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TEACHER SENSE OF POWER RELATIVE TO CURRICULUM
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# TEACHER SENSE OF POWER RELATIVE TO CURRICULUM IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER SENSE OF POWER RELATIVE TO CURRICULUM
IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

By

Mark Ezra Stern

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the politics of curriculum in a Michigan suburban school district by probing perceptual dimensions of teacher ability to control curriculum policy decision making.

Resolution of the objective was sought by distributing a questionnaire and two attitudinal survey instruments to a sample of 200 teachers. The questionnaire was used to stratify the sample into groups consisting of elementary school teachers, middle school teachers, secondary school teachers, education association representatives, and department heads. Of the survey instruments used, one was designed to measure teacher sense of power relative to curriculum, and the other was constructed to measure teacher perceptions of sanctioning agents.

Data were collected from 129 survey instruments which were returned and scored. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a stratified sample of 15 teachers to lend a more qualitative dimension to the study.

Research questions and hypotheses of this study were tested using standard statistical procedures. Means, standard deviations, variances, and correlation coefficients, where applicable, were determined for the various measures. Null hypotheses were analyzed by analysis of variance and the t-test.

Statistical and interview data were collected and analyzed. The results suggested that teachers were generally undecided with respect to their ability to control curriculum policy decision making. No significant differences in curricular sense of power were found among the teacher groups tested. Furthermore, it appeared from the data that teachers perceived curriculum control to rest with the building principal and superintendent. The results also indicated that these administrators control curriculum through a combination of influence and power arising from perceptions of normative superiority and ability to sanction, respectively.

Another possible effect contributing to administrative control was a general tendency of teachers not to politicize curriculum. Rather it appeared that coalition over curricular matters would more likely result in clique formation than in interest group formation.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who, through the course of my studies and this project, contributed to my personal and intellectual growth.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Statement of the Problem

If one were to observe the activities of a typical school, what would most probably be seen are administrators administering, teachers teaching, and students learning. Parents, although perhaps not obviously a part of the educational mainstream, might be involving themselves in an evaluation of all of the above processes.

Considering the aforementioned people with respect to their activities does not shed much light on their collective purpose, which is the dissemination of knowledge by a vehicle known as the curriculum. Someone must decide just exactly what must be learned or experienced under the auspices of the school. A closer inspection of the above school people may reveal that what is taught is a result of an interplay among a set of actors in political arena. As stated by Laurence Iannaccone:

> Politics and education are inextricably tied to one another; this will be true until education has no impact on the political beliefs and behaviors of a society's young or the adult leaders of a society do not find in education the vehicle for shaping the values and social commitments of their children.[1]

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[1]Laurence Iannaccone, Politics in Education (New York: The Center for Applied Education, Inc., 1967), p. 99.

At this juncture, it should be emphasized that as a political process, education differs somewhat from other political processes in content. The heart of the educational political process is not expressed in terms of assets or territorial gain, as is often the case in governmental politics. Instead, it has its core issues in curriculum, which is, more often than not, value based.[2] As stated in The Common Goals of Michigan Education, "Michigan education must create an educational environment which fosters the development of mature and responsible citizens."[3] The various processes to which a student is subject in both the classroom and ancillary school activities apparently have as a hoped-for outcome, maturity and responsibility.

That the substance of school politics is value based does not necessarily change other elements of the political process. The school provides a political arena complete with actors vying for some piece of the political pie. The problem is, then, the effect of the political process on that piece of the educational pie called curriculum.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the teacher group, in a given school system, as a political force acting on that school's curriculum. To do this entails studies of the school as

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[2]Michael B. Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1971), p. xx.

[3]The Common Goals of Michigan Education (Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, 1974), p. 3.

a political system and teachers as political actors within the school arena.

Over a period of years, a school district's curricular model may vary. For example, the traditional classroom may be replaced with an open classroom or year courses may be replaced by quarter courses and the like. It may just as well be that a particular curricular model may exist unchanged for quite some time.

The reason for the existence of a particular set of curricula could lie in the political influence of one or more school-related decision-making groups. In an effort to narrow the focus of this study, teachers were selected as the group under consideration. The rationale for this decision lies in the relationship of the number of participants in a group to the number in other groups which comprise the school organization. Compared to the number of school board members and administrators, the number of teachers is significantly larger. Although students represent an even larger population, they were not chosen for reasons stated elsewhere in this study.

Another reason for choosing teachers as subjects for this study is that their relationship to curriculum is clear. Most of the processes to which students are exposed in school are influenced by teachers in the classroom or in extra-class activities. Since curriculum may be defined as ". . . all of the experiences that the individual has under the auspices of the school," it is

reasonable to assume that the major disseminators of curriculum can somehow control what curricular model is employed.[4]

It should be determined, then, if a particular curriculum exists because teachers believe the model to be correct and perceive themselves as powerful enough to effect a possible change. This sense of power, so to speak, with respect to curriculum may be functions of various variables subject to statistical analysis.

Another factor to consider is whether a particular curriculum model exists because teachers are subject to influence from one or more school-related groups which are perceived as posing a threat of sanction. If so, it is hoped that the identity of the most influential group will be revealed.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions posed will help provide a framework for hypotheses. Actually, there are two general investigations around which the questions and hypotheses are constructed. One of these is concerned with identifying some factors affecting the sense of curricular power among teachers in a particular school district. The other investigation will concern itself with the relationship, if indeed any exists, between sense of power and groups perceived as agents of sanction.

All research questions and hypotheses refer specifically to teachers in a suburban school district located in southeast

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[4]Earl Newman, "Perspectives on Curriculum and Instruction" (unpublished paper, Michigan State University, 1976).

elementary, middle school, secondary, department heads, and office holders in the education association.

Research Question I: To what extent do teachers in the school district perceive themselves as having power to influence curriculum?

Research Question II: Of the groups sampled, which consist of teachers who have the greatest sense of power perceptions relative to curriculum?

Research Question III: Is there a relationship between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and teaching grade level?

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in teacher sense of power relative to curriculum between elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), and secondary (9-12) level teachers.

Research Question IV: Do teachers who participate as office holders in the education association have a greater sense of power relative to curriculum than the rank-and-file membership?

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in sense of power relative to curriculum between teachers who hold an office in the education association and the rank-and-file membership.

Research Question V: Do teachers who serve as department heads have a greater sense of power relative to curriculum than those who do not serve as department heads?

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in sense of power relative to curriculum between teachers who are department heads and teachers who are not department heads.

Research Question VI: Of the five sanctioning agents selected for this study (parents, school board members, superintendent, principals, other teachers), which poses the greatest threat to teachers?

Research Question VII: Which of the agents selected for this study poses the greatest threat of sanction for the individual teacher sample groups?

Research Question VIII: Which of the five teacher groups sampled for this study is most threatened by sanction arising collectively from the sanctioning agents?

Research Question IX: Is there a correlation between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction?

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant correlation between sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction.

## Importance of the Study

Given a particular school system and considering that system as a microcommunity, it may be worthwhile to study the internal political processes particularly with respect to curriculum.[5] To paraphrase Robert Cahill, one could study the politics of a community strictly for the sake of knowledge or as a means of political action aimed at achieving desirable political conditions.[6]

The importance of this study lies in Cahill's two-phased approach. A school system will be studied as a political system complete with a variety of political actors. Teachers, as a group of potential political actors, will be studied to determine if they are politically active with respect to curricular matters. That is, is the teacher group predisposed to a particular curriculum model or are teachers tied to that model because of the influence of others?

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[5]Alan Rosenthal, ed., Governing Education (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 8.

[6]Robert S. Cahill, "Three Themes on the Politics of Education," in The Politics of Education in the Local Community, ed. Robert S. Cahill and Steven P. Hencley (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1964), pp. 66-67.

The ultimate importance of this study would be that if the sense of power among teachers in a given district is measurable, it may then be possible to understand why a particular curriculum exists in that district. Moreover, key political actors may be identified, thereby giving some indication where the locus of control over curriculum might lie.

## Limitations of the Study

A question which often arises with any study centers around the degree to which one segment of a population attitudinally represents the remainder of the population. Put another way, the issue of generalizability will tend to surface. It is felt, however, that what is at issue here is not whether teachers in one school district function politically in a significantly different manner than another group of teachers in a different district. More germane to the issue would be the manner by which teachers in a given school district function politically. The object of this study is to analyze the political forces acting upon or being generated from teachers in a given district rather than to correlate one district with another.

One possible limitation of this study may exist with respect to participant candor when completing the survey instruments. Hopefully, this problem will be circumvented by a written assurance of preservation of anonymity. Another limitation would be the candor of participants in questionnaire responses. Face validity will have to be assumed here since there are no legitimate

avenues available to check the accuracy of responses. Another limitation might be participant candor in interview responses. Again, an assurance of anonymity preservation, in writing if necessary, should help promote freedom of response.

While the purpose of this study is to provide a political analysis of the teacher group and curriculum, it should be emphasized that polity does not function independently of other processes or phenomena operating within a social system. Sociometrically measurable variables, although not within the scope of this work, must be considered as interacting with polity. The research presented here, then, explores only one aspect of a multidimensional problem.

## Definitions of Terms Used

Curriculum: All those processes to which a student is subject under the auspices of the school.

Politics: Competition between interest groups or individuals for power or leadership.

Political Power: The process of controlling (maintaining of changing) the distribution of desired things in society, i.e., property, knowledge, prestige, power. Political power may be actually existing or perceived by others to exist.

Sanctioning Agent: A person or group which is influential in enforcing a set of standards.

## Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I, the introduction, begins with a statement of the problem followed by the study's purpose and subsequent research questions and hypotheses. Following these, the importance and limitations of the study are discussed. A section in which key terms are defined is included.

A survey of the literature, which is arranged into two broad sections, will be presented in Chapter II. The school as a political arena will be developed in the first section on organizational structure and decision making. The second section considers the concept of political power and, more specifically, teacher perspectives and political power.

Methodologies employed in conducting the study will be explained in Chapter III. Included here will be an explanation of sample-selection techniques and descriptions of instruments used for data gathering.

Data obtained from survey instruments as well as interviews will be presented in Chapter IV. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be employed and tabulated as part of the data analysis.

The data will be analyzed in Chapter V in terms of research questions and hypotheses posed. Findings, conclusions, and implications of the study will be discussed. Suggestions for future research will be proposed.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature relevant to educational politics will be arranged into two major headings. The first section, political structure of the school, will consider the school as a political system, the organizational model of the school, and the nature of political decision making going on within the organization. The second section will develop the concept of political power and its particular relationship to the school's political actors and curriculum.

Structuring the background material in this manner is not without purpose. If the notion that schools are political systems is to be defended, then a model must exist on which to predicate the defense. Identification of the organizational structure particular to schools is necessary to the establishment of a framework in which decision making and power may be studied. Following this, the power roles and relationships among various political actors as teachers, administrators, and parents will emerge. The effects of all of the above components with respect to curriculum will be examined to place curriculum in the political model, thereby lending credence to the issues in this study.

## Political Structure of the School

### The School as a Political System

The advice of Horace Mann that ". . . those points of doctrine or faith, upon which good and great men differ, shall not be obtruded into this mutual ground of the schools,"[1] was a strong appeal for the maintenance of apolitical schools. Relatively recent issues of school finance, busing, Sputnik, and the like might have changed Mann's thinking since these thrust education squarely into a political arena.

A more timely view would be that politics is an unavoidable part of human existence to which all people are subject in some way. Politics does not center itself solely around the governing of a country but is found in a host of institutions, including schools.[2]

A political system has been defined as ". . . any persistent pattern of human relationships that involve, to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority."[3] Moreover, whenever political systems are stable, political roles develop which are played by those who create, interpret, and enforce rules which bind other members of the system.[4]

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[1]Michael B. Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 37.

[2]Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 6.

[4]Ibid., p. 11.

By way of an operational definition, eight characteristics may be used to describe a political system. These are enumerated and explained below.

1. Uneven control of resources

Political resources are means by which one person can influence another such as through the use of reward or punishment. The uneven distribution arises from the division of labor normally found in a society, unequal access of all people to resources based on experience or social inheritance, and differences in individual incentives.

2. Quest for political influence

It is expected that some members of the system will seek to gain influence over the policies and rulers of the system.

3. Uneven distribution of political influence

Some participants in a political system will have a greater share of influence because of a greater skill in using political resources.

4. The pursuit and resolution of conflicting aims

Some members of a political system will pursue aims conflicting with other members. Most often, conflict is settled in a nonpolitical manner.

