

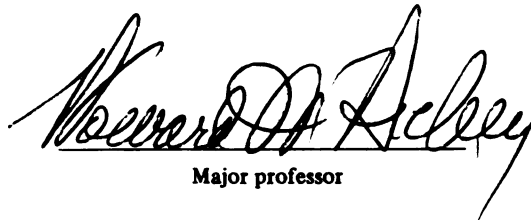
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A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF BOARD MEMBERS AND THE  
SUPERINTENDENT IN AGENDA CONSTRUCTION

By

Harold E. Whipple

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

### A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF BOARD MEMBERS AND THE SUPERINTENDENT IN AGENDA CONSTRUCTION

By

Harold E. Whipple

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of board of education members and the role of the superintendent of schools in establishing board of education meeting agenda items in selected Michigan school districts. The purpose included discovering new knowledge about the superintendent-board of education relationship.

#### Methodology

The population in this study was comprised of 18 superintendents of schools and their combined 126 board of education members. It was determined for a district to be included in the study that the superintendent and at least two board members respond. All 18 superintendents and 89 board members responded to the survey, with at least three board members responding from each school district.

The instrument that was utilized in this research contained three sections. First, the researcher requested personal information about the board member or the superintendent. Second, the questionnaire dealt with the amount of relative importance various areas have as they pertain to the welfare of students in the respective

school districts. Third, the respondents were asked to identify the amount of influence they had on the placement of actual board meeting agenda items on the agenda. The agenda items were taken from the actual agendas of each school district over a six-month period.

### Findings of the Study

Eleven hypotheses were formulated prior to gathering the data for this study. The findings of the study regarding these hypotheses were:

Research Hypothesis Number One: Board members over 35 do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those 35 and under.

Research Hypothesis Number Two: Female board members do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than male board members.

Research Hypothesis Number Three: Board members who have served on the board for six or more years do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those with less than six years experience.

Research Hypothesis Number Four: Presidents of boards of education do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than other board members.

Research Hypothesis Number Five: Board officers do not meet more frequently with the superintendent than trustees of the board to discuss agenda items.

Research Hypothesis Number Six: Elected board members do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than appointed members.

Research Hypothesis Number Seven: There is no relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda.

Research Hypothesis Number Eight: Superintendents have more influence than board members on the placement of items on the agenda.

Research Hypothesis Number Nine: Superintendents in the smaller school districts meet more frequently with board members than those in larger districts.

Research Hypothesis Number Ten: Superintendents with six or more years experience meet more frequently with board members than those with less than six years experience.

Research Hypothesis Number Eleven: Superintendents with degrees beyond the Masters do not meet with board members to discuss agenda items more frequently than those with a Masters degree.

The general conclusions reached in this study were that:

1. The agenda is important in superintendent-board member relationships.
2. The wording and placement of items on the agenda is important in what superintendents and board members are trying to accomplish for students.
3. The evaluation of teachers, student discipline, negotiations, and the problem of school finance are important to superintendents and board members.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special appreciation is extended to Albert Deal for his support and interest in the study. Without the cooperation of the superintendents and board members of the Kent County Intermediate School District this study would not have been possible. A special appreciation is extended to them.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Today there are 580 local school districts and 58 intermediate school districts in the state of Michigan. Just 30 years ago local districts in Michigan numbered in the thousands. Each one of the school districts is governed by a board of education composed of laymen. These laymen make the decisions which affect the educational welfare of the many children attending their public schools. In recent years there has been a considerable reduction in the number of districts, but each one that remains is still governed by a local board.

As the number of school districts in the state of Michigan has decreased, the formal preparation of school superintendents has increased. With better preparation a more formalized structure has evolved under which boards and superintendents operate and work. Every school district that has a board of education has an agenda for each of its formal meetings. The agenda may be in some written form or it may be just mental notes made by the superintendent or by one or more of the board members.

Fultz (1975) found in his research that

The most underlying reason for the release of Michigan school superintendents concerns their relationship with the board of education. Poor communications is a significant underlying

reason for the release of Michigan school superintendents and the number of superintendents released has increased significantly over the past five years (pp. 135-38).

Michigan school law provides for each school district to meet at least once per month. This meeting is usually led by the president of the board of education, who follows some kind of agenda. The agenda prescribes what the board and the superintendent will discuss. The agenda therefore becomes an important instrument in the two-way communication process between the board members and the superintendent, as well as between the administration and the public.

The researcher in this study is concerned with the role that the board members and the superintendent play in the placement of items on the formal agenda. The instrument used in this study was developed to determine who influenced the placement of an item on the agenda. Additional information was also requested to determine the importance of the board agenda in the board-superintendent relationship.

#### Need for the Study

A review of literature concerning the role of board of education members and the role of superintendents in agenda construction failed to provide a model for practicing administrators in constructing the agenda for a meeting of the board of education.

Lloyd Ashby (1968) stated that "some boards and superintendents themselves are confused as to their respective roles. The superintendent is confused as to whether he is the board's man, the educational leader of teachers, or the man in the middle." The

superintendent appears to be gradually moving into the position of being the board's man. In defining the role of the superintendent, Ashby noted that school boards fall into these three groups: those who look for a public relations man, those who look for a good business manager, and those who look for an educational leader. However, in many cases, boards often set out to find an educational leader and then criticize the newly hired superintendent for not being more businesslike. It is important that boards and superintendents define their roles.

