curriculum and facilities.

3. Superintendents devoted a substantial portion of their public relations activities to curriculum. However, the largest portion of this time was involved in interpreting the existing instructional program rather than in attempting to bring about change and/or improvement.

Admittedly, the schools are social institutions and as such strive for stability gained through maintaining the traditional. Regardless of the relevance of this fact it also must be noted that bringing about change requires knowledges of motivation, attitudes and beliefs that go far beyond those knowledges necessary to interpret effectively existing practices. The lesser attention given to introducing change may reflect the lack of knowledge and sophistication

in utilizing public relations concepts and techniques necessary to introduce change effectively.

(Data - The 62 Public relations acts involving "instruction" were reported by 30 respondents (62.5%). Fifty per cent of the respondents reported acts which "interpreted the curriculum" and 35 per cent reported acts involving "change and/or improvement.")

4. Contrary to what is viewed as popular opinion, the respondents did not appear to place an emphasis on public relations activities involving athletics.

(Data - Two acts involving "athletics" were reported.)

Techniques

1. The respondents appeared to rely heavily on public relations procedures which involved using their own abilities and competencies rather than those which involved other persons, special events, or physical materials. The use of physical materials was the second most frequently reported type of technique. This pointed up an apparent lack of importance placed upon working with and through people.

(Data - Respondents reported public relations acts involving the following types of techniques: Using Himself--131 acts, Using Physical Materials--95 acts, Using Other

People--91 acts, and Using Special Events and Projects--47 acts.)

2. The one technique reported used most frequently and by the most respondents was "personal contact." However, respondents with the most years of experience appeared to rely more heavily on personal contact as a public relations technique in contrast to respondents new to the job. The apparent lack of emphasis on personal contact as a critical tool of public relations by new superintendents may be interpreted as caused by an over-concern for the mechanics of getting the job done without recognition nor confidence in the personal-interaction phases of school administration.

(Data - The 77 acts (35%) which dealt with "personal contact" were reported by 38 respondents.)

3. The axiom "Good administration is good public relations" could be coined to indicate the emphasis respondents placed on maintaining and operating a well-organized business-like school system as a contributor to effective public relations. The intensity of feeling regarding the value of efficient administrative procedures was reflected in the number of times respondents reported more than one public relations act involving administrative acts and policies.

(Data - The 24 acts involving "administrative policy"

were reported by 12 respondents, and the 21 acts involving "administrative action"were reported by 15 respondents. This totaled to 45 acts (12.4%) which involved either policy or administrative action.)

4. The use of printed/or written materials as a technique was not given a place of major importance among the total number of techniques. The lack of evaluative measures of effectiveness of printed publications may have contributed some to the lack of emphasis on reporting acts in this area.

5. The preparation and placement of news stories in the mass media were not given major emphasis in comparison with other techniques. Television was not mentioned as a means for communicating with the public. Nor was there mention, except in one ineffective incident, of the daily newspapers from nearby larger towns which circulate in the local communities.

However, the respondents did indicate an awareness of the importance of the editor and his attitude and actions in relationship to the schools. This was emphasized by the 10 respondents who reported 11 acts in which they felt it was necessary to establish a relationship with the local editor that would have a positive effect on the type of school news the editor reported. No other individual in the community

was singled out for his importance in interpreting the schools.

(Data - The 20 acts (5.5%) involving the "mass media" were reported by 14 respondents.)

6. The respondents emphasized working through groups, rather than individuals to reach the various publics in the community. However, breakdowns of the composition of the groups and the types of individuals indicated significant patterns. Individual teachers were used almost completely in contrast to groups of teachers. On the other hand school district residents were used as a group more frequently than as individuals. Their greatest use was as a part of school committees or as members of a community organization.

(Data - The 36 acts (9.9%) involving using "individuals" were reported by 29 respondents; the 53 acts (14.6%) involving using groups were reported by 35 respondents.)

7. The respondents always reported using students in small groups in any attempt to work with the various publics. Neither individual students nor the total student body were used in any act.

8. Meetings, both those open to the public and small group invitational affairs, were reported as the most frequently used special event or project. The content of these

meetings revolved mostly around school issues and problems.

9. Specific traditional school events such as career days, business-education-industry days, open houses, school plays, band concerts, were given only slight mention by the respondents. The lack of acts in this area may be due to the responsibilities for such events being assigned to principals, or other staff members. If so, specific public relations acts involving the superintendent in the area should not have been expected.

Communication concepts

1. It appeared that, in most instances, the respondent selected a specific technique which he felt would suit the general situation without any specific understanding of the reasons why the particular technique was the best one to use. For this reason, the information on the respondents' use of the various communication concepts could not be interpreted to indicate how well the respondents understood these concepts, or consciously implemented them.

2. The two communication concepts "empathy" and "attention" which most closely related to the personal attributes of the respondents were reported in almost one-fourth (23.5%) of the public relations acts. Respondents with the most years

of experience appeared to rely on these personal attributes to a greater extent than new superintendents.

(Data - "Empathy" was identified as the critical concept in 65 acts and "attention" was identified in 22 acts.)

3. The respondents indicated a significant degree of ineffectiveness in the application of six of the communication concepts: empathy, dissemination, attention, timing, observation and group dynamics.

(Data - Each of these above concepts accounted for 12 per cent of the 41 ineffective uses of concepts.)