5. Acquisition of legitimacy

Leaders in a political system tend to clothe their influence in a cloak of legitimacy or moral correctness. Influence is thereby changed to authority. If nothing else, authority is, perhaps, the most effective form of influence.

6. Development of an ideology

Leaders in a political system tend to espouse doctrines that justify and lend legitimacy to their leadership. Such doctrines, which comprise the ideology of the system, contain organizational policies and a description of how the system works.

7. The impact of other political systems

Behavior of one system is often influenced by another political system.

8. The influence of change

All political systems undergo change.[5]

Given that Dahl specifically referred to the school as a political system, it will be assumed that the characteristics set forth above apply to schools as well as to other political institutions.

The school as a political system is responsible for the governing of education, which is a political process.[6] That which is political, then, is a segment of social life involving activities and relationships of individuals, groups, and associations resulting in, or intended to result in, decisions by any policy-making body. Education fits this model in that school districts have been shown to display a capacity to reflect changes in the wishes of local

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[5]Ibid., pp. 15-24.

[6]Laurence Iannaccone, Politics in Education (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1967), p. 2.

citizens with respect to what is taught. Such change in educational policy is brought about through whatever political machinery exists.[7]

Emphasizing the political nature of education is the observation that groups will tend toward a closed social system with closed cooptational politics and that education is particularly prone to cooptational politics since ". . . the behavior characteristic of effective teaching requires persuasion above all else."[8]

## Organizational Structure of the School

School organizational structure seems to conform to a bureaucratic model. This model has been described as one that ". . . involves elimination of irrationality and emotion from official business in order to insure efficient decision making and equitable treatment of subordinates."[9]

The characteristics of a bureaucratic model are accordingly:

1. A division of labor in order to insure a high degree of task and role specialization.

2. The arrangement of organizational positions on principles of office hierarchy and levels of grade authority.

3. The presence of rules which govern organizational life together with a hierarchical authority structure provide for

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[7] Ibid., p. 3.

[8] Ibid., p. 99.

[9] Max Weber, The Theory of Social Economic Organizations (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1947), pp. 330-40.

coordination of organizational activities and for continuity of operations regardless of personnel change.[10]

More recently, these same characteristics were noted in a similar discussion of organizational structure.[11]

The similarity between the bureaucratic model and school organization is remarkably close. In drawing comparisons, it has been contended that the division of labor exists by virtue of staffs providing a variety of school services. A further assertion is that schools attempt to create a universal role behavior. Employment practices are based on technical competence. Promotions are determined by years of service and educational achievement. At the administrative level, a management by objectives program may be used to accomplish the same end. The levels of hierarchy consist basically of school board, superintendent, principal, teacher, and students. Rules exist which control behaviors at each level, and standards are adopted which assume uniformity in task performance.[12]

It has been suggested that the organization of a school may differ somewhat from the bureaucratic structure because of its professional nature. The difference between the bureaucracy as defined by Weber and the professional bureaucracy lies in the type of social

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Peter M. Blau, Bureaucracy in Modern Society (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 18.

[12] Simon Wittes, People and Power (Ann Arbor: Institute of Social Research, 1970), p. 11.

control. That is, in the professional bureaucracy there exists an element of self-imposed standards and peer group surveillance.[13]

Additional support for this theory is offered by a study of graduate students who had been teachers. They perceived themselves as professionals who should enjoy autonomy over teaching activities.[14] A further contention is that ". . . the school is a formal organization in which both bureaucratic and professional forms of power structures are operative and interactive."[15]

The professional organization is characterized by a staff which consists of about 50 percent professionals. Goals of this organizational type consist of production, application, preservation, or communication of knowledge. Relationships which exist between professional and nonprofessional staff are such that the professional staff has greater authority over the organization's major goal activities.[16]

Before the active decision makers can be considered, it would be appropriate to examine the political decision-making process. Political decision making is a rather broad perspective,

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[13]P. M. Blau and W. R. Scott, Formal Organization (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1962).

[14]C. Washburn, "Teachers in the Authority System," Journal of Educational Sociology 30 (1957): 390-94.

[15]C. E. Bidwell, "The School as a Formal Organization," in Handbook of Organizations, ed. James E. March (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965).

[16]Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organizations (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 11.

and for this reason the discussion will be limited to that type of decision making relevant to curriculum.

Curriculum decision making can be classified as one of those involving small increments of change. An increment of change involves a small change in an important variable. Moreover, it results in a greater or reduced use of an existing social technique or a somewhat higher or lower level of attainment of some existing value as well.[17]

Curricular decisions are listed in a subcategory of the incremental change known as the repetitive change. One characteristic of the repetitive change is that it largely repeats frequent previous change with respect to the character and scope of change.[18]

Another characteristic of repetitive change is that a small change of this type could have large consequences. It should be emphasized, however, that although such consequences may arise, they are only the result of small moves made on particular problems as opposed to decisions made on comprehensive reform programs. This type of political decision making reflects the democratic process and the curricular process as well in that both survive under slow incremental change. To pursue incremental change, then, is to direct policy toward specific ills which are constantly subject to re-examination rather than comprehensive reform.[19]

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[17]David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, A Strategy of Decisions (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. 64.

[18]Ibid., pp. 65-79.

[19]Ibid.

## Political Power and the School

An analysis of power in the school arena provides a means by which educational politics may be studied. It has been demonstrated that ". . . power analysis can provide a frame of reference at once unifying and integrative and yet sufficiently discriminating which can account for a wide range of behavior in educational policy making."[20]

The key to political power is influence. One definition of power would be that ". . . a person may be said to have power to the extent that he influences the behavior of others in accordance with his own intentions."[21] Influence is inferred when, in an interpersonal transaction, one person acts in such a way as to change the behavior of another in some intended fashion.[22] Put yet another way, power is ". . . an actor's ability to induce or influence another actor to carry out his directives or any other norms he supports."[23]

Influence appears to be only one aspect of power. The other aspect, control, lies at the heart of and is an essential and universal component of an organization. The reason for this

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[20]Edward A. Duane, "Power Analysis of Educational Politics," Michigan Academecian 10 (Summer 1977): 91-100.

[21]H. Goldhammer and B. A. Shils, "Types of Power and Status," American Journal of Sociology 45 (1939): 171.

[22]Darwin Cortwright, ed., Studies in Social Power (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 204.

[23]Amatai Etzioni, A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 4.

lies in the various roles of the organization as integrator of members' activities and maintainer of members' conformity to organizational requirements and goals. An organization's ability to fulfill these roles by successfully influencing its members is a measure of its ability to control its members.[24]

In the sections which follow, the perspective of political power will be considered particularly as it applies to the relationship of teachers with other political actors in the educational environment.

## Political Power and the Teacher Group

Teachers have been shown to be numerically the largest but at the same time least significant among professional groups.[25] Whether or not any group is politically stable depends upon the internal homogeneity of the group. A major source of political problems within a group is nonhomogeneity, which draws from a characteristic of group life that no member is completely absorbed in the group to which he belongs. Hence, the internal politics of a group is affected by the extent to which its membership overlaps that of other groups.[26]

That such conflict can arise from a membership overlap in teacher groups was shown by a study of secondary school department

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[24]Wittes, p. 13.

[25]Alan Rosenthal, ed., Governing Education (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 6.

[26]David B. Truman, The Governmental Process (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), pp. 57-70.

heads. The subjects were elected by their colleagues as opposed to being administratively appointed. Because of their constant interaction with principals in decision making, they perceived themselves as being more closely aligned with administration than with teachers. Moreover, the department heads believed that they could do a more efficient job if administratively appointed and given administrative authority. In essence, they felt it difficult to be a rank-and-file member and at the same time lead a department.[27]

Teachers can exist in a psychological group with attendant characteristics of interdependent relationships among members and a shared ideology which serves to regulate members' mutual conduct.[28] If, on the basis of shared attitudes, claims are made upon other groups for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of these attitudes, an interest group emerges. If these claims are made against the body that governs them, then a political interest group is formed.[29] If teachers are the least significant among professional groups, it would appear that perhaps as a psychological group they would tend not to coalesce into a political interest group. If this is so, then the teacher group might be better categorized as a clique.[30]

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[27]Mark E. Stern, "The Politics of Department Chairmanship," Secondary Education Today 16 (Winter 1975): 58.

[28]David Kretch, Richard A. Crutchfield, and Egerton L. Ballacher, Individual in Society (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1962), p. 383.

[29]Truman, pp. 33-37.

[30]Thomas W. Madran, Small Group Methods and the Study of Politics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 9.

As in all groups, the positions, roles, and power of the members of a teacher group become differentiated and organized in a structure which influences the functions of the group to the members' satisfaction. It is interesting to note that a defined leadership need not be present since every group, although lacking a formal leadership, provides roles for its members which differ in the amount of power. In so doing, every group will provide for the gratification of some of its members' power want.[31]

Whether or not the teacher group perceives itself as powerful or powerless appears to be dependent on the expectancy that its behaviors cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes or reinforcement it seeks.[32] It has been suggested accordingly that powerlessness reflected ". . . some generalized feelings of futility and dissatisfaction which are projected upon either local government or public education in general."[33]

Prior studies in teacher power or powerlessness indicate that powerlessness is not independent of objective circumstances. For example, some investigators have shown that males have a higher sense of political efficacy than females, and that persons in higher income brackets with greater educational experience have a greater sense of power than those in lower status and educational achievement

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[31]Kretch, Crutchfield, and Ballacher, pp. 394-441.

[32]Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," American Sociological Review 24 (December 1959): 783-91.

[33]James M. Shipton and Eugene I. Belisle, "Who Criticizes the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan 37 (April 1956): 303-307.

levels.[34] Other studies have shown that a sense of power among teachers was inversely related to a climate of repressive authority and directly related to the degree of individual responsibility and interpersonal relationships with school officials. Furthermore, a direct relationship was discovered between a sense of power and sex, social class, and teaching level. A greater sense of power was found to exist in the male secondary teacher of upper-middle-class origins.[35]

The issue of sex is disputable. A different study concluded that male teachers behaved politically like female teachers and that this behavior could be understood as a masculine reaction to their feminine occupational life.[36]

Neither the degree of bureaucratization to which teachers were subjected not the extent of participation in a union was found to be a factor contributing to a sense of power. The Moeller and Charters study indicated a remarkable drop in sense of power among those in the second through seventh year of teaching experience. According to the authors, this suggests that perhaps a specific organizational phenomenon operates across school systems. Those teachers with a high sense of power would be eliminated by this

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[34]Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurwin, and Warren E. Miller, The Vote Decides (Evanston, Ill.: Row-Peterson, 1954).

[35]Gerald H. Moeller and W. W. Charters, "Relation of Bureaucratization to Sense of Power Among Teachers," Administrative Science Quarterly 10 (March 1976): 456-57.

[36]Harmon Zeigler, The Political Life of American Teachers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), pp. 10-13.

phenomenon after their first teaching year. The same study also showed that teacher sense of power was related to extra classroom positions of responsibility only in highly bureaucratic systems.[37]

## The Teacher Group and Sanctioning Agents

In the earlier discussion of political power, an overriding issue was control by influence. In analyzing political perceptions of a group, one would want to consider that group's perceptions of sanctioning agents. The reason for this lies in the ability of a sanctioning agent to control by virtue of influence in the form of threat or reward.

A study of the high school teacher's political world considered, as one of its issues, teacher perceptions of sanctioning agents. The purpose of this study was to determine which group or groups operating within or without the educational system posed the greatest threat to teachers if they would undertake a controversial course of action.

The sanctioning agents perceived as posing the greatest threat were parents, school board members, superintendents, principals, and other teachers. In terms of severity of sanction, parents received the highest score and principals the lowest. School board members were considered to be strong sanctioning agents as well. Groups existing outside the educational mainstream such as patriotic or community groups did not pose any significant threat

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[37]Moeller and Charters, pp. 464-65.

of sanction. The conclusion reached in the study is that the closer one gets to the daily school operation, the less severe the threat of sanction from groups in the intraschool milieu. Even principals, who are symbols of authority, were perceived more as benevolent authorities for although they sanction on many issues, the sanction is not severe.[38]

The reason teachers perceive parents and school board members as posing a severe sanction threat was proposed in a study indicating that teachers believed that parents, having no educational expertise, would tend to be unfairly judgmental. School board members would be apt to behave in like manner since they are representatives of the lay community.[39]

A further study suggested that the degree to which a teacher may be sanction prone could be related to characteristics as sex, job satisfaction, and subject area.[40]

Politics and the Curricular Process

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, curriculum is a vehicle for inculcating a system of values. This is further substantiated by the position that an effective curriculum will reveal

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[38]Harmon Zeigler, The Political World of the High School Teacher (Eugene, Oregon: The Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), pp. 137-41.