Wellington (1977) concluded that

School boards are responsible for what does and does not happen in elementary and secondary classrooms. The local school board, more than any other political group or body, will have the most influence on the quality of education a student receives. Boards are elected by the public. They are an arm of state government. By law they are given all the authority they need and, therefore, are totally responsible for everything that happens in a school district (p. 529).

The preparation of the agenda for the board meetings becomes extremely important as both the board and the administration will be judged by their actions on agenda items. The study is needed because:

1. no in-depth analyses have been done to investigate the role of the board members and the role of the superintendent in placing items on the agenda and
2. there exists no sufficient data as a basis for a modelling process for constructing board of education meeting agendas.



### Purpose of the Study

The researcher's purpose in this research is to determine the role of board of education members and the role of the superintendent of schools in establishing board of education meeting agenda items in selected Michigan school districts. It will also be the researcher's purpose in this study to make new knowledge available for: the colleges of education that prepare administrators; boards of education through the Michigan Association of School Boards, and superintendents through the Michigan Association of School Administrators.

It is hoped that this research will help practicing administrators better understand what influences the placement of items on the agenda. It is important because whoever decides what will be discussed at a board meeting tends to establish boundaries and rules of discussion (Ziegler, 1976). The power to establish the topics and policy alternatives which will be discussed gives the controller of the agenda considerable power in determining what policies will be adopted. The researcher seeks to ascertain who influenced and who actually was responsible for the issue being placed on the agenda, and to develop a modelling process for agenda construction. Board members, superintendents, and institutions preparing administrators should greatly profit from the information gathered.

Statement of the Problem

The problem can be summarized as follows:

1. Is the board meeting agenda important in the relationship between the superintendent and board members?
2. Is the wording and placement of items on the board agenda important to superintendents and board members?
3. Do board members and superintendents feel their input on the wording and placement of items on the board meeting agenda is important?
4. Do board members and the superintendent feel the Michigan Sunshine Law changed the determination of agenda items?
5. Of the areas: (1) evaluation of teachers, (2) student discipline, (3) construction of the board meeting agenda, (4) negotiations, and (5) problem of school finance, which area is most important to board members and which is most important to the superintendent as they pertain to the welfare of students in their school district?
6. In the agenda construction process, are there relationships between the board members' (1) age, (2) sex, (3) number of years on the board, (4) position on the board, (5) frequency they meet with the superintendent, (6) size of the school district, (7) whether they were elected or appointed to the board, (8) the superintendent's age, (9) number of years served as a superintendent, and (10) the highest degree attained by the superintendent.

### Research Hypotheses

The following general hypotheses were formulated regarding the findings of this study:

1. Board members over 35 believe they have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those 35 and under.

2. Female board members believe they have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than male board members.

3. Board members who have served on the board of education six or more years believe they have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those with less than six years on the board.

4. The presidents of boards of education believe they have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than other members of the board.

5. Board of education officers do not meet significantly more frequently with the superintendent to discuss board meeting agenda items than trustees on the board.

6. Elected board members believe they have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than appointed board members.

7. There is no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda.

8. There is no significant difference between the superintendent's influence on the placement of items on the agenda and the board members' influence.

9. There is no significant relationship between the size of a school district and the frequency the superintendent meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

10. There is no significant relationship between the number of years an administrator has been a superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

11. There is no significant relationship between the degree held by the superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

#### Procedural Steps and Methods

The initial step in this study was to conduct a telephone survey of the superintendents and board of education presidents in one intermediate school district in Michigan to determine the relevance of board agenda construction in board-superintendent relations. An intermediate district of 12 schools was chosen for the survey. Eleven superintendents and their board president were surveyed. Superintendents' names were obtained from the directory of Michigan school superintendents. Board presidents' names and phone numbers were obtained from the superintendent of the school districts surveyed.

Superintendents were informed that their board president would be contacted only if they gave their permission and they were

assured that the names of school districts and individual responses would remain anonymous. Thus, the answers given in the telephone survey were assumed to represent the true expressions of opinions on the question asked.

Prior to the telephone survey, a letter of positive endorsement was obtained from an intermediate superintendent. (See Appendix A.)

Identical questions were asked of board members and superintendents. They were asked to respond to the questions using one of the following four responses:

1. Of considerable importance
2. Of a moderate amount of importance
3. Of a slight amount of importance
4. Of a trivial amount of importance

They were asked to think of their responses in terms of the amount of relative importance as they pertained to the welfare of students in their district. The questions were as follows:

- I. How important is the agenda for board meetings in your relations with your board or superintendent?
- II. Has the Sunshine Law changed the relative importance in the determination of agenda items?
- III. Of what importance is the wording and placement of an item on the agenda in relation to what you are trying to accomplish for students?
- IV. How important is your input in the wording and placement of items on the board meeting agenda?
- V. In terms of the board agenda, of what relative importance are each of the following as they pertain to the welfare of students in your district?
  - a. Evaluation of teachers
  - b. Student discipline
  - c. Construction of the board meeting agenda
  - d. Negotiations
  - e. Problem of school finance

School districts were assigned a code number and their response was recorded on a coded answer sheet as they responded.

Following the pilot study an intermediate school district was selected and the names of the superintendents and board members were obtained. It was deemed necessary to delete two of the school districts, one because of its large size and the other because of the researcher's affiliation with the school district as the former superintendent of schools.

An arbitrary decision was made by the researcher that for a district to be included in the study a response must be received from the superintendent of schools and at least two of the seven board members.