Publics

1. The respondents appeared to direct more of their attention towards external publics that were not related to the schools than towards external publics that were related to the schools. This difference became even more significant when the publics in neighboring school districts were not counted as a school-related public.

(Data - "School-Related Publics" were involved in 83 acts, including 18 acts involving neighboring districts, "Non-School - Related Publics" were involved in 104 acts.)

2. The respondents reported that the newspaper editor was the most important individual public. He also was

reported as the most difficult person to work with effectively.

(Data - The 17 acts involving the "editor" were reported by 16 respondents; five of these were ineffective.)

3. The respondents appeared to have only minor contact with parents as individuals or as formal groups, such as the P.T.A. Their most frequently reported contact with parents was through informal groups.

(Data - Respondents reported 12 acts involving "individual parents," 4 acts involving the "P.T.A." and 33 acts involving "informal parent groups.")

4. Though the respondents identified the public in 100 public relations acts as the total community, in many instances, it appeared that the message was received by only a portion of the community. For instance, an article placed in the local newspaper with a circulation which covered only a small portion of the community, was frequently reported as reaching the total community. It may have been more precisely identified as having reached a specific segment of the public--possibly the "influentials" or more highly educated or civic minded who subscribed to the paper. The fact that this information in the paper may have been passed on by "word-of-mouth" by the limited number of persons who read the article might lead one to conclude that the total community eventually was reached.

However, it may be more helpful for the superintendent to recognize the difference between a primary public, who receives the original message, and a secondary public, who is usually informed by the primary public, because the persons who read and pass on information also frequently serve as censoring centers.

Summary

In this chapter the Grid, which classified the public relations acts of the superintendent, was analyzed in detail and significant interpretations were made. In addition to this general analysis, the specific elements were analyzed according to effectiveness and ineffectiveness, and for possible relationships between them and specified characteristics of the respondents.

It was possible to identify and classify specific examples of each of the six major elements of the public relations process in all of the 364 acts reported by the respondents.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Nationwide social, technical, and economic developments are creating new demands upon the American educational system. Thus new high levels of joint effort on the part of communities and their schools will have to be expended. The resultant quality of this effort will depend to a substantial degree upon the abilities and perceptions of school superintendents, as the educational leaders within the communities, to promote school-community cooperation.

The increasing need for better school-community co-operation contains some implications for the educational institutions which have programs for the preparation and stimulation of school superintendents and other professionals in the field of school public relations. One of the most direct implications inherent in the changing educational scene is the need to re-evaluate the current status of training programs designed to create leadership in school public relations. Another identifiable implication of

interest to educational institutions is the need for a more firmly based research program designed to structure and evaluate school public relations programs. The investigations of the status of school public relations preceding this particular research project revealed clearly that (1) there was little evidence of the existence of a systematic method for depth analysis of the public relations process, and (2) most public relations programs have been based solely upon pragmatic common-sense observation.

This research study, then, was carried on because of the increasing need for improved school public relations programs and the need for better research instruments in this field.

Purpose of the study

This study had two parallel purposes: first, to attempt to develop a conceptual schema that would prove useful in analyzing, using, and developing the public relations process; and second, to test the schema's usefulness as an analytical model by using it to submit to analysis critical public relations functions of the superintendent.

Methodology and conduct of the study

The conduct of this study required a rather lengthy series of research methods. Each of these and its relationship to this study will be presented in the following paragraphs in the order in which it was used. This presentation of research methods will serve, also, as a summary of the conduct of the study.

1. A search was conducted of related literature in three areas: (a) school public relations and the superintendent as they relate to the purposes of this study; (b) communication models as they relate to the purposes of this study; and (3) the critical incident technique as a research method.

2. A rationale was developed and procedures were established for the creation of a conceptual schema as a plan for analyzing the public relations process. The conceptual schema was planned around the development of a model that would identify the major elements of the public relations process, and a grid that would include these elements as headings for a classification system. This creation of a model of the public relations process was approached by reviewing first several models of the communication process and then, through a synthesis of their major elements, constructing an appropriate communication model. The public

relations model was then constructed by identifying the basic elements of the public relations process and equating them to the elements of the communication model. These elements of the resultant Public Relations Model--Source, Content, Communication Concept, Technique, Public, and Effect--were then used to form the major headings of the Grid which could be used to classify specific elements of the public relations process in a meaningful system.

3. A random sample was selected consisting of forty-eight superintendents representing twenty per cent of those superintendents in school districts in Michigan with a Class B or C high school.

4. Each of the forty-eight superintendents was interviewed according to the procedures of the critical incident technique and incidents were obtained describing the superintendent's public relations behavior.

5. Public relations acts were derived from these critical incidents through analyses based on established criteria and procedures.

6. The public relations acts were analyzed and the six elements of the public relations process were identified in each and were classified under the major headings of the Model described in Item 2.

7. An outside judge was selected and procedures were established and used to validate the identification of the specific elements in the public relations acts and their assignments within the framework of the Grid.

8. The data classified through the Grid was analyzed for information regarding the public relations functions of the superintendents, and appropriate inferences were made.

9. The Chi-square and the Fisher Exact Probability tests were used to measure possible relationships between specified characteristics of the respondents and designated specific elements of the public relations process.

10. The data classified through the Grid were analyzed for information that would indicate the Schema's usefulness as an analytical model of the public relations process.