[39]Howard S. Becker, "The Teacher in the Authority System of the Public Schools," Journal of Educational Sociology 27 (November 1953): 128-41.

[40]Harmon Zeigler, The Political World of the High School Teacher, pp. 145-46.

an intelligent awareness of current forces, reflect the values which people hold important, and prepare students to live a worthy life of loyalth and integrity.[41]

The political nature of curriculum lies in the means by which it exists or is changed in a school. For example, curriculum decisions are subject to influence from parents, school board members, administrators, and teachers. There are also a variety of extra-school policy influencers as well. Examples of these would be government, national testing services, college entrance examining boards, accreditation committees, professional organizations, and the like. All of these might influence a superintendent to request his board to adopt a curriculum policy. Often, the school board is willing to do this because of their lack of expertise in such matters. Teachers are, in turn, influenced to accept a particular curriculum policy such as curriculum coordination vis-à-vis curriculum autonomy. Policy implementation will probably not be dictated due to teachers' professional autonomy and expertise.[42]

It was further suggested that teachers rarely are considered a major policy-making group with respect to curriculum. The teacher group appears to be more concerned with individual classroom operations rather than with the collective school curriculum. Moreover,

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[41]John H. Fischer in A. Harry Paslow, ed., Curriculum Crossroads (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965), pp. 5-7.

[42]Michael W. Kirst and Decker F. Walker, "Curricular Decisions in the Political System," in State, School, and Politics, ed. Michael W. Kirst (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1971), pp. 217-19.

this attitude seems independent of union organization since negotiation concerns center around pay and working conditions with curricular matters being peripheral at best.[43]

The lack of involvement in curriculum policy is thought to be due to a variety of factors. One reason could be that teachers accept the authority of their principals in the areas of curriculum and instruction.[44] Another is the perception that curriculum is controlled by the superintendent by virtue of his ability to control school board policy.[45] Still another reason could be the effect created by an increasing dominance of managerial systems. Such systems tend to make lines of communication more rigid, thereby promoting feelings of alienation and inefficacy.[46]

Students play a minor role at best in the curriculum decision-making process. They have little, if any, influence over what they learn, and their views are rarely considered by policy makers.[47]

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[43]Ibid., pp. 220-21.

[44]Becker, pp. 128-41.

[45]James W. Guthrie and Patricia A. Craig, "Who Controls the Schools," in Policy Issues in Education, ed. Allen C. Ornstein and Steven I. Miller (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1976), p. 62.

[46]Frederick M. Wirt and Michael Kirst, The Political Web of American Schools (Boston: Little,Brown & Co., 1972), p. 92.

[47]Kirst and Walker, p. 221.

## Summary

The literature suggests that schools are political systems characterized by a professional bureaucratic organizational model. Policy, including curriculum policy, is established by means of an incremental decision-making process.

Studies in political power seem to indicate that teachers tend not to exist in politically strong groups for a variety of reasons relatable to the nature of the group and the sense of power among its members.

It appears, from the literature, that teachers are not curriculum policy makers but are influenced by factors such as sense of power and perceptions of sanctioning agents to operate within the confines of a given curriculum model.

# CHAPTER III

# DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the sources from which and the means by which data are collected. Data treatment methods will be discussed following a restatement of research questions and hypotheses.

## The Sample

The population from which the sample is drawn consists of teachers in a Michigan suburban school district. Of the 488 teachers employed by the district, 252 teach at the primary (K through 5) level, 106 teach at the middle school (6 through 8) level, and 130 teach at the secondary (9 through 12) level. Thirty teachers serve as department heads. These are elected annually by their colleagues and have no administrative authority. The entire staff is represented by 76 teachers who hold various offices in the suburban education association, an affiliate of the Michigan Education Association and the National Education Association.

## Sample Selection

Because of the nature of this study, a true random sample is not employed. Instead, a stratified sampling will be used. The population was divided according to the strata which follow.

1. Teachers at the primary level excluding representatives of the education association and department heads.
2. Teachers at the middle school level excluding representatives of the education association and department heads.
3. Teachers at the secondary level excluding representatives of the education association and department heads.
4. Teachers participating as representatives of the education association excluding department heads.
5. Teachers serving as department heads.

Subjects from each stratum were randomly drawn. An exception to this is the last stratum. Because of the relatively few teachers who serve as department heads, survey instruments were sent to the entire population.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question I: To what extent do teachers in the school district perceive themselves as having power to influence curriculum?

Research Question II: Of the groups sampled, which consist of teachers who have the greatest sense of power perceptions relative to curriculum?

Research Question III: Is there a relationship between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and teaching grade level?

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in teacher sense of power relative to curriculum between elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), and secondary (9-12) level teachers.

Research Question IV: Do teachers who participate as office holders in the education association have a greater sense of power relative to curriculum than the rank-and-file membership?

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in sense of power relative to curriculum between teachers who hold an office in the education association and the rank-and-file membership.

Research Question V: Do teachers who serve as department heads have a greater sense of power relative to curriculum than those who do not serve as department heads?

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in sense of power relative to curriculum between teachers who are department heads and teachers who are not department heads.

Research Question VI: Of the five sanctioning agents selected for this study (parents, school board members, superintendent, principals, other teachers), which poses the greatest threat to teachers?

Research Question VII: Which of the agents selected for this study poses the greatest threat of sanction for the individual teacher sample groups?

Research Question VIII: Which of the five teacher groups sampled for this study is most threatened by sanction arising collectively from the sanctioning agents?

Research Question IX: Is there a correlation between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction?

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant correlation between sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction.

## Source of Data

Three data sources were employed for the statistical treatment of research questions and hypotheses. These consist of a questionnaire and two attitudinal survey instruments. The survey instruments were designed to measure teachers' sense of power relative to curriculum and perceptions of sanctioning agents. Copies of these instruments can be found in the appendices.

As an additional data source, personal interviews were conducted with a 5 percent sample drawn randomly from the strata described above. It is hoped that by using this approach, an additional dimension will be added to the study which would not be obtainable through the exclusive use of statistics. The nature of the questions used will depend on the outcome of the statistical analysis and the stratum from which interview subjects are drawn.

## The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is used primarily as a sorting tool. It groups subjects into the categories around which the hypotheses are built. Since the items on this instrument do not probe into the subjects' personal backgrounds, it is assumed that the responses will be honest. For the same reason, it is likely that a greater number of subjects will complete the instrument, thereby limiting the probability of sample bias. Face validity for this instrument is assumed.

## Measurement of Teacher Sense of Power Relative to Curriculum

An attitudinal survey instrument measuring teacher sense of power relative to curriculum was designed after the method of Moeller and Charters.[1] The instrument consists of six Likert-form questionnaire items which were pretested and subjected to Guttman scale analysis by the authors. The rationale for using a Likert-form

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[1]Gerald H. Moeller and W. W. Charters, "Relation of Bureaucratization to Sense of Power Among Teachers," Administrative Science Quarterly 10 (March 1976): 450.

instrument lies in the continuum characteristic of sense of power perceptions. For example, perceptions of sense of power may range from feelings of unlimited influence in effecting policy to no influence in effecting policy.

Participants are asked to choose one of five possible responses for each item. The responses are "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Scoring is done by assigning a maximum value of five for a "strongly agree" response and a minimum value of one for a "strongly disagree" response to a positive item. For negative items, the scoring system is reversed. The Moeller and Charters instrument was reported to have a coefficient of reproducibility of 0.93.

The six items on the sense of power relative to curriculum instrument are listed below. Each item completes the initial phrase, "In the school system where I work, a teacher like myself . . ."

A. believes he/she has some control over what textbooks will be used in the classroom.

B. feels he/she does not know what curricular decisions are being made in the upper levels of administration.

C. never has a chance to work on school committees which make important curricular decisions for the school system.

D. considers that he/she has little to say over what teachers will work with him/her on his/her job.

E. usually can find ways to get system-wide curricular policy changed if he/she feels strongly enough about them.

F. feels he/she has little to say about important system-wide policies relating to curriculum.

Measurement of Teachers' Perceptions of Sanctioning Agents

Teachers' perceptions of sanctioning agents are functions of who they believe would pose some threat if they undertook a controversial course of action. To measure such perceptions, an instrument was designed after the method of Zeigler, who reported a coefficient of reproducibility of 0.92.[2] Using this method, teachers are asked to evaluate the probable reaction of members in various educationally concerned groups to a behavior which is controversial.

The problem in conducting a study of this type is determining what types of behaviors with respect to curriculum are likely to be regarded as controversial by teachers. In order to make the determination, a pilot study was conducted in which a group of five teachers were asked to submit a list of possible controversial classroom behaviors relating to curriculum. The behaviors were arranged in a Likert-form instrument and submitted to another group of 20 teachers. Item discrimination was employed after the method of Sax.[3] Those items with scores above the index of item discrimination were used to construct the final instrument. The behaviors chosen for the study are as follows:

A. Permitting students to decide what subject matter is of most worth to learn.

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[2]Harmon Zeigler, The Political Life of the High School Teacher (Eugene, Oregon: The Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), p. 138.

[3]Gilbert Sax, Empirical Foundations of Educational Research (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 221.

B. Conducting sensitivity training in the classroom.

C. Refusing to teach by criterion-referenced objectives.

D. Assigning or presenting material containing politically liberal values.

E. Assigning or presenting material containing morally liberal values.

The sanctioning agents chosen for this study are parents, school board members, the superintendent, principal, and other teachers.

Sanction severity is rated on a zero to four continuum. A zero would indicate no sanction activity, and a four would indicate severe sanction activity. Subjects were asked to rate the degree of threat posed by each of the sanctioning agents with respect to each behavior item. Total scores are computed by behavior and by sanctioning agent. A sanction severity ratio is calculated as well. This latter computation will be discussed in Chapter IV.

## Analysis of the Data

### Analysis of the Survey Instruments

Routine descriptive and inferential statistical procedures will be employed to analyze the data obtained from both survey instruments. Significance at the 0.05 level or less will serve as a basis for rejecting null hypotheses.

### Analysis of Interview Data

The interview results will be grouped according to the stratum from which the participants are drawn. Responses from the members of a group will be summarized according to the question asked.

## Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate the means by which teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and teacher perceptions of sanctioning agents will be determined. The sample, sample selection, research questions and hypotheses, survey methodology, and data treatment were discussed.

Statistical analysis of the data and responses to personal interviews will be presented in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER IV

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This study was conducted to investigate the politics of curriculum from the perspectives of teachers in a selected suburban school district in Michigan. The extent to which teachers perceive themselves as influential to the curriculum decision-making process was determined by measuring their sense of power relative to curriculum. Teachers' perceptions of other school-related groups or individuals were measured on the basis of sanction activity. This was done to permit a determination of which group or individual was perceived as having the most power to influence or control what teachers do in their classrooms. Additionally, a relationship was sought between the degree of teacher sense of power and the degree of threat posed by others who may be perceived as being more politically powerful.

If teacher sense of power is related to the influence of another group or person perceived as being more powerful, then the nature of the influence behind this power should be considered. To that end, the remainder of the study will focus on the qualitative dimension of teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and sanctioning agent influence.

Data were collected from instruments designed to measure teachers' perceptions of sense of power relative to curriculum and

teachers' perceptions of sanctioning agents. Instruments were mailed to 200 teachers representing about 41 percent of the teacher population. The teacher group was sampled as per the stratification discussed in the previous chapter. Of the 200 instruments sent, 129 were returned, which represents 64 percent of the original group selected and 26 percent of the teaching staff.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to answer the research questions and test null hypotheses. The results of this analysis were used to generate interview questions, the answers to which will lend a qualitative dimension to the quantitative data.

Research questions and hypotheses are evaluated in order of their presentation in Chapter III. Following the statistical analysis, the results of teacher interviews will be presented. A discussion of findings for both the quantitative and qualitative data will be presented in Chapter V.

## Statistical Findings

### Analysis of Research Question I

Research Question I: To what extent do teachers in the school district perceive themselves as having power to influence curriculum?