The instrument to be sent was revised several times. It was designed to provide sufficient information for the study but brief enough to insure cooperation and a high rate of response. The last 20 questions on the questionnaire are actual agenda items as they appeared on each school district's board meeting agendas. The cover letter to the 18 superintendents assured the respondents that their responses would remain completely confidential. The letter to the 126 board members gave the same assurances. A sample of the letters may be found in Appendices B and C.

#### Definition of Terms

Superintendent of schools: One who is employed by a board of education as the chief executive officer of a school district.

School board member: A resident of a school district who was legally elected or appointed to serve as a member of a board of education of a school district.

Agenda item: Memoranda of things to be done, as items of business or discussion to be brought up at a legal meeting of a board of education.

### Research Design

This study was designed to analyze the extent of influence board members and the superintendent believed they had in the placement of items on the board meeting agenda.

The sample process, or the selection of part of a population from which the characteristics of the whole are inferred, has long been accepted as a legitimate and expeditious method of research procedure (Parten, 1966, p. 106). The districts chosen for this study were taken from one intermediate school district of the state-wide total of 58.

The agenda items that the board members and the superintendent rate their influence was taken from a random sample of board agenda items over a six-month period.

### Overview

Chapter I serves as an introduction to the nature of the problem involved and the need and purpose of the study. Chapter II provides a review of the literature. The design of the study and the design of the instrument are provided in Chapter III. In

Chapter IV the results are analyzed. Chapter V provides a summary and conclusions of the study with recommendations for further study.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature pertinent to this study follows in this sequence: The Role of the Superintendent, the Role of the Board of Education Members, the Board Meeting Agenda, and Summary.

#### The Role of the Superintendent

Today the superintendent of schools occupies a crucial position in each community. As Charles Fowler (1977) points out, "the superintendent is the key individual in any community's educational program" (p. 21). No list of the functions of the school superintendent can be complete nor are the duties of one school superintendent exactly like those of another. Many studies have been made of the relationship between the school board and its superintendent, with most attempting to draw a line between their respective functions and to distinguish carefully their areas of authority. The rule of thumb is that the school board makes policy and the superintendent carries it out.

The ease with which writers have separated the legislative and executive functions in school government could lead to the impression that the distinction is much more real than it actually is. The interaction between executive and policy maker is so

intricate in the policy-forming stage as well as in the policy-implementing stage that it is hopeless to attempt to separate these functions in practice.

According to Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee (1965),

The business of running schools is so serious that neither board members nor administrators can afford to allow this relationship to deteriorate. It is imperative that each partner understand the other's role and that each try hard to maintain an acceptable level of performance in the fulfillment of his responsibilities. Where the relationship is not compatible, it should be examined by both parties. If differences in perceptions about the definitions of roles or the performance of the superintendent or board members in their respective roles cannot be reconciled, then it may be necessary for the superintendent to leave. In some cases board members would do well to resign as well (pp. 182-84).

Neal Gross (1958) relates his feelings,

. . . that if an executive and his board of directors hold similar ideas about who should do what, and if they agree on policies and programs for their organization, then one crucial ingredient is present for relatively smooth working relationships. If they have different ideas about these things, then the stage is set for confusion, tension, frustration and conflict. This is so because they are viewing each other's behavior through different-colored glasses; each act tends to be interpreted on the basis of different evaluation standards (p. 113).

The results of a study conducted by Gross of 105 superintendents and 508 board members, whom he interviewed,

. . . strongly suggest that in many school systems superintendents and school boards do not agree on the crucial problem of who is supposed to do what, on what is policy making and what is administration. It seems a reasonable prediction that a corporation will be headed for trouble if its president and board of directors disagree over the basic ground rules for their relationships and over policies and programs. A similar prediction may be made for school systems in which these conditions hold (p. 125).

Campbell et al. (1965) relate that

In most school districts the superintendent of schools is the formally recognized chief executive. He is the most visible, the most vulnerable, and potentially the most influential member of the organization. As chief executive, he interacts with a variety of people about school matters in and out of the school organization. He spends most of his time and energy maintaining his organization; but occasionally some superintendents exert leadership in attempting to change the goals or procedures of the organization. He is confronted with the question of accepting the resources society offers to support the organization or the necessity of manipulating the environment so as to get a greater share of the resources. We think that most superintendents will find a major task in exercising the political acumen needed in the struggle to arrange the conditions in the larger society to permit a viable educational program (p. 208).

Campbell et al. also point out,

A major role of most superintendents must be that of arranging the environment so that the educational enterprise may remain vital. This means, we think, that most superintendents cannot be the instructional experts in their schools. To be sure, we think that superintendents need to have a very clear notion of what schools are for and what kinds of people and material are needed if the objectives are to be attained. It will be chiefly at the level of goals and policy that the superintendent will give leadership to the staff and also to the community. Usually, subordinates to the superintendent can extend and implement his leadership with the staff. Frequently, only the superintendent can make the case with key groups and individuals in the community (p. 214).

Davies and Prestwood (1951) point out that

When a superintendent carries out the policies of the board of education, he performs many kinds of executive functions. Boards which have really made their superintendents their executive officers report that among those functions are the following:

1. Personnel. The superintendent nominates all personnel, both professional and nonprofessional. He assigns, transfers, and promotes all employees with the board's approval and within the limits of state law. He supervises the work of all personnel. He recommends for suspension or discharge, as state law may permit, any employees not rendering satisfactory service.