Analysis of data

The data collected on the public relations functions of superintendents and classified on the Grid were reviewed in detail. This analysis was carried out in three stages. First, the specific elements classified under each of the major elements of the Grid were analyzed on the basis of frequency and their relationships to the area and sub-area categories. Second, the same information was analyzed on the

basis of the number of respondents reporting a specific element. Third, the Chi-square and Fisher Exact Probability tests were applied to portions of the data provided in stage two to determine possible relationships among specific elements on the Grid and specified characteristics of respondents.

Conclusions

The series of conclusions which resulted from the conduct of this study are presented as appraisals of the eight basic questions posed as a part of the purpose of this study in Chapter I.

Appraisal of the basic questions of this study

Question one: Can the theories and research in the area of communication provide an appropriate conceptual background for an orderly and systematic study of school public relations?

This question warranted an affirmative answer, for during the conduct of this study it had been demonstrated that both the school public relations process and the specific public relations acts could be classified and analyzed in detail through the use of communication theories and concepts.

Question two: Can individual school public relations acts be studied as communication acts?

The answer to this question was affirmative also, for in developing and using the Conceptual Schema based upon communication models and concepts, it was possible to classify and analyze all of the several hundred individual public relations acts contributed by school superintendents for this study. These classifications and analyses are presented *in extensio* in Chapter IV.

Question three: Will the process of equating the elements of a public relations act to the elements of a communication act through a conceptual schema provide a structure suitable for identifying and analyzing the critical elements of the school public relations process?

The answer to this question was sought by undertaking a rational comparison of the major elements of the communication process with the major elements of the public relations process. This direct comparison resulted in the creation of a model of the public relations process. This model was then used in developing a grid suited to detailed classification and analysis of public relations acts. A description of the construction of the Model and the Grid is contained in Chapter III. The application and usefulness of the Model and the Grid are described in Chapter IV. Thus, it appeared evident that all of the issues raised in Question three had been met satisfactorily.

Question four: What is the level of awareness of superintendents of the communication process as it is related to public relations and is indicated by an analysis of the reported critical incidents?

It became evident from the analyses of the critical incidents which were made in Chapter IV that no direct quantitative measurements of the awareness level of superintendents could be derived. However, it was possible to arrive at several inferential conclusions and insights regarding the substance of the question. These are presented in the several succeeding paragraphs along with illustrative quotations from actual incidents.

1. The current public relations activities of superintendents appeared to be geared to the technique selected rather than to any real understanding of, or utilization of, basic communication concepts. This point may seem obscure, or to be of minor importance, since each technique does derive from some basic concept. However, it is the order and process of these events which create a significant difference. For example, if a superintendent would first identify a basic concept, which appeared to be of great potential value in a proposed public relations act, then he would have broad freedom of choice among a group of techniques, any or all of

which might be useful in implementing the previously selected concept. Further, if the correct processes were utilized as just stated, then the superintendent would be in a position to improvise and to develop new techniques to fit specific situations. For it was noted that there was little evidence of creativity in the types of techniques which were reported by the respondents. It seemed evident that they tended to employ specific techniques because some other superintendent had reported success with them.

2. The lack of knowledge about basic communication concepts also prevented the respondents from evaluating why a specific technique failed. This was evident especially in the use of citizens committees. As one respondent explained: "I did as the textbooks suggested. I put two persons on our committee to study school needs for the next tax election who were opposed to increasing the school budget. I did this under the assumption that they would change their minds. Just before the election they broke away from the committee and its recommendations and campaigned against the proposed tax." The superintendent did not seem to recognize what forms of communication had to occur between these two persons and the other committee members, or between them and himself in order for a change of attitude to take place. Nor did he assess

the power of other groups in the community to which these opposers were related. Lack of sufficient knowledge caused him to leave things to chance once he took the first step of organizing the committee "like the textbook says."

3. The lack of recognition of basic communication concepts is reflected, also, in the many instances in which the respondents appeared to be operating in the area of public relations by "feel." For instance, a superintendent related an incident in which the vocational agriculture teacher told him of a negative attitude towards the school that a farmer held because of a misconception. The superintendent was then able to clarify the issue for the farmer and win his support for the schools. However, the superintendent did not appear to realize that he was using the communication concept of "feedback." To him, the reporting of the incident by the teacher was a happy circumstance. He identified the effectiveness of the incident by the fact that he talked to the farmer and was able to win his support. No emphasis was placed upon establishing a return channel of communication through the unique duties of the vocational agriculture teacher.

4. It appeared that effective public relations behavior was characterized by the superintendent's ability to recognize a need, or a potential problem area, and to take some action.

The activities of the respondents indicated that school public relations is primarily a "self-starter" operation which requires wide knowledge of effective techniques and why, how, and when to use them. It also calls for taking the initiative and getting things started.

Many incidents were reported in which respondents did respond quickly and adequately with an appropriate public relations act. However, it was impossible to evaluate how many of these acts should be classified as having been like "fire prevention" or like "fire fighting."

5. A real degree of concern for other people, both school-related and non-school-related individuals, and their problems, appeared to be an integral part of the superintendent's public relations function. The value of his personal concern for others to the school system was reflected in three psychologically-based communication concepts: empathy, canalization and attention. The substantial number of acts reported which involved these concepts indicated that several respondents were aware of the need to understand and respond to the problems and concerns of other people before the superintendent could expect them to respond to his interest in school problems.