Since each statement on the sense of power instrument has a maximum score of five, the maximum possible score per teacher is 30. The highest possible score for the entire group would be 3870 (129 x 30). Descriptive measures for the teacher sample are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.--Descriptive measures for teacher sense of power relative to curriculum scores.

| N | df | $\bar{X}$ | S.D. | Var. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 129 | 128 | 19.18 | 4.06 | 16.50 | 2475 |

## Analysis of Research Question II

Research Question II: Of the groups sampled, which consist of teachers who have the greatest sense of power perceptions relative to curriculum?

Descriptive measures for the various sample groups used in this study are listed in Table 4.2. For the remainder of the data analysis, the department head and education association groups will be abbreviated as D.H. and E.A., respectively.

Table 4.2.--Descriptive measures for teacher sense of power relative to curriculum scores by group.

| Group | N | df | $\bar{X}$ | S.D. | Var. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 26 | 25 | 17.96 | 3.68 | 12.84 | 467 |
| Middle school | 24 | 23 | 20.75 | 3.74 | 14.02 | 498 |
| Secondary | 31 | 30 | 18.45 | 4.29 | 18.38 | 572 |
| E.A. | 26 | 25 | 18.26 | 3.64 | 13.24 | 475 |
| D.H. | 22 | 21 | 21.04 | 3.84 | 14.80 | 463 |

In order to test Null Hypothesis 2, a group of Education Association members who functioned only as dues payers was sampled. The members in this sample were randomly drawn from the elementary, middle school, and secondary populations. This group will be referred to as the rank-and-file group.

An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if any significant difference existed among the two groups. The result of the test is listed in Table 4.4. No significant difference was found to exist at $p < .05$. For this reason, it is not possible to reject Null Hypothesis 2.

Table 4.4.--Analysis of variance of teacher sense of power relative to curriculum between E.A. office holders and rank-and file members.

| Source | SS | df | MS | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 1835 | 55 | | |
| Between | 105 | 1 | 105 | 3.281 |
| Within | 1730 | 54 | 32 | |

## Analysis of Research Question V

Research Question V: Do teachers who serve as department heads have a greater sense of power relative to curriculum than those who do not serve as department heads?

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in sense of power relative to curriculum between teachers who are department heads and teachers who are not department heads.

Here, as in the last test, a rank-and-file group is needed. The sample used is the same as that used to test Null Hypothesis 2. An analysis of variance was conducted to determine the existence of significant differences. The result of the test is listed in Table 4.5. Since no significant difference was found at $p < .05$, it is not possible to reject Null Hypothesis 3.

Table 4.5.--Analysis of variance of teacher sense of power relative to curriculum between department heads and rank-and-file teachers.

| Source | SS | df | MS | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 1520 | 51 | | |
| Between | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0.0989 |
| Within | 1517 | 50 | 30.34 | |

## Analysis of Research Question VI

Research Question VI: Of the five sanctioning agents selected for this study (parents, school board members, superintendent, principal, other teachers), which poses the greatest threat to teachers?

The instrument used to determine teachers' perceptions of threat of sanction were hand scored. Total scores for each sanctioning agent are listed in Table 4.6. A sanction severity ratio representing the total score an agent received divided by the maximum score obtainable was calculated after the method of Moeller and Charters (see Chapter III). The maximum score possible is obtained by the following multiplicative procedure:

N x number of behaviors (5) x maximum score per behavior (4). Thus, the maximum score is calculated as: 129 teachers x 5 behaviors/ teacher x 4 points/behavior = 2580 points. Sanctioning agents are abbreviated in Table 4.6 and subsequent tables. The key to the abbreviations is Pa = parents; SB = school board members; S = superintendent; Pr = principal; and OT = teachers.

Scores reflecting teachers' perceptions of sanction activity for each sanctioning agent are listed in Table 4.6. Total scores and sanction severity ratios for each agent are presented here as well.

Table 4.6.--Sanction activity scores per sanctioning agent.

| Group | N | Sanction Activity Scores | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pa | SB | S | Pr | OT |
| Elementary | 26 | 333 | 317 | 208 | 345 | 199 |
| Middle school | 24 | 277 | 284 | 285 | 258 | 123 |
| Secondary | 31 | 355 | 323 | 404 | 359 | 257 |
| E.A. | 26 | 318 | 334 | 344 | 327 | 195 |
| D.H. | 22 | 221 | 179 | 183 | 202 | 150 |
| Total | 129 | 1504 | 1437 | 1424 | 1491 | 924 |
| Sanction severity ratio | | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.55 | 0.58 | 0.36 |

Sanctioning agents are rank ordered by total score and sanction severity ratio in Table 4.7. A coefficient of correlation was calculated for the two ranking systems. The coefficient of correlation was subsequently subjected to a two-tailed t-test and was found

to be significant at $p < .05$ and $p < .01$. A significant and near-perfect linear relationship can be seen to exist between the two methods.

Table 4.7.--Rank order of sanctioning agents by degree of perceived threat to teachers.

| Sanctioning Agent | Total Score | SSR[a] | r | df | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pa | 1504 | 0.58 | | | |
| Pr | 1491 | 0.58 | | | |
| SB | 1437 | 0.56 | 0.999 | 3 | 38.42 |
| S | 1424 | 0.55 | | | |
| OT | 924 | 0.36 | | | |
| $\overline{X}$ | 1356 | 0.53 | | | |
| t .05 (3) = 3.182, | t .01 (3) = 5.841 | | | | |

[a]Sanction severity ratio

Analysis of Research Question VII

Research Question VII: Which of the agents selected for this study poses the greatest threat of sanction for the individual sample groups?

Sanctioning agents were rank ordered for each teacher group. Total scores, maximum possible scores, and sanction severity ratios are listed in Table 4.8. Here, the maximum score obtainable is arrived at in the same manner as previously discussed. The only difference is that N will vary with the size of each group.

Table 4.8.--Rank order of sanctioning agents by perceived degree of threat for each teacher group.

| Group | N | Sanctioning Agent | Sanction Score | Maximum Score | SSR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 26 | Pr | 345 | 520 | 0.66 |
| | | Pa | 333 | | 0.64 |
| | | SB | 317 | | 0.61 |
| | | S | 208 | | 0.40 |
| | | OT | 199 | | 0.38 |
| Middle school | 24 | S | 285 | 480 | 0.59 |
| | | SB | 284 | | 0.59 |
| | | Pa | 277 | | 0.58 |
| | | Pr | 258 | | 0.54 |
| | | OT | 123 | | 0.26 |
| Secondary | 31 | S | 404 | 620 | 0.65 |
| | | SB | 393 | | 0.63 |
| | | Pr | 359 | | 0.58 |
| | | Pa | 355 | | 0.57 |
| | | OT | 257 | | 0.41 |
| E.A. | 26 | S | 344 | 520 | 0.66 |
| | | SB | 334 | | 0.64 |
| | | Pr | 327 | | 0.63 |
| | | Pa | 318 | | 0.61 |
| | | OT | 195 | | 0.38 |
| D.H. | 22 | Pa | 221 | 440 | 0.50 |
| | | Pr | 202 | | 0.46 |
| | | S | 183 | | 0.42 |
| | | SB | 179 | | 0.41 |
| | | OT | 150 | | 0.34 |

## Analysis of Research Question VIII

Research Question VIII: Which of the five teacher groups sampled for this study is most threatened by sanction arising collectively from the sanctioning agents?

Table 4.9 lists total scores, maximum scores, and sanction severity ratios by behavior for each teacher group. Behaviors are lettered to correspond with those discussed in Chapter III. The

Table 4.9.--Sanction scores for each teacher group by behavior.

| Group | N | Sanction Score by Behavior | | | | | Total | Maximum Score | SSR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | | | |
| Elementary | 26 | 291 | 262 | 294 | 292 | 366 | 1455 | 2600 | 0.56 |
| Middle school | 24 | 221 | 293 | 254 | 220 | 254 | 1242 | 2400 | 0.52 |
| Secondary | 31 | 283 | 459 | 319 | 316 | 401 | 1778 | 3100 | 0.57 |
| E.A. | 26 | 258 | 363 | 273 | 250 | 361 | 1505 | 2600 | 0.58 |
| D.H. | 22 | 131 | 270 | 173 | 149 | 220 | 943 | 2200 | 0.43 |

sanction severity ratio is calculated by dividing the total score for each group by that group's maximum score. Maximum scores are arrived at through the use of the following formula.

$$\text{N teachers} \times \frac{\text{5 sanctioning agent}}{\text{behavior}} \times \frac{\text{maximum score}}{\text{sanctioning agent}} \times \text{5 behaviors}$$

Thus, for the elementary group (N = 26), a maximum score of 2600 (26 x 5 x 4 x 5) is calculated.

Analysis of Research Question IX

Research Question IX: Is there a correlation between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction?

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant correlation between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and perceived threat of sanction.

The mean sense of power score for each teacher group was correlated with that group's sanction severity ratio (from Table 9). A coefficient of correlation was calculated at -0.873, which indicates a somewhat linear and inverse relationship. The result of a two-tailed t-test showed no significance at $p < .05$. For this reason, the null hypothesis could be rejected. The data for this calculation are listed in Table 4.10.

## Summary of Statistical Findings

### Research Question I

The data in Table 4.1 appear to indicate that the sense of power relative to curriculum of the sample population was neither high nor low but more of an in-between, undecided nature. Put

another way, it would seem as though the teachers studied could neither agree nor disagree on the matter of their ability to influence curriculum.

Table 4.10.--Correlation of teacher sense of power relative to curriculum with perceived threat of sanction.

| Group | Mean Sense of Power | SSR | r | df | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D.H. | 21.04 | 0.43 | | | |
| Middle school | 20.75 | 0.52 | | | |
| Secondary | 18.45 | 0.57 | -0.873 | 3 | 3.09 |
| E.A. | 18.26 | 0.58 | | | |
| Elementary | 17.96 | 0.56 | | | |
| $\overline{X}$ | 19.29 | 0.53 | | | |

Research Question II

The highest mean sense of power was found to exist in the department head group followed by the middle school, secondary, education association office holder, and elementary group. Although the department head mean was higher than the others, its value does lie between "neither agree nor disagree" and "agree" attitudes rather than at a value indicating a definitively positive sense of power.

Research Question III

No significant relationship was found between teaching grade level and sense of power relative to curriculum.

Research Question IV

No significant relationship was found in sense of power relative to curriculum between education association office holders and rank-and-file members.

Research Question V

No significant relationship was found in sense of power relative to curriculum between department heads and non-department heads.

Research Question VI

The descriptive data in Table 4.6 suggest that for the collective teacher sample, the greatest amount of perceived sanction activity would be generated by parents followed by the principal, school board members, superintendent, and other teachers.

Research Question VII

Considering the sample groups individually, the data suggest that middle school, secondary, and E.A. office holder groups perceived the greatest threat of sanction as being posed by the superintendent. Elementary teachers and department heads perceived the greatest sanction threat as being posed by building principals.

Research Question VIII

The data in Table 4.9 suggest that the degree of perceived threat of sanction among elementary, middle school, secondary, and education association office holder groups was nearly similar based on sanction severity ratio values. Department heads showed a considerably lower sanction severity ratio than the others.

Research Question IX

Although a somewhat linear and inverse relationship was shown to exist between sense of power relative to curriculum and the degree of perceived threat of sanction, the coefficient of correlation was found not to be significant.

## Interview Findings

Interviews were conducted with a sample of 15 teachers randomly drawn from the strata described in Chapter III. The purpose of the interviews was to seek a deeper understanding and clarification of statistical data previously presented. Five general areas of inquiry were investigated in an effort to provide a means by which quantitative findings might be probed.

A. Do teachers generally agree on a definition of curriculum?

B. What factors might account for an apparently undecided attitude on the part of teachers toward their ability to influence curriculum policy-making decisions?

C. Do teachers have different perceptions of who should control curriculum as opposed to who does control curriculum? If such control rests with others, who are they and what is the means by which control is effected?

D. What person, group, or perhaps combination of the two would tend to be most threatening to teachers? Additionally, what factors account for the capacity to so threaten?

E. Is curriculum perceived to be an issue over which teachers would coalesce in an education-association-related interest group to effect their demands?

An interview schedule was constructed to elicit both closed- and open-ended responses. Designing the instrument in this manner provided a means by which closed-ended responses could be organized as a body of data while at the same time permitting the flexibility to probe responses with additional tiers of questions. A further benefit was that the method used was flexible enough to encourage participation by teachers with either limited or unlimited amounts of time for the interview.

A copy of the interview schedule, as used, can be found in the appendices. Interview questions will not be presented here in their original order but rather as they relate to a particular inquiry. Question numbers, however, will correspond with those found on the schedule.