2. Curriculum. The superintendent, with his supervisory and teaching staffs, develops new courses and revises old ones to meet the needs of all children and youth.

3. Pupils. The superintendent and his staff direct the instruction, guidance and discipline of all pupils. He enforces the state's compulsory-education law. He directs the classification, promotion, and graduation of all students.

4. Finances. The superintendent prepares the budget and administers it after it has been adopted. He and his staff direct the accounting of all school funds. He makes periodic reports to the board.

5. School Plant. The superintendent and his staff keep the board informed about trends in enrollment and how the utilization of the district's buildings is being affected by them. He, along with the school architect and others of his staff, directs the planning of new buildings and the alteration of old ones. He and his staff supervise the maintenance and operation of all buildings and the construction of new buildings authorized by the board.

6. Public Relations. In many ways, the superintendent is the key figure in a district's public-relations program. He is responsible for a program that should help the public understand the board's policies and what the schools are attempting to do, what their problems and responsibilities are. He works with parents' organizations and lay advisory groups. He sees to it that the newspapers receive news releases (pp. 130-31).

Keith Goldhammer (1964), Dean of the College of Education at Michigan State University, feels that

As the executive officer of the board, it is the responsibility of the superintendent to do three particular things:

1. It is his responsibility constantly to assist the board to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational enterprise and the extent to which it is meeting both the needs for education generally and the aspirations of the citizens of the community particularly. It is his responsibility to inform the board of inadequacies and of needs which should be met if the school is to achieve its purposes.

2. It is his responsibility to advise the board of various alternatives of action with respect to any of the problems with which the school district is confronted. It is his responsibility to assist the board in understanding the consequences for the community and for the public schools of its accepting one set of alternatives in place of another.

3. It is his responsibility to execute the policies which the board has established and to inform the board of

the extent to which effectiveness of the educational program is promoted or hindered as the result of those policies (pp. 54-55).

Goldhammer goes on to point out,

There are five particular role expectations for the superintendent of schools held by school board members. These are generalized roles, and not all school boards or school board members concur in all the expectations. They include:

1. Executive Secretary for the Board. School board members generally hold that the superintendent should be an executive secretary for the board. School board members feel that the superintendent should be an advisor to them and that he should keep them apprised of the implications and interpretations necessary to enable them to make wise policies, both with respect to the expectations of the community and on the basis of the knowledge and experience of the educational profession. It is the function of the superintendent to maintain adequate records for the board of education and to prepare the agenda for school board meetings.

2. Educational Leader. School board members frequently refer to the superintendent as the "head of their school." They expect him to be the educational leader in the community, helping the community to interpret the educational program and endeavoring to educate the community regarding values inherent in school policies.

3. Business Manager. Because of the financial conservatism of many school board members, the superintendent is presumed to have considerable acumen and responsibility with respect to the careful business management of the schools. The superintendent is presumed to give direction to the business management of the schools and to scrutinize carefully the degree to which it is possible for the schools to operate effectively and economically.

4. Community Leader. It is presumed by board members that he will be committed to the welfare of the community and will exemplify the values to which the community--or at least influential elements within it--subscribe. He is expected to accomplish this by being a leader in community affairs, promoting those civic enterprises which enable the community to maintain itself and to achieve patterns of operation that are harmonious with its value structure.

5. Intermediary Between Board and Staff. Since school board members look upon the superintendent as the person responsible for the transmission of their policies throughout the various echelons of the organization, they also look upon him as their contact with the rest of the staff (pp. 42-45).

A great deal of today's literature deals with the constantly changing role of the superintendent. Ziegler (1976) states,

As American schools move from an era of expanding resources to one of scarce resources, the essentially political issue of resource distribution will become dominant. School boards will continue to turn to superintendents for recommendations. Superintendents must use both their political and technical resources as the task of conflict management becomes more prominent in school district governance (p. 12).

A number of situations have combined to bring about a change in the superintendent's role. The financial responsibilities of the superintendency have increased dramatically over the past few years. The past few years have seen a trend toward fewer but larger school districts. This has created school systems with more students, more employees, more hot lunches, more buses, and a more complex administrative situation. Numerous other qualitative and quantitative changes have had their impact on the role of the superintendent. The growth of state-wide testing and evaluation, voter reluctance to approve increased school spending, and high school taxes have all left their marks.

No combination of changes, however, has equalled the dramatic impact of the passage of the act to allow school employees to negotiate. Bradley (1970) observes that

Negotiations between the teachers and the school board have affected the superintendent in two ways. One, the teachers no longer automatically accept at face value all the suggested proposals of the board of education and the superintendent. Two, there has been a major change in the relationship of the superintendent within the framework of the actual process of negotiations. Superintendents have for years kept their hold on the professional organizations representing teachers. They have encouraged their own teachers to become

more active in the same professional organization without preparing for estrangement from the group. Now that teachers are in the process of dominating the leadership of such groups, superintendents are finding themselves outside the normally friendly paternalistic camp. They are representing the board of education and the students and teachers are representing themselves (p. 278).

According to the New York State Office of Education (1974),

Today the superintendent is required to consult his staff on many issues which formerly were his to dispose of as he wished. Failure to adhere to contract requirements or differing interpretation of what they mean can result in protracted discussions or informal and formal grievance procedures which often require the superintendent's participation and are exceedingly time consuming (pp. 7-8).