6. The respondents appeared to employ a greater variety of techniques and concepts and to utilize them in a coordinated

manner when they were attempting to carry-out a clearly established, major, or long-range objective of the school program. This tendency was illustrated by the quality and variety of superintendent public relations activities and knowledges that were called into play when a tax election or a school district reorganization movement had become a major objective of the schools. The respondents without a clearly defined short- and long-range objective for the school system did not appear to utilize fully their knowledges and competencies in public relations. This may be likened to operating on one cylinder or on six cylinders.

7. The personal public relations role of the superintendent and the broader public relations program of the school system appeared to be deeply intertwined in many instances. Thus it was not possible to establish clear distinctions and definitions between the area of personal responsibility and the area of facilitating or leadership responsibility in many critical incidents. A clear distinction between these two functions would have been of significant value. For example, this distinction would have been useful in efforts to analyze the frequent charge by boards of education that the superintendent was fired primarily because of poor public relations.[1]

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[1]Kennan, op. cit., p. 2.

Neither boards of education in these instances, nor the collected data of this study shed any light on whether the "failure" had been in the area of "personal" public relations or in the area in which the superintendent facilitated the carrying out of public relations activities by others.

8. The Schema, as designed, was not a precise instrument useful to record the details of "two-way" public relations acts. However, considerable evidence was collected that school superintendents were aware of the inter-action and reaction qualities of the school public relations process. It was reported in Chapter IV that a significant number of the respondents had reported using public relations techniques which by their nature do encompass the interaction and reaction concepts of the communication process. Some of the most used "two-way" concepts were "empathy," "attention," "feedback" and "group dynamics." Some of the frequently used techniques were "committees," "meetings," and "personal contact."

Questions five and six: What behaviors do superintendents report that demonstrate their effective use of the public relations process? What behaviors do superintendents report that demonstrate their ineffective use of the public relations process?

The behavior of the respondents, as reported in the

public relations acts, were enumerated and analyzed in detail in Chapter IV. Both the effective and ineffective use of elements in the public relations process were reported. The quantity of information was such that no attempt will be made to summarize it at this point.

Question seven: What relationships exist between the reported public relations acts and certain professional characteristics of the superintendent?

The answer to this question was sought by using the Chi-square and Fisher Exact Probability tests to identify possible significant differences among the respondents' years of service as a superintendent, years of experience as a superintendent in the current job, and number of superintendencies, and those specific elements in the Schema reported by ten or more respondents. The statistical procedures used pointed out possible trends that might be followed profitably in future research studies. However, they did not provide sufficient measures of differences between any of the professional characteristics and the specific elements of the Schema so that definite conclusions could be made on the basis of the data in this study. The "possible trends," indicated by the statistical analyses, were that respondents with 20-plus years experience as a superintendent may use the

communication concepts of "empathy,""attention," and "timing," and the technique of "personal contact," more than do superintendents of 0-4 years experience. These four public relations elements all reflect the personal attributes of the superintendent to a greater extent than they do his professional or mechanistic competencies.

The attempt to answer this question was handicapped by the small size of the sample of respondents and the small number of public relations acts collected.

Question eight: Will the investigations and analyses proposed in this report produce significant inferences for improving the preparation programs in public relations for school superintendents?

The conduct of this study inferred many significant ways for improving the preparation programs in public relations for school superintendents. These inferences included both specific details and broad conceptual approaches.

The specific details were encompassed in the data on the Grid. For instance, the organization of this data was such that it presented an orderly summation of areas of effective and ineffective practices in school public relations. This specific data on the Grid may be considered as a contribution, in the form of content, to school public relations

courses. The form of organization of the Grid also made it possible to use the information on it to point up relationships between the superintendent, as the source, and the other various public relations elements.

The rationale and theoretical focus underlying the organization and use of the total Conceptual Schema provided areas for drawing broad inferences for public relations training programs. These broad inferences are presented in the form of three specific recommendations:

1. The flexibility and numerous uses of the Conceptual Schema, as outlined in various parts of the study, are such that the Schema should be looked upon and developed as a teaching tool. Specific uses in this respect are presented in the section on "Recommendations."

2. The ease and the useful way in which it was possible to relate the area of public relations to the area of communication was such that a communication focus should be considered in the teaching of public relations whenever appropriate.

3. The need for understanding the concepts and theoretical considerations underlying the practices of public relations is such, that the twelve communication concepts, identified on the Grid, should be considered as a possible substantial part of any public relations training program.

A further discussion of inferences derived from this study for improving public relations preparations programs is given in the section on "Recommendations."

Recommendations

The findings of this study opened many avenues for the application of the information presented to existing needs, and for further research. Only some of the major areas that appear to warrant further consideration are presented in this section.

For clarity the recommendations are presented in two parts: (1) recommendations and implications for further use and development of the Conceptual Schema as a method for analyzing the school public relations process; and (2) recommendations and implications for in-service and pre-service training programs for superintendents in public relations.

Further development and use of the Conceptual Schema

The use of the Conceptual Schema in research. The Conceptual Schema appeared to offer a foundation for numerous systematic approaches for gathering and developing information on the process of school public relations. Several of these possibilities are presented in the form of hypothetical examples.