Inquiry A: Do teachers generally agree on a definition of curriculum?

Interview question 1: How would you define curriculum?

No disagreement was found to exist among teachers with respect to a definition of curriculum. All teachers interviewed essentially felt that curriculum consisted of that which is taught in school. Included here were courses taught, materials used, and personal contributions particular to an individual teacher.

Inquiry B: What factors might account for an apparently undecided attitude on the part of teachers toward their ability to influence curriculum policy-making decisions?

Interview question 2: To what extent might the following account for teachers' largely undecided attitude toward their perceived ability to influence curriculum policy decision making? Why?

a. Unaware that they might be able to exert influence
b. Feel no need to exert any influence
c. Generally do not care about curriculum policy since what goes on in the privacy of the classroom is more educationally important
d. Feel that any attempt to exert influence would be futile
e. Other

The predominant response of the collective sample population was that teachers tend to feel that any attempt to exert influence would be futile. Considering the question at each stratum may help determine why these feelings exist.

Elementary teachers were attitudinally divided. They either felt no need to exert influence or that any attempt to do so would be futile. On further examination, it was revealed that much of what goes on in the elementary classroom is believed to be state mandated through a variety of testing programs. Since the state is perceived to be a major participant in curriculum determination and an entity too big to fight, any attempt at change would be frustrating at best. For this reason it is, as stated by one teacher, ". . . much easier not to become involved with the issue of determining curriculum."

Feelings of futility among middle school personnel interviewed appeared to arise from ". . . a lack of cohesiveness and communication between middle school teachers, elementary teachers,

and secondary teachers." A commonality of curricular purpose and continuity was believed to be absent. As a "middle man," the middle school teachers expressed the need for agreement between themselves and those at other levels. When asked about the process of district curriculum coordination, however, a reply was that this would be ". . . a source of frustration. It takes too much time and money. It's much easier to shut the [classroom] door on the whole issue."

Secondary interviewees tended to feel that teachers' largely undecided attitude toward their ability to influence curriculum policy was the result of a combination of factors. For example, it was commonly believed that teachers were unaware that they could be influential, since "as a large group, they could be exerting more influence than what is presently seen." It was also generally felt that "it is much easier to cope with curriculum policy by closing the door to the unscrutinized domain of the classroom." This attitude seemed to stem from the notion that "curriculum policy decisions are made elsewhere with no apparent avenues for change."

Responses of interviewees actively participating in the educational association were similar to those already expressed. Indecisiveness relative to curriculum influence was thought to be due to feelings of futility and the ease of retiring to the classroom from which administrative curriculum policy decisions might be locked out. It was stated that although "the teacher group is large enough to exert some influence," the proclivity of teachers to ". . . bury their heads in the sand" exists because of the increased amounts of mandated paper work. As put by one interviewee,

"Teachers are tired. They have all they can cope with in the classroom."

The department head sample generally believed that any effort to influence curriculum policy making was, more often than not, an exercise in futility. One major cause of these feelings was that although their input was solicited, final decisions had been made prior to the solicitation. Hence, department head input was without recompense. Another cause was thought to arise from ". . . teachers' distrust of the system." Department heads and other teachers often sit on a number of committees where the work done was ". . . time consuming and nearly always unproductive in terms of results."

Inquiry C: Do teachers have different perceptions of who should control curriculum as opposed to who does control curriculum? If such control rests with others, who are they and what is the means by which control is effected?

Interview question 3: To what extent should each of the following (school board members, teachers, building principal, superintendent, department head, parents, E.A. council committee, other) participate in curriculum policy decision making? Why?

Irrespective of whether the interview population was taken collectively or as members of different strata, teachers believed that they should participate in curriculum policy-making decisions to a greater extent than the other groups. Building principal followed the teacher group in order of importance, but for different reasons.

The teachers interviewed felt that since they are the curriculum dissemination vehicle, their input into the decision-making

process should be most significant. Put succinctly by one interviewee, "Teachers are the experts."

A consensus relative to the education association was found to exist. Teachers uniformly felt that curriculum was not an arena for association participation except where curriculum policy might have a contractual tie as in the areas of work load or class size. Generally, the purposes of the education association were thought to be best served in the areas of "contractual watchdogging" and negotiations for wages, fringe benefits, and working conditions. A view expressed by a middle school interviewee was that "Their [education association] biases with respect to contractual matters may affect their judgment in curriculum." An active association participant believed that "It would not be a particularly good idea for the E.A. to get involved in curriculum matters since if they did, others might become less involved."

Building principals were considered to be almost as important to curriculum decisions as teachers but, as previously stated, for different reasons. All interviewees felt that the principal was close to the educational process but, at the same time, had not the curriculum expertise of teachers. The general feeling was that building principals were important figures in program coordination and financing and as such should have a sizable input into curriculum decisions.

Department heads received the same consideration for expertise as did teachers. This, however, was not because of their

position but rather because they were felt to be in the same group with rank-and-file teachers.

All of the other groups were perceived as being too far removed from the educational mainstream to have legitimate access to curriculum policy decisions. Included here was the superintendent, whose ultimate purpose was perceived to be management and public relations functions. While he does recommend curriculum matters to the school board, such recommendations ". . . should be based on what teachers believe to be appropriate."

The school board, as a body representing the community, was thought not to be the group to influence curriculum policy any more than the constituents it represents. It should, however, accept proposals made by the superintendent which reflect the wishes of teachers. That actual matters of curriculum content should not be a school board function was a widely expressed opinion.

> Interview question 4: To what extent do you feel the following (same groups as in the preceding question) presently influence curriculum policy decision making? Why?

Taken collectively, interviewees perceived the present major influencer of curriculum policy to be the building principal. This selection was made by members of each stratum with the exception of middle school teachers, who chose the superintendent of schools.

Elementary teachers felt curricularly constrained by mandates arising from sources external to the school. Such mandates control text selection to the extent that while teachers and principals decide on which textbooks are to be used, principals have the ability

to veto teachers' choices if the texts in question do not contain material conforming to the mandates. It was generally felt, then, that "teachers are given an opportunity for input, but they don't always feel their opinions carry a great deal of weight."

Middle school participants chose the superintendent largely because they believed that while teachers can perhaps exert some influence on principal-set policy, still, the superintendent can reject the principal's recommendations. Another opinion generally expressed by this group was that the school board serves as a "rubber stamp" for superintendent-made recommendations.

Secondary teachers perceived the building principal to be most influential to curriculum policy but that such influence tended to be exerted as a reaction rather than an action. As stated by one participant, "Curriculum is often a reaction to what others want, and the building principal will exert influence such that the wants of others are met." Clarification of this perception was sought and elicited, an example which will be paraphrased here.

Community or parent groups may have a need to exert pressure on the school board to gain some curricular end. The school board, in turn, may well pass this pressure on to the superintendent through a recommendation. The recommendation may then be passed to the principal in the form of a mandate. Building principals will control curriculum decisions such that the mandate is fulfilled. The principal's curriculum recommendations are then returned through and up the "chain of command," where they are "rubber stamped" by

the school board, since such recommendations are in accord with the board's original decision to placate the external pressure group.

An active participant in the education associated stated that "the principal has power to make happen what he wants to happen. He operates with a smaller group which is easier to influence and is less threatening." Another reflection from the education association stratum was that "teachers have some input, but power seems to lie with the principal. The superintendent acts on the principal's recommendation."

Department heads felt that with respect to the principal, "What he likes is what happens." This group also believed that the superintendent's decisions were based on building principals' recommendations. They also perceived the school board as ". . . a rubber stamp for superintendent-made recommendations."

> Interview question 6: Suppose you felt some curriculum revision was necessary to your program and that you had data to support your position. How valuable would support from the following (same groups as in preceding question) be in gaining approval for the revision? Why?

This question, used as a double check against the previous interview question, further supported the perception of curriculum policy decision making resting with the building principal. The sample taken collectively or individually according to stratum believed that if support for a curriculum revision was needed, such support would be most valuable if given by the principal. Some typical statements pertinent to this issue were: "The staff hasn't the power to do anything supportive. Personal contact with building

administration provides a better chance"; and "Matters of curriculum initiated within the school move from within to without. Others [superintendent and school board] will react accordingly."

If building principals are perceived to most influence curriculum policy decision making, then the base of the influence should be examined. The degree to which one individual may be more influential than another upon whom the influence is exerted could be the result of one or more perceived behaviors such as expertise, normative superiority, and the ability to reward. Should there be a perceived ability to punish or sanction, then influence is more accurately defined as power.[1] The interview questions which follow were designed for the purpose of probing dimensions of influence in an effort to determine how building principals effect the curriculum control they are perceived to possess.

> Interview question 7: If you have a problem centering around curriculum which required expertise you may not possess, what is the likelihood of you consulting with each of the following groups to bring about a solution? Why?
>
> Interview question 8: Suppose you developed a new curriculum method which you strongly believed would bring about a positive change in your school's program. With which of the following would you first want to reveal and discuss this method? Why?

The groups to which interviewees referred were much the same as those used in previous questions. One difference was that the education association, as a body, was replaced with education

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[1]Edward A. Duane, "Components and Linkages in the Definition of Power" (unpublished paper, Michigan State University, 1975), pp. 11-17.

association officer. Collectively, the sample believed that other teachers would have the most expertise in curriculum and thus would serve as the best "sounding boards." It was also felt that matters of curriculum revision were best discussed with colleagues before consulting with principals.

Respondents from the elementary-level group believed that teachers would be best consulted first because of greater knowledge relative to curricular matters. Principals were perceived to have less expertise than teachers but more than other groups because of their proximity to the teaching situation. Similarly, it was felt that curriculum revision ideas were best broached with other teachers since "teachers feel more secure talking to other teachers. They are experts"; and "A fellow teacher is more directly involved with the program and can give instant feedback on the subject from first-hand observation." The building principal was a second choice because of his position ". . . in the chain of command leading to the superintendent, who would have to be consulted prior to any revision."

Attitudes of middle school participants were generally congruent with those of the elementary sample. On the issue of curriculum problem solving, a mathematics teacher responded that "teachers must be the experts since expertise is inversely proportional to hierarchy." Teachers in this group preferred to seek feedback from peers rather than administration relative to matters of curriculum revision. Reasons given were much the same as those of the elementary sample.

The views of secondary teachers and active participants in the education association were very nearly the same as those expressed by preceding groups. Added by some of these respondents as an additional source of expertise were county resource people and university personnel. Participants also felt that new curriculum methods were best discussed within departments because of the ". . . understanding of colleagues and the probability of receiving more positive reinforcement."

Department head perspectives differed somewhat from the foregoing. This group believed teachers had curricular expertise but at the same time considered the principal's proximity to the teaching environment to be a significant enough factor to place him in a position of equal expertise. Moreover, they believed that sharing a new curriculum method would be best done with a principal, since "he has the ability to decide how a new method would fit in with the building program and also if he approves of the method, he would be most able to effect it."

> Interview question 9: Suppose that you were asked to perform some additional school-related tasks by the following groups or individuals. Which set of tasks would receive the highest priority? Why?

The groups to which respondents were asked to refer differed from those previously used by the incorporation of an education association committee in addition to the education association president. Essentially, this question was used to assess the dimension of normative superiority. If used to collect only closed-ended responses, the reliability of the question in assessing normative

superiority would probably be minimal. Open-ended responses and subsequent probes were thought to supply more substantive information.

Elementary teachers interviewed placed the issue of normative superiority squarely with the superintendent. Significant responses here were that "Requests that the superintendent makes are likely to be for the good of the district"; and "The superintendent possesses the highest educationally related rank and for that reason his wishes should supersede those of the building principal."

Contrary to the elementary viewpoint, middle school personnel felt that the principal's wishes should take precedence since "the principal is boss. He evaluates the teachers. The superintendent is too remote."

Secondary interviewees placed requests made by the superintendent in a higher order of importance than those made by a principal. One participant stated, "I would give a request made by the superintendent the highest priority for two reasons. One, because I would treat it as an order and two, because I feel that some positive action would result." Others chose the superintendent because of ". . . his position in the power structure," and "if a good job was done, the superintendent would remember who was responsible."

Of the education association participants interviewed, only one felt that requests made by the association president would receive the highest priority and then only because the interviewee was an executive committee member and received a stipend for his work as treasurer. Hence, to him, honoring the association

president's requests was a duty. Of the remaining participants, one opted for the superintendent because "even though the request might have come from the building principal, still they most likely reflect the wishes of the superintendent." Another respondent from the education association sample elected to first fulfill the requests of his building principal, "to help continue his support by way of goods and services."