Campbell et al. (1965) summarized the changing role of the school superintendent quite well when they wrote:

As we try to view the superintendency in the years to come, we probably are guilty of mixing prediction with hope. Be that as it may, we think there is some evidence to suggest that there will be fewer superintendents, that selection procedures will be more rigorous, that preparation programs will be improved, and that a more realistic role definition will be evolved.

Basic to all the improvements we see on the horizon is a more realistic definition of the job of the superintendent. School staffs, boards of education, and even the superintendents themselves have tended to define the superintendent as a superman. He is supposed to be a paragon of personal virtue, a man of culture and charm, a professional who knows teaching and learning, an efficient manager of people and things, and finally an educational statesman of great wisdom and charisma. Few people meet the mark (pp. 222-25).

#### The Role of the Board of Education Members

According to the American Association of School Administrators (1956),

The early schools, though often mean, bare, and poorly taught, were created by the people. Simple administrative tasks were performed by committees or boards usually appointed by the governing body of the community. These committees or boards did everything but teach. They elected the teachers, issued

their certificates, chose textbooks, decided what should be taught, evaluated the schools in terms of what students had learned, and took care of any problems that might arise. The secretary or clerk often handled the administrative details (pp. 51-52).

Fensch and Wilson (1964) relate that

As life in America changed, dramatic changes were also evident in the operation of its schools. During the twentieth century there have been numerous forces operating to effect major changes in educational objectives and scope. These forces may be classified as:

- Deliberative studies by organizations bent on improving education.
- Fluctuations in the nation's economy.
- Wars.
- Changes in the status of the family.
- Modification of philosophical values.
- International unrest, especially with the emergence of new nations.
- Research.
- Influence of special-interest groups (p. 6).

Reeder (1941) points out that

In 1826, the first state (Massachusetts) enacted a law requiring every town in the state to select a separate school committee and prescribed as its only function the direction and control of the schools of the town. To these school committees or boards, however, which today are ubiquitous in every state and have large power, the people were slow in delegating authority. The large power which school boards now have has come to them in slow evolution. The first large step, then, in creating a school machinery was taken when separate school committees or boards were established to perform certain administrative functions. The next large step was taken when it was realized that the business of education was so great, complex, and important that special employees were needed to assist boards of education with its administration. Thus, superintendents of schools came into being, the first city superintendency being established by Providence, Rhode Island, in 1836 and the first county superintendency coming about the same time (pp. 9-10).

With the creation of the school superintendency came the necessity to distinguish the role that the board would now play.

Goldhammer (1964) states,



The research on school board role expectations clearly reveals that the human factor must be considered in the evaluation of any position. The perspectives which school board members have of their jobs are varied by the personalities, the goals, and the beliefs of the individual members. Because this is true, it is difficult to generalize about how a board functions, for the function of the board is a variable of the perceptions that the individual members have of their roles. If the member conceives of his role as that of the supervisor of the work of the administrator, the function will differ from the situation in which the member conceives of his role as that of a buffer for the administrator between the professional staff and the community. The administrator himself will have to structure his roles differently. If the members' concepts of their roles differ considerably, it is apparent that some basic conflicts exist on the board and that these conflicts may impede the ability of the board to transact business (pp. 41-42).

As Dykes (1975) points out, "what the school board does depends in large measure on the board's view of itself in relation to its responsibilities" (p. 31).

A majority of American school board members perceive their roles as being consistent with the values of professional educators. Lipham, Gregg, and Rossmiller (1967) found that "90 percent of all school board members thought that they should not serve as spokesman for segments of the community; yet slightly over one-fourth of the citizens thought this was a good idea."

According to Kimbrough (1964),

The board of education, as the local agent of the state system of education, has the official authority for the improvement of education in the local school district. All interest groups, including professional teachers' associations, may propose policies to the board. However, we must recognize that the board has the official power to adopt educational policies (p. 272).

Gross (1958) believes,

School boards in each community make the final decisions about what is taught, how much will be paid to the teachers, what

buildings are required, what values will be emphasized, and even how much time is spent teaching the children and how much on other activities. The school superintendent, as the board's administrator, advises the board members and carries out their policy decisions. These people, school board members and superintendents, occupy a crucial social position in each community. They are the ones who are supposed to tell the citizens what the schools are and are not accomplishing. They are the ones whose decisions most directly affect whether what is done in the schools will be done poorly or well (p. 150).

Gross goes on to say,

Yet, there are many school board members who are well motivated and have ill-defined or hazy notions about their jobs. Some school board members act as if they as individuals had the right to make decisions, which is the prerogative of the entire school board. Some school board members act as if they, rather than the superintendent, had the right to administer the policy decisions of the board. Superintendents and school board members frequently disagree over their respective rights and obligations (p. 139).

Gross concludes, "As individuals, school board members have no rights. Rights and obligations are invested in the school board as a unit, not in individual board members" (p. 14).

This idea of the school board as a group of men and women, whose joint decision has the power of law but whose individual positions are, at least legally, without such power, is both the most important and the most difficult aspect of the American school organization. No other part of the world has tried it, and all too many Americans do not understand it.