Example one: In this first example, it is recommended that the Conceptual Schema and data-gathering, processing, and analyzing procedures presented in this study be used to gather information on other persons at the time that they are serving the "source" function in the public relations process. The source, be it the teacher, parent, school board member, would be held constant, as the superintendent was held constant in this study, and appropriate public relations acts would be gathered and analyzed. An analysis of the grids constructed for these various sources could shed substantial light upon the specific elements of public relations acts related to each source. It would identify, also, chains of relationships and differences between elements involving the various sources.

It also would be possible to conduct a detailed analysis of any one of the other specific elements of the Grid. The element selected would be held constant, as the superintendent was in this study, and acts involving this element gathered and analyzed. For instance, the communication concept of "empathy" appeared a sufficient number of times on the Grid to indicate that it is a significant element in the public relations process. To determine its exact role and importance, public relations acts in which "empathy" was a key determiner of effectiveness or ineffectiveness would be collected and analyzed.

Example two: The major elements of the public relations model in the Conceptual Schema provide a framework for developing a grid for identifying and classifying existing research in related fields of the behavioral sciences. For instance, information now available regarding motivation, perception, attitudes, opinions and other factors that modify and influence human behavior could be classified according to their roles in affecting any of the major elements of the Model.

Because an appreciable amount of study and research has been done in interpreting the communication act in light of known knowledges in the behavioral sciences, it would be possible to go directly to behavioral research bearing upon communication. The application of the information, so obtained, to the construction of an appropriate public relations grid would be primarily a matter of classification.

Example three: Another use of the Conceptual Schema would be to use the framework of the Model for the analysis of case studies involving public relations problems and projects. The anecdotal style of most case studies probably would provide several specific public relations acts. These acts could be identified and classified according to the major elements of the Model. Among other things, the identification of the specific elements would pinpoint areas in the case

study that would warrant particular analysis.

In addition, each public relations act could be classified horizontally across the six major elements of the Model without losing its identification as a specific act. Each element of the specific act then could be analyzed for its relationship to the other elements. It may be possible for the person analyzing the case to visualize the types of interaction that took place among the elements and to consider the effects of possible changes in one or more of the elements. Although this form of analysis would need to be done for each public relations act identified in the total case study, the process would accumulate a valuable body of information and insights that then could be applied to the total case study.

The over-all value of the Schema for analyzing case studies might be that the analyzer would have a systematic basis for identifying the most important variables in a specific situation.

Example four: There appears to be value in exploring further the relationships among the various techniques and communication concepts. It may be recalled that the classification system for the communication concepts called for identifying the critical concept underlying each technique according to the specific situation in which the technique was

used. In the instance of this study the analysis of the 364 public relations acts resulted in from one to eight different critical concepts being identified for one technique. It is conceived that if sufficient acts involving a specific technique were analyzed, then the related communication concepts would be identified in sufficient numbers so that they could be ranked in order of importance to the technique.

For instance, in this study the technique "personal contact" was reported in sixty-five acts. An analysis of the technique in the situation in which it was used resulted in identification of the following critical concepts. (Each concept had been the "critical" one in the number of public relations acts indicated.) Critical concepts for "personal contact": empathy--35 acts, dissemination--8 acts, feedback--8 acts, involvement--8 acts, attention--7 acts, power structure--3 acts, canalization--1 act, and timing--1 act.

Among other uses, detailed knowledge of the concepts underlying various techniques would be valuable for the superintendent who still likes to select a technique and then analyze its application to his specific situation. Depth knowledge of all the concepts involved would provide check points for implementing the technique effectively.

The use of the Conceptual Schema in evaluation

Currently, research in the area of public relations lacks evaluative instruments. Thus, numerous public relations programs, or acts, are proposed and many are consumated with little real evidence of either success or failure. Therefore, it is suggested that appropriate grids could be constructed and public relations programs could be analyzed on them on either a pre-planned or a post-mortem basis, or both. The execution of these analyses then could produce measurable data regarding "success" or "failure" and "goodness" or "badness" of school public relations programs.

Further development of the Schema

The key to the Conceptual Schema, as now conceived, is the Public Relations Model. It seems logical to assume that any major improvement or changes in the Schema would begin with changes or improvements in the Model.

The Model in its present form lacks the concept of process. It has arrested all action in order that the elements that go into the process can be examined as discrete parts. However, when in action these parts of the public relations process do not operate separate from each other. Therefore, there is a degree of unrealism in the Model as it is now

organized. Its primary value to the researcher is that it enables him to identify and classify information relating to each of the major elements.

The Schema's limitation, because of the elemental nature of the Model, is one of omission, rather than of commission. Essentially, the Schema presents a framework that is basic to more complex forms of analytical systems that may be developed in the future.

It is recommended that further improvements of the Conceptual Schema be directed toward refining and developing the current Public Relations Model. Attention should be given especially to depicting the interaction qualities of public relations and to identifying the influences of environment upon the elements in the public relations process. The recommendations made by Riley and Riley for further development of a communication model also can apply to further development of a public relations model. This model:

> Should follow a sociological orientation which locates the individual (communicator or receiver) in relation to his diverse primary groups, his larger social structure, and the over-all system. Recognition must be given the communicator's and receiver's parts in the larger social pattern which are carried out in accordance to the expectations and actions of other persons and groups in the same system.[2]

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[2]Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard S. Cottrell (eds.), Sociology Today - Problems and Prospects (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959), p. 567.

Training programs for superintendents in public relations

The three recommendations regarding training programs presented briefly in answer to question number eight in the section titled "Conclusions" were stated in terms of one of the purposes of this study. They are repeated in this section along with a broader theoretical substantiating background as major recommendations of this study.