Department heads were more likely to favor a principal-made request above all others. When asked why this might be so, a predominant response was that "he is the most visible boss."

> Interview question 10: If you were invited to chair a meeting on curriculum, would the invitation be most flattering if personally made by (same groups as in preceding question)? Why?

The purpose of Question 10 was to assess the dimension of influence by virtue of perceived reward. Flattery was chosen as the reward around which the question was framed because of the affective nature of this word. Monies, goods, or services were thought not to be appropriate rewards because they are either determined contractually or by a pre-set departmental budget.

Elementary teachers felt that an invitation from other teachers would be most personally flattering because "this would be an indication of peer approval." Another reason given was that to chair a curriculum committee would require reliable knowledgeableness and to be considered so knowledgeable by other teachers would be highly complimentary, since "teachers tend to be highly critical of other teachers."

Middle school teachers believed that an invitation from a school board member would be most flattering. Some reasons given for this choice were, "If my reputation got to the school board, it must have gone through others in the chain, and therefore others would have a high opinion of me." Similarly stated by another interviewee, "My reputation must have spread beyond the school."

Secondary teachers decided that they would be most personally flattered by an invitation from the superintendent. One teacher felt that if the invitation was made by the superintendent, "I would be chairing a group generating recommendations upon which positive action would be taken." Other reasons given centered around perceptions of the superintendent's position in the power structure. His invitation would be most flattering because "he is the boss. He runs the school system. The school board accepts his decisions because of his influence over them."

Participants from the education association sample felt that an invitation from the superintendent would be most flattering since it would be made as a ". . . result of recognition of expertise." Another similar response was, "Since a committee of this sort would probably have district-wide representation, I would have been picked due to recognition of my reputation as opposed to others in the district."

Department heads selected a school-board-made invitation as most flattering for generally two reasons. One was that "if the school board should extend such an invitation, word of one's competency in curriculum must have reached them through the chain of

command." The other reason generally expressed was that the school board has the "final say" in curriculum approval.

Inquiry D: What person, group, or perhaps combination of the two would tend to be most threatening to teachers? Additionally, what factors account for the capacity to so threaten?

Interview question 11: To what extent would a reprimand from each of the following individuals or groups be personally disturbing? Why?

The purpose of Question 11 was to assess the dimension of perceived ability of others to punish or sanction. Groups or individuals used were much like those in the preceding question. One major difference was the use of the education association judicial committee, a body which can recommend revocation of membership in the education association. Because of an agency shop clause in the teacher contract, a consequence of membership revocation is job termination unless the former member continues to pay to the association an amount equivalent to membership dues.[2]

Elementary teachers chose the superintendent as an individual from whom a reprimand would be greatly disturbing. A common reason given was that "if a complaint serious enough to warrant a reprimand got to him, it must have come from the principal."

Middle school participants rated the superintendent and school board equally as sources from which a reprimand would be greatly disturbing. A typical response was, "If a reprimand is forthcoming from the school board or superintendent, then the problem

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[2]"Collective Bargaining Agreement, [Suburban] Education Association and Board of Education, [Suburban] School District," Article IIA, 1977-79, pp. 2-3.

has gone too far up the chain of command. At this point, one's job is in jeopardy." When asked specifically where the "chain of command" originates, respondents uniformly agreed on the building principal.

Some secondary interviewees felt that a reprimand from the superintendent would be greatly disturbing, not only because "he has the power over job and working conditions," but also because "he can make life difficult." Other interviewees chose the building principal. Typical of the reasons given was, "The building principal is most personally threatening because of his ability to make recommendations to the superintendent."

Participants from the education association sample were divided on this issue. One respondent chose both the school board and superintendent since to receive a reprimand from either would have been the result of ". . . something so bad as to elicit a strong enough stimulus for these individuals to react negatively." Another feeling was that "the school board is a public forum where a reprimand would bring bad personal press, creating a hopeless situation in terms of one's reputation."

Another association respondent felt that reprimands from other teachers would be most disturbing because "I would have to defend myself against a large group of peers. It would take too long to rebuild relationships and credibility."

An executive committee member of the association chose the judicial committee to be a source of the most disturbing reprimand. His reason was, "The education association has the power to revoke

membership in the Michigan Education Association. Under our contract, a job loss could result." In view of this, he further believed that the association, through its judicial committee, ". . . is every bit as if not more powerful than the other groups."

Department heads considered reprimands from the school board, superintendent, and building principal to be equally and greatly disturbing. It was generally believed that any one of these could ". . . threaten job security or the ability to do one's job effectively." Reprimands resulting from "squeaky wheel" parent complaints were also felt to be disturbing. "Squeaky wheel" parents were defined as ". . . a small group of parents who constantly complain to the school board. The problem with this group is that they do not represent the majority of satisfied parents from whom the board rarely hears. These parents tend not to say much publicly."

Inquiry E: Is curriculum perceived to be an issue over which teachers would coalesce in an education-association-related interest group to effect their demands?

To answer this question would first require a determination of whether or not curriculum demands exist. If any should exist, the issue of curricular coalition may be probed. The reason for linking coalition formation to the education association lies in collective bargaining, a central purpose of this group.

Responses to previous questions seemed to indicate that teachers wanted to influence curriculum to a great extent but perceived curricular influence to lie with others. It would seem that if there is a need to wrest influence from others, the marketplace

of negotiations might be one arena in which to accomplish this end.

Prior to the start of negotiations, teachers are polled by the education association in an effort to determine those demands which will be the objects of bargaining. In this study, teachers were similarly polled to attempt a determination of whether or not they feel strongly enough about curriculum to make it one of the more dominant issues on the bargaining docket.

Interview question 5: To what extent does each of the following statements reflect your attitude towards curriculum revision? Why?

1. Periodic revision is necessary in order to keep up with the educational scene.
2. There is no reason to revise the present curriculum.
3. Curriculum revisions are generally faddish and short lived.
4. I do not wish to work in a proving ground for new models.
5. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
6. Curriculum is set by experts and administrators anyway, so why be concerned about it.
7. Curriculum content is not important since it is my ability to spark inquisitiveness in students that counts.
8. Other

The response to this question was virtually unanimous, irrespective of whether the teacher group was taken collectively or by individual strata. It was most strongly felt that periodic revision of the curriculum was necessary in order to keep up to date with the educational scene. Further probing revealed additional reasons why periodic revision was a necessary process.

Elementary teachers thought that periodic revision was necessary as "a check against possible control by the state or community." A different sentiment was shared by middle and secondary school participants. Typical statements from these groups were that "Periodic revision is necessary to accommodate differing needs, abilities, and backgrounds of students"; and "Revisions avoid getting stuck in a rut."

A participant from the education association believed that "we tend to look at symptoms, not the problem. We do not carefully consider that assumptions which we make might be incorrect."

The response of department heads was somewhat similar to that of elementary teachers. A general feeling was reflected in the statement that "there is an apparent trend toward administratively set curriculum influenced by external pressure groups. This type of curriculum should be subject to question and, if necessary, revised by teachers who have expertise but not enough voice."

Some responses, then, indicated a need for curriculum revision to insure that what is taught continually meets the needs of students. Others perceived the revision process as an opportunity to counter the effect of external pressure groups. Whether the need for curriculum revision is strong enough to appear as contractual language has yet to be determined.

Interview question 12: Rank order the following in order of importance to you.

Availability of a grievance procedure

Salary schedule

Salary increments

Tenure
Fringe benefits
Work load
Class size
Text selection
Curriculum review
Curriculum revision

The five items of highest priority were found to be salary schedule, class size, work load, fringe benefits, and salary increments. Of lower priority were the items of tenure, availability of a grievance procedure, curriculum review, curriculum revision, and text selection.

Since the responses to Question 12 seemed to contradict the attitudes expressed in the previous question, additional probing was necessary. Further questions relative to the prioritization above brought, as a typical response, "While curriculum is important, it is not as important as feeding my kids or paying my bills." A different but perhaps noteworthy response was, "The auto unions don't negotiate the design of the car. They negotiate workers' wages for building it and the working environment in which the car is built."

## Summary of Interview Findings

A stratified sample of teachers was interviewed in order to provide answers to five general questions reflecting on various aspects of the statistical data. A discussion of interview findings relative to the quantitative findings will be presented in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate curriculum as a political issue in a suburban school district. Teachers were chosen as subjects for this investigation because of their role as disseminators of that which is to be learned and because of their numbers as compared to other school-related groups. It was felt that measuring teacher sense of power relative to curriculum might reveal whether a particular curriculum model exists because of teacher influence or because of the influence of some other group teachers perceive as being more powerful than themselves. Should the latter situation exist, then a sub-purpose of this study was to determine the basis of influence which such other group was perceived to possess.

In order to resolve these objectives, two methods of inquiry were used. The first method employed descriptive and inferential statistics to answer research questions and test hypotheses constructed for this study. Data were collected through the use of attitudinal survey instruments. The second method, consisting of a more qualitative interview approach, was designed to clarify and further probe quantitative results.

The literature suggests that schools are political systems characterized by a professional bureaucratic model. Within the model, teachers are seen as politically ineffectual for reasons which may be relatable to their perceived sense of power.

Teachers were found not to play a significant role in curriculum policy-making decisions. Prior studies have indicated that there is either a tendency for teachers to accept the curricular authority of their principals or that they perceive curriculum to be superintendent controlled. Additionally, recent studies point to an increase in teacher alienation from the decision-making process because of an increased use of managerial systems.

It has also been shown that teachers tend not to coalesce into an interest group over curricular issues. Such issues were found to occupy positions of low or no priority as bargaining chips for use in negotiations compared to items as wages, fringe benefits, working conditions, and the like.

## Major Statistical Findings

### Research Question I

Considering the collective population, teachers could neither agree nor disagree on the matter of their ability to influence curriculum policy-making decisions.

### Research Question II

The department head stratum had the highest mean sense of power relative to curriculum followed by middle school, secondary education association, and elementary groups. Although department

heads had the highest mean score, the value was not sufficiently high to indicate a substantially greater sense of power perception among members of this stratum.

Research Question III

No significant relationship was found between teaching grade level and sense of power relative to curriculum.

Research Question IV

No significant relationship was found in sense of power relative to curriculum between education association office holders and rank-and-file members.

Research Question V

No significant relationship was found in sense of power relative to curriculum between department heads and non-department heads.

Research Question VI

Descriptive data for the teacher population suggested that the greatest amount of perceived sanction activity would be generated by parents followed by principals, school board members, the superintendent, and other teachers.

Research Question VII

The same data treatment for individual strata resulted in the finding that middle school, secondary school, and education association office holder groups perceived the greatest threat of

sanction was posed by the superintendent. Elementary teachers and department heads perceived the greatest sanction threat as being posed by building principals.

Research Question VIII

The results seem to indicate that elementary, middle school, secondary, and education association groups are very nearly similar in the extent to which they are sanction prone. Department heads appear to be somewhat less sanction prone than the other groups.

Research Question IX

The inverse relationship between sense of power relative to curriculum and the degree of perceived threat of sanction was found not to be significant.

## Major Interview Findings

Inquiry A

Teachers generally concurred that curriculum consisted of that which is taught in school.

Inquiry B

By and large, teachers felt that indecisiveness relative to their ability to influence curriculum was due to feelings of futility. Such feeling appeared to arise from the perception that curriculum policy was decided elsewhere such as by the state or school administration. Teacher input was felt to be solicited merely as a courtesy. Irrespective of the cause of futile feelings, it was generally agreed that coping with the issue was best done by retiring to the

domain of the classroom as opposed to an attempt at change. Only two teachers interviewed noted that, as a large group, teachers should be able to influence curriculum policy making and therefore it may be likely that teachers are unaware of their potential capacity to influence such decisions.

Inquiry C

Teachers uniformly believed that they should be the major influencers of curriculum policy-making decisions. Primary reasons for this were that teachers deliver the curriculum, and that teachers have curricular expertise when compared to other school-related groups or individuals. Building principals were felt to be important to the decision-making process by virtue of their role in program coordination and financing. It was generally believed that the education association, although comprised of teachers, should confine its activities to contractual and negotiable issues. Curriculum was not considered to be an arena for education association participation. Teachers considered any other groups to be too far removed from the educational mainstream to play any significant role in curriculum decision making.