The American Association of School Administrators (1956) states,

The idea of individual responsibility and integrity is deeply rooted in American society. It is easy, therefore, to think of a board of education as only the total of its members. Yet we all know from experience that a group of people can

develop a team spirit which can almost be said to have a life of its own. As an individual, the school board member naturally wants to make his ideas count. As a member of the board, his job is also to listen sympathetically to other board members, to the superintendent, and to the public, and to be a wise judge. The idea that a school board can succeed depends on an assumption that such group feeling and group responsibility are possible and will be developed. But, as we have seen, it is not easy to accomplish (pp. 70-71).

Goldhammer (1964) believes,

The board of education in an efficiently organized school district has five major areas of responsibility. It can define its duties behaviorally while it delegates to its administrative staff responsibilities which are coordinate with its own. These areas of responsibility are:

1. The Determination of Major Goals. The goals must be defined within a framework established by law and in accordance with the local population's understanding of how their efforts relate to the accomplishment of major objectives of the broader society. A clear statement of goals and principles is not an academic exercise; it is a statement of the criteria upon which the schools will be evaluated.
2. General Formulation of Operating Policies. Policies relating to matters that are of concern both to the curricular and noncurricular aspects of the program should be determined by the school board.
3. The Selection of Key Personnel. Legally, the board is responsible for the employment of all personnel within the school system. The board's primary responsibility should be the selection of a competent superintendent of schools who has (1) the breadth of experience and preparation necessary to perform the services in accordance with the best professional knowledge available and (2) a concern for a proper consideration of the public interest in the management of public education.
4. Resource Procurement and Allocation. Since colonial times, a major concern of the people in this country has been over their proper representation in the determination of the amount of taxes which shall be levied and how these taxes shall be utilized. An understanding of the financial structure of the schools, of the financial needs of the school district, and the manner in which the financial and other resources of the public schools are allocated and distributed is a major responsibility of the school board member. It is his duty to be able to inform the public of how educational goals are being achieved.
5. Evaluation. The school board should constantly have evaluations of the curriculum and of all other phases of the

schools' operations presented to it. If this is done, it can appropriately determine the extent to which the interests of the community are being well-served and the degree to which community needs for education are being met. The school board should expect during the course of the year that every phase of the schools' operations will be evaluated by the professional staff. Written evaluations should be presented to the board so that it can most adequately represent the public's interest in the maintenance of both quality and economy in public education (pp. 100-103).

Goldhammer goes on to state,

As a duly elected or appointed body, the school board operates solely as an agency of the state and derives its power primarily from statutory law. There are five levels of control over the independent action of the local school boards and from which local school boards derive their authority to act in specific situations. These levels of authority are:

1. Constitutional Provisions. Each of the constitutions of the fifty states contains some provision for education. Generally, these provisions are very broad, and the establishment of specific laws for the operation of schools is considered a legislative function.

2. Legislative Enactments. The school board's powers and duties have been specifically defined as those that are expressly granted by the statutes. It is recognized by authorities in the field that school boards are responsible to legislative control and can exert no powers outside of the provisions of the statutes. The degree to which legislative control is exerted over the local school district is determined by the state legislature.

3. Rules and Regulations of the State Board of Education. Legislatures have generally considered it their function to establish the broad outlines for the operation of public education and to leave the filling in of the specific details either to a state educational agency or to the local school board. The state agency is primarily known as the state board of education and has an executive arm (known as the state department of education) operating under the state superintendent for public instruction.

4. Legal Interpretations. Two agencies exist for the purpose of making legal interpretations of statutes which affect the operation of schools. In most states the attorney general of the state is designated as an agency for interpreting the laws of the state for its political subdivisions, and such interpretations have the force of law until reversed by a court of proper jurisdiction. The other agency for the interpretation of the law is the courts, which may act upon suits brought either by other agencies of the state or by

private citizens in order to seek a proper legal definition of the authority of school boards.

5. Societal Demands. There has been a general trend in American society to delegate increasing phases of the child's educational development to the schools. Areas of responsibility that formerly were undertaken by other agencies, such as the church or home, are now acknowledged as the school's obligation (pp. 4-8).

Hillway (1961) points out,

Though the state is clearly supreme in the control of education, it cannot operate an educational system that violates principles of the federal Constitution. The rights and liberties of citizens are protected against school boards as well as against all the other agencies of government (p. 143).

Bendiner (1969) reports,

The literature on school boards and how they work is replete with criteria for detecting the ideal school board member. Besides a devotion to public education, the injunctions read, he should have more than average ability, a capacity for understanding his fellowman in spite of differences of opinion, an independent mind but not a belligerent nature, the confidence of the community, and willingness to spend untold quantities of time and energy for no compensation beyond the satisfaction of doing public service. As if all that were not enough, it is usually suggested that he have a sense of humor, which in fact would be required just to confront all the other qualifications.

Although such paragons are rarely encountered, it is possible that they are to be found in a higher proportion on school boards than in other public offices if for no other reason than that the job as a rule pays no money at all and is more often a source of affliction than of power (p. 14).

### The Board Meeting Agenda

Agenda are, according to the dictionary, "things to be done." Included here are those things that reach the official board of education meetings for the board to discuss or to take action on. Agenda construction for school board meetings is the introducing of a topic, by various means, to be placed on or withheld from the written agenda. According to Ziegler (1976),

Proposal development is characterized in terms of agenda setting, and executive review is characterized as agenda refining. Legislative action, then, is the process of making authoritative decisions concerning the items of the policy agenda. Formal decisions are made by the school board. The primary function of legislative sessions of school boards is decision-making (p. 12).