1. The review of the related literature did indicate the existence of a number of studies of the current training programs in school public relations, so that it would be superfluous to examine them in detail in this study. However, this study was undertaken with the thought that new materials and approaches might be developed which could have some application to future training programs.

The subject of training programs in school public relations may be brought into focus by reporting that in the past, school public relations had taken on a journalistic focus. More recently it has stressed the ideological--a concern regarding the philosophy that should guide courses of action in school public relations. This latter thought has been characterized by the emphasis on the school-community concept. Somewhere in between these two ideas is the recognition

that public relations involves dealing with people and thus superintendents need to know more about them.

The topic of public relations courses was brought up frequently during the "warm-up" and "closing" stages of the interviews held to collect data for this study. Though only three or four respondents mentioned taking specific courses in public relations, and attributed little to them, many more referred to courses in sociology as having given them the insights they needed to function effectively in the area of public relations.

Sociology emphasizes understanding people within the setting of their society or group. It focuses on attitudes, opinions, group attraction and action, customs, mores, etc. Thus, its value to public relations becomes self-evident. Unfortunately, the potential of this science in school public relations has not been tapped sufficiently. A similar observation might be said for psychology and especially the area of social psychology. However, drawing heavily from both of these behavioral sciences is the area of communication. As this term is known today it extends far beyond the more limited and traditional field of journalism. Historically, journalism has emphasized two mechanical aspects of communication--message and channel. Today, the broader term, communication, continues

to recognize the importance of these two aspects of the process, but not as independent entities. Thus, some of the earlier mechanistic emphases of journalism have been transcended by the larger humanistic communications emphases on the behavioralistic aspects of the "source" and the "receiver."

The newer communication focus on the "receiver" and the "source" means a focus on people. Whenever people are involved in a proposition it is axiomatic to turn to the behavioral sciences. This the students in modern communication have done by drawing upon the basic information regarding human behavior and then adapting it and adding to it in accordance with their own specialized focus. Currently, the concerns in the communication field include such knowledges as how do people form attitudes, change opinions, become motivated and react in group situations. Further, how can communications use this information to implement the communication process?

Therefore, it is recommended that a communication focus be used in the teaching of public relations whenever appropriate.

2. The lack of analytical devices has hampered training programs in school public relations in the past. It has been difficult to present generalizations and to develop comparable materials relating to discrete public relations practices and

techniques. These difficulties in synthesis and analysis may be simplified through the employment and development of the Conceptual Schema created in this study.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Conceptual Schema be looked upon and developed as a teaching tool.

3. Courses in school public relations have tended to emphasize either philosophy or technique.[3] In a broad sense "philosophy" may be equated to "content" in the public relations model. Both try to answer the question, "What are we communicating about and why?" Neither philosophy nor technique can be disregarded completely in public relations. Any activity must relate to a purpose to be effective. Philosophy gives the basic purpose, and technique provides the method for implementing the purpose. Though technique has been emphasized beyond all other areas of the public relations process, it has been done on a "how-to-do-it" basis rather than on a "why-to-do-it" basis. This lack of knowledge about the "why" has limited the scope of the techniques used and the rate of effectiveness of those that are used.

The Model of the public relations process developed

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[3]Joseph Carol and Richard C. Lonsdale, "A Report of a National Survey of Graduate and Undergraduate Courses in School-Community Relations and School Public Relations" (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1958), 8 pp. (Mimeographed.)

in this study attempted to focus on the "whys." This was done by identifying the basic communication concepts underlying various public relations techniques. Twelve such concepts were identified that relate to school public relations. An understanding of these basic concepts would permit superintendents to identify those concepts which were critical to a specific situation or need. These conditions would give a firmer base to the selection of a particular technique to meet a situation. Recognition of the concepts which are critical to the technique also would give some evaluation of areas of the technique that are most important. For instance, if the concept of "timing" is identified as being important in creating citizen action because of the fall harvest schedule, then the technique of using a citizens committee should be scheduled to meet this timing requirement. Lack of recognition of the importance of timing might find the use of a citizens committee ineffective.

It is recommended that these twelve communication concepts be made a substantial part of any public relations course.

Summary

The dual purpose of this study and the methodology and analysis of data carried out to fulfill this purpose were summarized in this chapter. In addition, major conclusions were stated which emphasized the applicability of communication theories and concepts to the analysis and development of the school public relations process. The usefulness of the Conceptual Schema, developed in this study, as a tool for utilizing existing knowledges in the specific area of communication and the broader area of the behavioral sciences was pointed out through specific recommendations. These recommendations included examples of potential use of the Schema in improving school public relations, and provided an approach, through a communication focus, towards improving in-service and pre-service preparation programs in public relations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW

Dear _____:

Michigan State University is launching a study of one of the critical job areas of the superintendency -- the superintendent's public relations functions.

As a part of the study, individual interviews are being scheduled with a small group of Michigan superintendents who have been especially selected for this project. We earnestly hope that you will accept our invitation to be one of the superintendents interviewed.

Through these interviews we hope to identify actual practices of the superintendent that contribute to the basic goal of school public relations: The development of moral and financial support of the schools by the community. We are not looking for "oughts" and "shoulds," but for the superintendent's perception of what makes the difference.