The majority of teachers interviewed felt that the major influencers of curriculum policy decision making were their building principals. Middle school teachers, however, chose the superintendent as the primary influencer based on his ability to veto principal-made decisions. While many teachers believed the building principal to be a significant curricular force, the nature of

his influence has yet to be explored. By whatever means the principal might control, more than one group noted that such control is exerted over curricular issues such that conformity to the desires of some school-related groups will occur. The activities of the superintendent and school board were often perceived as being limited to "rubber stamping" principal-influenced decisions. Further support for perceptions of principals as major curriculum influencers was reflected in the tendency for teachers to seek principal support when developing new curriculum or modifying previously existing curriculum.

Principal control over curriculum decision making was assessed and found not to be the result of perceived expertise. Teachers uniformly reserved this particular quality for themselves. Principals appeared to be perceived as important to effecting curriculum by virtue of their position in the "chain of command."

Responses to additional tiers of questions appeared to indicate that teachers perceived either building principals or the superintendent as being in a position of normative superiority. One or the other, then, was felt to do those things or set such standards as are "for the best." Perceptions of the relationship between principal and superintendent varied. In some cases, teachers believed that the principal was an extension of the superintendent and, as such, not the true norm establisher. Other teachers perceived the building principal as the official "boss" not only in terms of his capacity as building administrator but also because his decisions were perceived to be uniformly accepted by the superintendent.

With the exception of elementary participants who chose colleagues, teachers interviewed were most flattered by invitations made by either the school board or superintendent. Elementary teachers believed that by virtue of expertise, teachers are the best judges of others in the profession.

Reasons given by middle school teachers and department heads for their choice of a school board member were framed largely in terms of one's reputation reaching through the "chain of command." Secondary teachers and education association participants indicated that they would feel most flattered by the superintendent because of recognition of expertise and that a superintendent-made invitation would not be frivolously made.

Inquiry D

By and large, teachers appeared to be most threatened by reprimands originating with the principal, superintendent, and school board. In some cases it was mentioned that reprimands from higher administrative levels would be greatly disturbing because the initial action would have been taken by the principal and passed "up the chain." Whether the reprimand originates with the principal or is the result of the superintendent acting on a principal-made recommendation seems not to matter. Either party appears to have a perceived capacity to make one's teaching life difficult in terms of working conditions or job security. Few perceived other school-related groups as posing much of a threat.

Inquiry E

Most teachers interviewed believed that curriculum should be subject to periodic revision or review often as a means of maintaining checks and balances against external curriculum influence. At the same time, the apparent need for such revision or review was not significant enough to warrant contractual language to this effect. Compared to traditional, noncurricular negotiations items, curriculum issues were rated quite low in terms of priority.

## Discussion of the Findings

Results pertinent to Research Questions I through V indicate that irrespective of strata, teachers in this school district have an apparent indecisiveness relative to their perceived ability to influence curriculum policy-making decisions. While department heads showed a somewhat greater sense of power perception than other groups, still their score was not high enough to be significantly different. Null Hypotheses 1 through 3 could not be rejected based on the lack of significant differences among the groups tested.

A lack of significance at the 0.05 level or less could be due to a variety of reasons. Statistically, the effect of small sample size may be a factor here. Other causes could be a lack of agreement on a meaning of curriculum, a perception that curriculum is controlled elsewhere, or an unawareness that curriculum might be a political issue. It may also be that curriculum control is not a significant enough issue such that teachers would want it to be a political object.

Interview inquiries A, B, C, and E were constructed in an effort to resolve these points. The interview results suggest first that teachers' definitions of curriculum are very similar to that used in this study. Differences in perceptions of who does control curriculum decisions as opposed to who should control such decisions were seen to exist. While teachers believed that curriculum decision making should be largely influenced by themselves, they generally believed that such influences rested with nonteachers as building principals or the superintendent.

Few teachers noted that by virtue of collective size more influence over curriculum could be exercised. More often, they expressed feelings of futility with respect to the curricular process rather than a need to form a united front to exercise curricular demands. The education association was seen as not playing a role in curriculum. Moreover, many felt that it should not. Instead, the majority of teachers interviewed believed that association business should be limited to contractual "watchdogging" and negotiating for wages, fringe benefits, working conditions, class size, and the like.

Thus far, teachers have expressed feelings of futility with respect to their perceived ability to influence curriculum policy. Additionally, they have indicated a need for curriculum revision, review, or monitoring because of perceived increases in external influence. However, when compared to the more traditional negotiations items, curricular matters did not carry much weight. A common resolution of curricular indecisiveness was seen not to be interest

group formation but evasion of curriculum policy issues within the confines of the classroom.

Other factors to consider when assessing curriculum influence would be teachers' perceptions of where the locus of curriculum control lies and why such control is perceived to lie with a particular person or group. It was hoped that an examination of perceptions would provide clues as to why some other or others have control over curriculum policy making.

Various dimensions of power were explored through the use of survey instruments and interviews. Power by virtue of a perceived ability to sanction was examined in Research Questions VI through IX and Interview Inquiry D. Dimensions of influence such as expertise, normative superiority, and reward were probed exclusively through the use of interview questions, particularly those relating to Interview Inquiry C.

The disparity in results for Research Questions VI and VII could be attributable to the method used in instrument scoring. Zeigler, from whom the instrument design was adopted, mentions a similar problem in his study. One reason could be that a sanctioning agent which is perceived to sanction mildly in many areas can achieve a score similar to an agent perceived to heavily sanction in a few areas. Likewise, a behavior perceived to elicit a mild response from all groups can achieve a score similar to a behavior perceived to elicit a severe response from a few groups. For these reasons, sanction severity ratios roughly approximate the position of a sanctioning agent or behavior. Another instrument-related effect

reported by Zeigler is that responses are not measures of actual events but are measures of estimates of probable events.[1]

Since results for Research Questions VI and VII are dissimilar, resolution might best be sought through a consideration of pertinent interview questions especially as relevant to Inquiry D.

Interview findings suggest that the major source of sanction threat seems to arise from within rather than from without the educational mainstream. At the same time, it should be noted that although building principals and the superintendent-based sanctions are perceived as being threatening, still the basis of threat could arise from parental action. Sanction is probably not perceived as being levied by parents but rather circuitously through administrative action. It may well be, then, that teachers are threatened by parents only to the degree that administration will exert pressure as a reaction to parental demands.

Apparently it matters little if threat is perceived as being generated by a principal, the superintendent, or the school board. With few exceptions, teachers noted that often one may serve as a "rubber stamp" for the others. The predominant basis for threat appears to lie in the perception that administration, regardless of level, can jeopardize job security, reputation, or working conditions. Although the education association, through its judicial

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[1]Harmon Zeigler, The Political World of the High School Teacher (Eugene, Oregon: The Center for Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), pp. 139-40.

committee, may be able to threaten job security, only one participant indicated that he would feel disturbed by a reprimand from this group.

Research Question VIII suggested that with the exception of department heads, groups surveyed were sanction prone to very nearly the same degree. Department heads were found to be somewhat less sanction prone. These results may be attributable to department head proximity to and frequent contact with building administration. Although of lesser magnitude, department head sanction severity ratio by behavior is still relatively high. A possible explanation for this might lie in the role department heads must play in securing funds, goods, or services for staff members. Since department heads are elected by peers and receive additional compensation, continuance of their positions may be perceived as being dependent on good working relationships with administration.

Although Research Question IX sought a relationship between teacher sense of power relative to curriculum and the degree to which teacher groups are sanction prone, the relationship was not found to be significant. An inverse and near-linear relationship existed, but the effect of small sample size most probably operated against statistical significance at the 0.05 level or less.

Another dimension of curriculum control assessed was influence, which is somewhat "softer" than power because of the absence of a perceived ability to punish. Avenues by which influence might be achieved were sought in Interview Inquiry C. Through interview questions pertinent to this inquiry, an examination of influence by perceived expertise, normative superiority, and reward was probed.

The results indicate that expertise is perceived as belonging to teachers as opposed to other groups. At the same time, normative superiority was seen to rest with building principals or the superintendent. Either one was often characterized as a "boss" or an individual who operates in the best interest of the school district. Their norms, then, were perceived by many, but not all, as being correct. Less common, but still existent, was the perception that the wishes of principals and the superintendent should be respected because they are providers of goods and services.

Influence by a perceived ability to reward was assessed specifically in Interview Question 10. Although no single individual can be pinpointed as a reward provider, the results do indicate that teachers appear to perceive administration-generated reward more flattering than peer group reward.

## Conclusions and Implications

The results of this study suggest that teachers in this school district are generally undecided about their perceived ability to influence curriculum policy-making decisions. This attitude could be due to a variety of factors, any one or combination of which might account for the continued existence of the curriculum model presently employed. Although an implication may be that the present curricular model exists because teachers believe it to be correct, still teachers indicated a need for curriculum review and revision. The sequitur, then, negates the implication.

One factor which might account for an undecided perception of curricular power is that curriculum is not a political issue over which teachers would coalesce to effect their demands. The results and literature support this conclusion in that teachers, when they coalesce, do so on negotiable issues concerned more with monies and working conditions than with curriculum. On curricular matters, teachers are seen to exist in a clique as opposed to an interest group.

Given that the teacher group will not tend to politicize curricular issues, at the same time they did indicate a need to monitor, revise, and review curriculum. Attitudinally this may be explained in terms of teachers' perceptions of control by other school-related groups or individuals. The results suggest that some sanction proneness exists with respect to curriculum. It is not clear, however, if perceived threat of sanction arises from within or without the educational arena since an administrative reaction may have a parental source. In essence, parents may not be perceived as a direct source of sanction but as providers of impetus for administrative sanction.

Another effect which might operate against teacher sense of power is teacher perceptions of curriculum control by other groups and the means by which control is achieved. Thus far, the issue of sanction has provided clues that administration, either by action or reaction to others, may be perceived as controlling curriculum through the use of power. Additionally, an influence component may

exist not because of curricular expertise but perhaps through normative superiority and reward.

Although administrators were not perceived as possessing curricular expertise compared to teachers, at the same time it was often felt that their decisions were made for the good of the district. Also, administration was seen as providing reward through flattery.

There appears to be more than one factor contributing to sense of power indecisiveness relative to curriculum among the teacher group. One appears to be that power, by virtue of sanction, rests with administration. Another could be that administration has the capacity to influence curriculum through perceived normative superiority and the ability to reward. Finally, the often expressed opinion that curriculum should not be an education association function coupled with the low priority given curricular issues as bargaining items could have an additional effect.

## A Participant-Observer Dimension

Up to now, every conscious effort was made to focus on issues objectively. This section is devoted to adding yet one more dimension to the conclusions through a participant-observer response. The subjective input will probably be influenced by my positions as a secondary teacher and department head. Formerly, I actively participated in the education association as a building representative to the association council.

An Historical Perspective

As a newcomer to the school district eight years ago, I found that what content was taught and how it was taught was largely a matter of individual determination. Administration mandated little other than matters of building policy such as attendance, discipline, and grading procedures. Moreover, access to administrators at the building or central level was relatively free and the "chain of command" quite flexible. Teachers and administrators often socialized and made educationally related decisions together in a local bar, fishing boat, bowling alley, and the like. The education association was relatively strong in the marketplace of traditional negotiations items. Even so, relationships between the association and administration were relaxed if not amicable. Although the teacher contract did not as yet contain an agency shop clause, new teachers were encouraged to join the association by the superintendent, who, during new teacher orientations, verbally supported the organization.

Curricular autonomy was seen to exist at the elementary, middle (then junior high), and secondary school levels. Each group seemed free to pursue whatever purposes it deemed correct. Although there might have been some problems of curriculum overlap among levels, little concern was displayed. Any serious problem was often handled by teacher committees.

School board members were seen to function mostly as non-educational policy decision makers. Trustees concerned themselves with matters of real estate, easements, construction, and finances. Superintendent-made recommendations on educational matters were, by

and large, "rubber stamped." Parents were generally nonvocal except for one or two who regularly attended board meetings to complain. These few were treated as little more than a nuisance.

Up to about 1974, I would have to say that teacher sense of power relative to curriculum, including my own, was relatively high. Curriculum was not a political issue since the majority of decisions were teacher made. We taught, then, in a more typically professional bureaucratic model. This does not mean to say that teachers were apolitical. They easily coalesced in matters of administration contract violations. Class action grievances were filed and often won. Also, the acquisition of goods and services was often politically tinged. Budgets were flexible and at times an expensive piece of equipment or new texts were best gained by a teacher who could provide a boat for fishing, a cabin for hunting, or several rounds at the local Elks Club.