Reeves (1954) has shown that

The purposes of the agenda are: to expedite procedure and to prevent waste of time by furnishing a plan to be followed; to provide for members an opportunity to give reflective thought to the matters scheduled for action; and to prevent the omission of any matters that should receive attention (p. 199).

Effective preparation of the agenda is necessary for insuring the success of a school board meeting. The agenda is a concise and orderly statement of topics or problems to be discussed at a given board meeting and therefore it is important to the successful practicing school administrator to have a better understanding of the placement of items on the agenda.

According to Ziegler and Tucker (1976),

Proposal (agenda item) development begins when the need for action is articulated and one or more policy alternatives are suggested. Proposal development can originate with either governmental or nongovernmental individuals or groups within the educational system, or can originate outside a specific decision-making unit. Indeed, many of the problems currently encountered by local school districts are the result of proposal development occurring at the federal level. Whatever the source, however, proposal development invariably requires that preferences be translated into demands which require a response. Hence, the question of "responsiveness," so currently in vogue, can be understood as an inquiry into which, of the variety of demands placed upon a school system, are selected for a response (p. 2).

Agenda setting is the opening round in the struggle for influence, and by no means an inconsequential one. As Schattschneider (1960) has observed, "political conflict is not like an intercollegiate

debate in which the opponents agree in advance upon a definition of the issues. As a matter of fact, the definition of alternatives is the supreme instrument of power" (p. 68). In Schattschneider's view, then, control of the agenda is analogous to, say, choice of a battleground in wars. A group or individual will always select a battleground which provides the advantage.

Boyd (1974) holds the view that

The direct setting of the agenda of school board policy-making is quite insulated from those outside the school establishment. Clearly, the administration occupies a powerful "gatekeeping" position. The administration is in a position to establish an agenda which will minimize controversy and maximize routine decision-making. That is, superintendents and other professionals can set an agenda which, because it emphasizes technical problems, requires administrative, rather than board, resolution (p. 40).

Thus, Boyd asserts that there is reason to believe that many, perhaps even most, school administrators are inclined to be cautious in their policy initiations and reluctant to test the boundaries of their influence.

According to Kimbrough (1964),

When the superintendent, the board, or someone else stirs the elements in the functioning system by introducing an educational proposal or administrative act, power resources are set in motion wherein hidden leadership groups are apt to be the most effective. Many school leaders have neither the proper understanding, security, power, or preparation to combat effectively the forces so unleashed. Unfortunately, a great many school board members prefer not to disturb these forces because to do so would be exceedingly threatening. Control over educational policy is often made effective by anticipatory coercion or the fear of what might happen if a project is proposed.

Much of the decision-making activity involves an informal, extra-legal process of decision-making. That is, the deciding often takes place outside and preceding the meetings of the official decision-makers. The people most closely associated

with such an informal activity may or may not hold a public office; some have never held an elective public position (p. 219).

School boards (and individual members) use several means of preparing to make decisions. Individual board members who advocate special interests often rely on spokesmen for those interests for information and assistance. Some board members who view their role as being genuinely representative develop a range of contact persons to consult about school matters. Others rely on what their particular circle of friends say. In addition, many board members read widely about education as background for their deliberating.

According to Nystrand and Cunningham (1973),

School boards also employ more formal and corporate means to inform themselves for decision-making. A somewhat controversial technique is to employ standing committees of the board. The theory is that these committees will deliberate about matters in their assigned realm (e.g., curriculum, finance, buildings) and bring recommendations for action to the board as a whole. Reservations about this procedure have been expressed by superintendents who feel that such committees are inclined to delve into administrative matters or to merely duplicate effort required of the total board.

The demand that school boards represent community interests is very much alive today. The press for community control reflects this sentiment and often includes the specific demand that neighborhood people be allowed to make personal decisions on whether a particular school building should be closed because of declining enrollments. Board members in communities of all kinds are often pressed very hard to take positions which represent community views even in the face of fiscal crises and expert opinions.

Placing a controversial item on the board agenda because a friend has asked you to is not always an easy task.

Goldhammer (1964) states,

There are basically three types of decisions that school board members make: (1) housekeeping decisions, which involve the acceptance of reports, formal acknowledgment of correspondence



and reports, notes of appreciation and thanks, and the determination of procedures; (2) administrative (terminal action) decisions, which involve the purchasing of school sites, adding to insurance coverage, the borrowing of funds, granting exclusions to the compulsory attendance law, and calling for bids on bonds; and (3) policy decisions, which serve as guidelines to administrative action and which exist as a rule or a law exists in other school contracts. It becomes quite evident that there is really little limitation upon the nature of items that can be placed on a board agenda and be discussed at a meeting. The power to decide what will be discussed at board meetings, therefore, becomes extremely important (p. 77).

Campbell et al. (1965) state,

Irrespective of the kind or character of the decision, the need for the decision must be recognized by a member of the board. Somewhere and somehow the process of making a decision gets started. The exact point of origination is often difficult to discern; nevertheless there does appear to be some point in time when an observer at least can identify the humble beginnings of the process. Once someone recognizes the need for a decision or recognizes a problematic issue, the need for policy action must be introduced into the stream of school board considerations. The length of time preceding each policy enactment is dependent on the energy and resources board members direct to the problem, existing legal constraints, the stakes involved, value conformity of board members, and the degree to which board members share perceptions of the consequences of the action proposed (p. 181).

Eventually it reaches the superintendent of schools and is placed on the agenda for total board consideration.