We would like to interview you sometime between now and December 30. The interview will take less than two hours. If you are coming to Lansing, please write or phone so that an appointment can be made for you at the College of Education. There are many meetings in Lansing during the next two months which could be combined with a visit with us. If you are not coming to Lansing, we will be pleased to come to your office or other place you may designate.

May we hear from you on the enclosed post card?

Cordially,

Sylvia Ciernick (Miss)
Phone 355-1723

SC:lao

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PURPOSE

We are attempting to identify the critical job requirements for the superintendent in the area of public relations or school-community relations.

That is, we are trying to identify specific things that superintendents do that show they are effectively or ineffectively fulfilling the public relations phases of their jobs.

PROCEDURE

We are using an interview technique that is possibly different than those you are accustomed to.

First, I will give you a card that defines the purpose of the superintendency in the area of public relations. This definition has been agreed upon by superintendents and experts in the area. I will also want your agreement or disagreement.

Second, I will ask you to recall incidents involving yourself in which you feel you were effective in contributing to this stated purpose. You will be asked also to recall incidents in which you were ineffective.

By an incident I mean an event - a specific, observed act. Something that you did that made you think that you were performing in an effective or ineffective manner.

Any questions?

INTERVIEW

Here is a definition of the purpose of the superintendency in the area of public relations. (Present card.)

"The purpose of the superintendency in the area of public relations is to obtain moral and financial support for the schools through developing community understanding, knowledge and participation in school affairs."

Q. Do you agree or disagree with this general aim?

A. _____

Now, take a minute to think of a recent incident in which you feel you were effective in contributing to this purpose.

Q. What were the general circumstances leading up to the incident?

A. _____

Q. What actually happened?

A. _____

Q. Why do you think you were effective?

A. _____

(The last three questions are repeated for obtaining ineffective incidents.)

APPENDIX C

BASIC DATA SHEET

_____
(Code No.)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Number of years as a teacher _____

Number of years as a principal _____

Number of superintendencies and years in each position:

First position _____yrs.

_____

_____

_____

Current position _____

TOTAL _____

CURRENT TOTAL ENROLLMENT _____

APPENDIX D

BASIC DATA SHEET SUMMARY

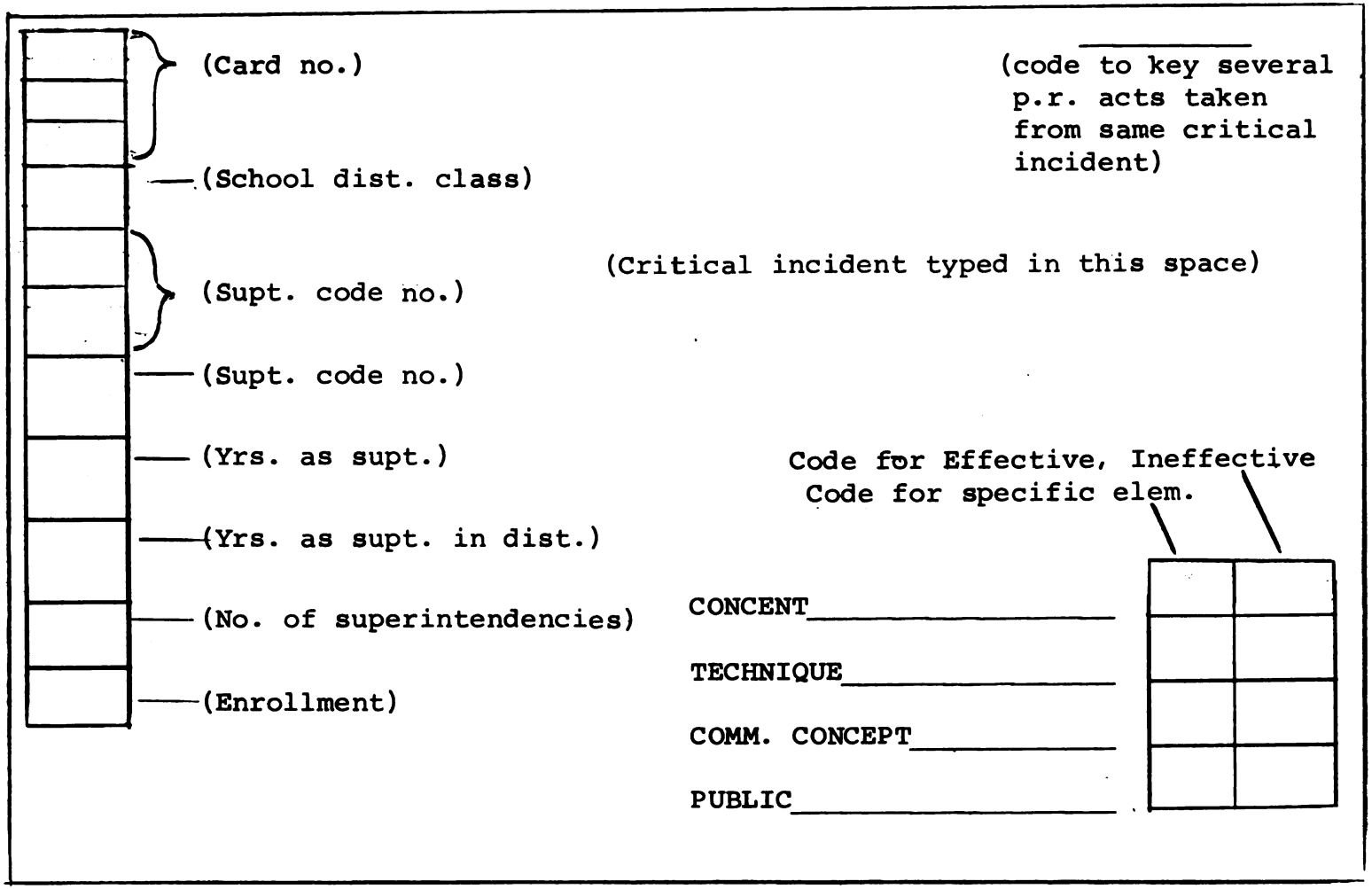
Supt. Code No.	Yrs. as Superintendent 0-4	5-0	10-19	20-+	Yrs. as Supt. in Dist. 0-4	5-0	10-+	No of. Superintendencies 1	2	3	4	Total Enrollment 0-999	1000-1999	2000+
101			14		2						x			3225
104			11			6			x					2950
105			10			6			x					2700
106				30			14			x				2711
107			17				15		x				1800	
108				44			15			x			1567	
109		8				5			x					2476
110	2				2			x					1700	
111			17				17	x						3300
112			12				12	x						3056
113		8				8		x					1372	
114				24			24	x		x			1350	
116				29		8								3050
117			10				10	x					1893	
119			14			6				x				2369
120			13			8			x					3590
121			12				10		x				1923	
122			13		4					x				3700
123			11				11	x						3083
124				20			15			x				2300
202			10			6			x				1300	
203		6				6		x					1130	