A change in school board members, particularly the president, brought incremental district-wide changes the results of which were not immediately felt by teachers. The new president mandated a management by objective (M.B.O.) system for administrators. Whether or not administrators met their objectives was, and still is, a determinant factor in salary increases. The superintendent subsequently resigned.

It should be noted here that prior to this time, performance objectives and criterion-referenced testing based on objectives were being touted by the state department of education as being a most suitable framework for curriculum. The Michigan Education

Association showed concern, through its publications, that this process could be used as a basis for an accountability model. Teachers generally ignored the issue since, as yet, their curricular autonomy had not been breached. The use of objectives was, at most, a matter of personal preference based on one's professional judgment.

At his first general faculty meeting, the new superintendent announced that one of his major goals was to begin a five-year plan to place the district curriculum in the performance objective framework and measure curriculum through criterion-referenced testing. I remember that teachers were unconcerned if not amused by this. A number of us at the secondary level felt that we could not be forced to do anything that was not to our professional liking. However, the five-year plan will be concluded in 1979, and the superintendent will have been successful. His success was gained in a manner that I perceive as being politically masterful. The various events by which the performance objective process was established coupled with an increased use of management systems are, I feel, responsible for the results of this study.

## A Perspective of the Dimension of Change

Over a period of about four years, a number of events occurred, the total effect of which I feel has only recently been felt by teachers. The initial process of change began at administrative levels and was of little concern to teachers. Change processes continued slowly and in an incremental manner until change was indeed effected. During the course of events, "bread and butter"

issues which this and other studies show to be most important to teachers were not affected. Teachers' salaries and benefits continued to increase. Curriculum, on the other hand, was remarkably affected through new and often subtle interplays occurring both inside and peripheral to the educational arena.

It is my impression that the one-time episodic issue of "why Johnny can't read" opened the door to increasing parental criticism of elementary programs. It may have also provided a strong rationale for the use of more testing and performance objectives. Apparently elementary teachers did not resist the process. Nor did it appear that the process was actually mandated. My perceptions are that, at that time, the effect of state testing programs and the relationship of the superintendent to state educational hierarchy had a combined impact on elementary teachers which might have influenced them to accept performance objective writing as the correct thing to do. Middle and secondary school teachers were not as yet affected nor do I feel they perceived the process to ever affect them. It was an elementary-centered problem.

Other changes were going on which many teachers were beginning to notice. One of these was an apparent tightening of administrative ranks. For example, open socialization with teachers diminished. Access to central office personnel was reduced to a very nearly appointment-only basis. More parental scrutiny was felt as the result of a newly formed citizens advisory committee established to study school buildings, activities, programs, and curriculum.

Budgets were made more restrictive and considerable emphasis was placed on going through proper channels.

Middle school teachers subsequently began the performance objective writing process. If any controversy existed, secondary teachers were not aware of it. The issue never surfaced at association meetings, although the subject of accountability did from time to time. Again, it would appear that the process was not actually mandated. After all, the elementary group had written their objectives and so too should the middle school group, as this would be beneficial to curriculum coordination. A rationale as this was successfully used, perhaps because of the elementary component of middle school. This last point, admittedly, is personal speculation.

At the secondary level, we were not concerned about the curricular changes since they were not our problem. Frankly, I was not even aware that the performance objective process had entered the middle schools. At that time, we were more concerned about pressure generated by the citizens advisory committee. To us it appeared that administration was turning more to the community and less to us on matters requiring educational expertise. Although the citizens advisory committee is now dissolved, it had a major effect in that, intentionally or unintentionally, its activities distracted attention from the performance objective issue.

Eventually, the performance objective process was mandated at the secondary level. Although there was much in the way of heated discussion, argumentation, and the like, no choice existed. Secondary

teachers could not stand alone on the issue since their colleagues at other levels had already completed the process.

It is my feeling that whatever curricular sense of power might have existed has been incrementally eroded. The erstwhile professional bureaucracy had become less professional by the ability of administration to effect curriculum decisions made without teacher input. I also believe that initially administration was able to influence teachers at lower grade levels through normative superiority. As administrative accomplishments developed, the perception of normative superiority changed to a perception of power. This last conclusion is based on my experience as an association building representative. Seven years ago, teachers would grieve a contract violation without hesitancy. In 1977, teachers were less inclined to do so. While teachers are expressing a genuine concern over the possibility of an accountability model, they have continued to steer clear of an association-related coalition. I cannot help but feel that this is due to a perceived threat of administrative sanction.

As a participant observer, I see teachers as becoming increasingly confused. There is a need to maintain the status of professional but, at the same time, no intent to form an interest group over professional matters has been demonstrated. There continues to be resistance to the education association functioning in any other manner than as a trade union. I do see teachers as being influenced by perceived administrative normative superiority, reward giving, and ultimately, power. I do not believe teachers are politically aware compared to administration. My general impression is that teachers

cope with professional frustrations by leaving them outside of the classroom door.

In an effort to narrow the focus of this study, teachers' perceptions of their ability to control curriculum have been placed in a political context. It would, however, be unwise to conclude that political processes are solely responsible for the results. Instead, related research is needed to determine the existence of other social phenomena with which polity may be interactive.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Emerging from the results of this study are some possible research inquiries listed below.

1. Given a particular teacher group, is there a teacher within the group who by reputation or position most influences sense of power perceptions relative to curriculum existing among the members?
2. To what extent is teacher sense of power relative to curriculum dependent on an occupational identification with a labor vis-à-vis a professional status?
3. To what extent is teacher sense of power relative to curriculum dependent upon teacher perceptions of existent systemic change processes?
4. Is there a relationship between teacher sense of curricular power and personality type as measured by the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator?

5. What differences in curricular sense of power exist between teachers in rural, suburban, and urban schools?
6. What differences in curricular sense of power exist between teachers in private schools and teachers in public schools?

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

# QUESTIONNAIRE

# APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire by checking the applicable statements.

During the 1976-77 school year, I

A. Taught at the elementary (K-5) level . . . . . _____

B. Taught at the middle school (6-8) level . . . . . _____

C. Taught at the high school (9-12) level . . . . . _____

(Note: If you taught at more than one level, check the level where you spent the majority of your time.)

D. Held an office in the E.A. (such as building rep., council rep., officer, etc.) . . . . . _____

E. Served as a department head . . . . . _____

F. Served on a committee or as part of a group which participated in curriculum decision making . . . . . _____

Did an administrator serve on this committee or as part of the group? . . . . . Yes___ No___

# APPENDIX B

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT MEASURING TEACHER SENSE OF POWER RELATIVE TO CURRICULUM

## APPENDIX B

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT MEASURING TEACHER SENSE OF POWER RELATIVE TO CURRICULUM

For each statement below, circle the one response that best reflects your attitude toward that statement.

SA = strongly agree; A = agree; X = neither agree nor disagree;
D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree

In the school system where I work, a teacher like myself . . .

A. Believes he/she has some control over what textbooks will be used in the classrooms.

SA A X D SD

B. Feels he/she does not know what curricular decisions are being made in the upper levels of administration.

SA A X D SD

C. Never has a chance to work on school committees which make important curricular decisions for the school system.

SA A X D SD

D. Considers that he/she has litle to say over what teachers will work with him/her on his/her job.

SA A X D SD

E. Usually can find ways to get system-wide curricular policies changed if he/she feels strongly enough about them.

SA A X D SD

F. Feels he/she has little to say about important system-wide policies relating to curriculum.

SA A X D SD

# APPENDIX C

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT MEASURING TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SANCTIONING AGENTS

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT MEASURING TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SANCTIONING AGENTS

Listed below are five activities which you might conduct in the classroom. For each activity, five groups are presented. Any one or more of these may pose some threat to you if you were to engage in such an activity.

Using a 0,1,2,3,4 scale, please rate each group based on the degree of threat posed. A zero would indicate no threat and a four would indicate maximum threat. You may use the same number if more than one group poses the same degree of threat for a given activity. Place the number in the blanks provided.

Key to the threat-posing groups: PA = parents; SB = school board members; S = superintendent; PR = principal; OT = other teachers

A. Permitting students to decide what subject matter is of most worth to learn.

| PA | SB | S | PR | OT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

B. Conducting sensitivity training in the classroom.

| PA | SB | S | PR | OT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

C. Refusing to teach by criterion-referenced objectives.

| PA | SB | S | PR | OT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

D. Assigning or presenting material containing politically liberal values.

| PA | SB | S | PR | OT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

E. Assigning or presenting material containing morally liberal values.

| PA | SB | S | PR | OT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

# APPENDIX D

# INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Sample group: ELE___ M.S.___ SEC___ D.H.___ E.A.___

Years of teaching experience _____

Years in the district _____

---

1. How would you define curriculum?

---

Descriptor for questions 2-5:

A. To a great extent
B. To a moderate extent
C. To a slight extent
D. To no extent

---

2. To what extent might the following account for teachers' largely undecided attitude toward their perceived ability to influence curriculum policy decision making? Why?

____ Unaware that they might be able to exert influence

____ Feel no need to exert an influence

____ Generally do not care about curriculum policy since what goes on in the privacy of the classroom is more educationally important

____ Feel that any attempt to exert influence would be futile

____ Other

3. To what extent should each of the following participate in curriculum policy decision making? Why?

____ School board members
____ Teachers
____ Building principal
____ Superintendent
____ Department heads
____ Parents
____ E.A. council committee
____ Other

4. To what extent do you feel the following presently influence curriculum policy decision making? Why?

____ School board members
____ Teachers
____ Building principal
____ Superintendent
____ Department heads
____ Parents
____ E.A. council committee
____ Other

5. To what extent does each of the following statements reflect your attitude toward curriculum revision? Why?

____ Periodic revision is necessary in order to keep up to date with the educational scene.

____ There is no reason to revise the present curriculum.

____ Curriculum revisions are generally faddish and short lived.

____ I do not wish to work in a proving ground for new models.

____ Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

____ Curriculum is set by experts and administrators anyway, so why be concerned about it.

____ Curriculum content is not important since it is my ability to spark inquisitiveness in students that counts.

____ Other

6. Suppose you felt some curriculum revision was necessary to your program and that you had data to support your position. How valuable would support from the following be in gaining approval for the revision? Why?

   Descriptor: (A) Very valuable; (B) Moderately valuable; (C) Of little value; (D) Of no value

   _____ School board members
   _____ Other teachers
   _____ Building principal
   _____ Superintendent
   _____ Department heads
   _____ Parent groups
   _____ The E.A.
   _____ Other

7. If you had a problem centering around curriculum which required expertise you may not possess, what is the likelihood of you consulting with each of the following in order to bring about a solution? Why?

   Descriptor: (A) Highly likely; (B) Likely; (C) Unlikely

   _____ School board members
   _____ Other teachers
   _____ Building principal
   _____ Superintendent
   _____ Department head
   _____ Parents
   _____ E.A. officer
   _____ Other

8. Suppose you developed a new curriculum method which you strongly believed would bring about a positive change in your school's program. With which of the following would you first want to reveal and discuss this method? Why?

____ School board member
____ Another teacher
____ Your principal
____ The superintendent
____ A department head
____ A parent group
____ An E.A. officer
____ Other

9. Suppose that you were asked to perform some additional school-related tasks by the following groups or individuals. Which set of tasks would receive the highest priority? Why?

____ A school board member
____ A committee of other teachers in your building
____ Your principal
____ The superintendent
____ Your department head
____ An E.A. committee
____ The E.A. president
____ A parent committee
____ Other

10. If you were invited to chair a meeting on curriculum, would the invitation be most flattering if personally made by:

____ A school board member
____ A committee of other teachers
____ Your principal
____ The superintendent
____ Your department head
____ The E.A. president
____ An E.A. committee
____ A parent committee
____ Other

Why?

11. To what extent would a reprimand from each of the following individuals or groups be personally disturbing? Why?

Descriptor: (A) Greatly disturbing; (B) Moderately disturbing; (C) Slightly disturbing; (D) Would not bother me at all

____ School board
____ Other teachers in your building
____ Your principal
____ The superintendent
____ Your department head
____ A parent group
____ The E.A. judicial committee
____ Other

12. RANK ORDER the following in order of importance to you. Assign the number one to the item of highest priority and ten to the item of lowest priority.

Availability of a Grievance Procedure _____
Salary Schedule _____
Salary Increments _____
Tenure _____
Fringe Benefits _____
Work Load _____
Class Size _____
Text Selection _____
Curriculum Review _____
Curriculum Revision _____

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