APPENDIX D. Continued

Supt. Code No.	Yrs. as Superintendent 0-4	5-0	10-19	20-+	Yrs. as Supt. in Dist. 0-4	5-0	10-+	No. of Superintendencies 1	2	3	4	Total Enrollment 0-999	1000-1999	2000 +
204			15				10		x				1307	
208	3				3			x				929		
209			10			6			x				1512	
210				35			17				x		1042	
211			10				10	x					1725	
214				14			10		x				1450	
215		7				7		x					1600	
216		5			2				x			755		
217				20			20	x				850		
218			16		4						x	872		
219		7			3				x				1079	
220			13				13	x					1150	
221	2				2			x				695		
222				35			35	x				670		
224	3				3			x				677		
225		8			3					x			1425	
226			17				13		x				1500	
227	6 mo.				6 mo.			x				850		
228			14				14	x					1243	
229		5				5		x					1484	
230			18				13			x			1774	
232		7			4					x			1025	
233		6			4				x			997		
250		7				7		x				650		
251			15			7			x				1225	
252	4 mo.				4 mo.			x				841		

APPENDIX E

I.B.M. INFORMATION CARD



APPENDIX F

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS DESIGNATED AS INEFFECTIVE

Specific Element Under Major Elem.	Total	Ineffective Specific Elements	Per Cent of Total	Per Cent of All Ineffective Elements Under Major Element (N-41)
Content:				
Finance	91	21	23.0%	56.0%
General (includes several)	92	10	10.8%	24.0%
Personnel	34	3	8.8%	7.0%
Administrative operation	23	3	13.0%	7.0%
Instruction	62	2	3.0%	5.0%
Transportation	10	1	1.0%	2.0%
Plant and/or equipment	13	1	1.0%	2.0%
Technique:				
Personal contact	77	7	9.0%	17.0%
General adm. policy	24	6	25.0%	14.6%
Residents as members of school committees	30	6	20.0%	14.0%
Newspaper editor's position	11	5	4.5%	12.0%
Administrative act	21	4	19.0%	10.0%
Prepared presentation	19	3	16.0%	7.0%
School news stories	11	3	27.2%	7.0%
Millage brochure	2	2	100.0%	5.0%
Open public meeting	9	1	11.0%	2.0%
School Committee-internal	5	1	20.0%	2.0%
Letters	17	1	5.8%	2.0%
Staff newsletter	2	1	50.0%	2.0%
Survey - opinionnaire	10	1	10.0%	2.0%
Empathy	65	9	13.8%	22.0%
Dissemination	51	7	13.7%	17.0%

APPENDIX F. Continued.

Specific Element nder Major Elem.	Total	Ineffective Specific Elements	Per Cent of Total	Per Cent of All Ineffective Elements Under Major Element (N-41)
Attention	22	5	22.7%	12.0%
Timing	13	5	38.0%	12.0%
Observation	38	5	13.0%	12.0%
Group dynamics	26	5	19.0%	12.0%
Involvement	44	4	9.0%	10.0%
Feedback	23	1	4.0%	2.0%
Public:				
Total community	100	18	18.0%	44.0%
Editor	17	5	3.0%	12.0%
Board of ed. - group	32	4	12.5%	10.0%
Parents - informal group	33	3	9.0%	7.0%
Instructional staff - all, informal group	7	2	3.0%	5.0%
Lay citizens - indiv., non-school rel.	15	2	13.0%	5.0%
Non-instr. staff - informal group	1	1	100.0%	2.0%
Board of ed. - indiv.	8	1	12.5%	2.0%
P.T.A. - formal group, non-school rel.	4	1	25.0%	2.0%
All formal groups - non-school rel.	8	1	11.0%	2.0%
Citizens committee	9	1	10.0%	2.0%
Service club	11	1	9.0%	2.0%
Business - professional interests - informal	7	1	14.0%	2.0%