According to the American Association of School Administrators (1956),

There is normally a rhythm to the work of the school board which culminates with each meeting. The day after adjournment may be the time for the superintendent to start sending out to the members the materials they will consider at the following session. This mailing of reports as they are completed continues until the members receive the agenda and recommendations for the next meeting.

The most important part of the school board meeting may be the superintendent in getting advance reports and recommendations to the members, and by the members in reading and

analyzing the advance information which they receive from the superintendent. The process of getting ready for meetings is thus continuous (p. 100).

Johnson (1964) relates that

The effective preparation of the agenda is necessary for insuring the success of a school board meeting. The agenda is a concise and orderly statement of topics or problems to be discussed at the next meeting. It is usually prepared by the superintendent, often with the advice of the board president or one or more of the board members. The superintendent will always have certain items which he feels must be a part of the board's discussions. Board members will have other items in which they have a particular interest. Committees have reports which should be read. Citizen groups and teacher groups may have items which they feel are important in the improvement of education. All such communications should be routed to the office of the superintendent in order to be included in the agenda of the board (pp. 104-105).

Goldhammer observes that

It is generally recognized by authorities that the agenda should be developed by the superintendent of schools, and a tentative draft of the agenda should be sent in advance of the meeting to all board members, the press and other interested communication media, subordinate administrative officers, officers of educational organizations, and interested citizens of the community. School board members should be encouraged to suggest additional items that might be incorporated on the agenda in advance of school board meetings. However, a sufficient time prior to the meeting must be given to the superintendent so that he can prepare materials for his recommendations on items which members of the board wish to add to the agenda (pp. 72-73).

The American Association of School Administrators points out that

In the preparation of the agenda it is important that all reports and recommendations to be made to the board be made in writing so that each member may be informed of the issues under consideration. Not only may this save time, but it may also eliminate the possibility of ill-feeling. Even if the board is divided in its reaction to a particular issue, the possibility of any faction indicating that the other members were informed more thoroughly is lessened. This does not preclude the necessity for the superintendent and the

school board chairman to meet in advance of the general meeting in order to preview the agenda and to extend their understanding of any controversial issues that may arise. Pre-planning helps make for an economical, fruitful meeting and is appreciated by all concerned (pp. 101-104).

Brickell (1969), former assistant superintendent of the Manhasset, Long Island, schools, makes these suggestions for the preparation and use of the agenda:

1. Never discuss any subject which is not on the printed agenda.
2. Don't listen to written material aloud--this means minutes, correspondence, reports, etc.--have all of it mailed in advance.
3. Have the superintendent or the secretary write suggested starting time by each agenda item so that the board can tell whether it is spending the proper time on each item.
4. Abandon the traditional agenda format and substitute one in which all action items are separated from all information items.
5. Place all action items at the top of the agenda and finish every one before moving into the information section.
6. Place all delegations, committees, and individuals on the agenda at the end of the action section--not at the beginning.
7. Allow time for public questions at the close of the meeting--not during the proceedings (or, at least fit two or three definite places during the session and limit the people to these).
8. Ask the superintendent to send his written recommendation in advance on every "action" item.
9. Ask the superintendent to express his recommendations in the form of motions, worded as they appear in the official minutes.
10. Ask the superintendent to list briefly the reasonable alternatives to his recommendations and to give when possible the pros and cons of each.
11. Ask the superintendent to design standard forms for recommending appointments, acting on bids, approving warrants, admitting non-resident students, and all other routine actions so that many small decisions can be a single motion (p. 56).

On July 1, 1977, the Michigan Open Meetings Act became effective. This law, commonly called the "Sunshine Law," requires all meetings of the board of education to be public meetings. The

business of the board and official action will be conducted before the public.

The American Association of School Administrators concludes that

At all times it is the duty of the superintendent to advise the board and to help insure that the wording and enforcement of its policies will reflect credit on the school board and promote the best interest of the school program (p. 125).

#### Summary

The review of the literature reveals that there is not unanimity on the role of the superintendent and the role of board members. The general consensus of the literature indicates that school boards and superintendents function best when the board and superintendent view their respective roles in a similar light. There are also many views on the way in which items are placed on the agenda by the superintendent and board members. The importance of the format of the agenda was also considered. Excellent educational leadership by the superintendent will assure each board member and the citizens of the community that their input is important in the decision-making process. Adherence to the Sunshine Law by boards of education will assure the people of Michigan their school districts are conducting their business in open sessions where the public is welcome.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The design of the study and the order of research are described in this chapter. These are described under the following headings: Population, Instrumentation, Hypotheses and Analysis of the Data, and Summary.

#### Population

The population under study in this thesis was comprised of 18 superintendents of schools and their combined 126 board of education members. This represents all school districts in one intermediate school district except the largest school district and the district with which the researcher was formerly associated.

The population who responded to the instrument used in this study involved those superintendents and board members who were presently serving in their respective roles at the time the survey was conducted. They were included regardless of their time of service in the school district.

The researcher determined prior to commencing the study that it would be necessary to receive responses from the superintendent and at least two board members for a district to be included in

the study. The researcher also determined that a minimum of 94 responses would constitute an adequate sampling.

Since all but the two excluded districts were included in the study, selection was not on a random basis.

### Instrumentation

Survey research has involved extensive use of the questionnaire as a survey instrument. The questionnaire is a flexible instrument, capable of being custom designed to assist in the investigation of some research problem (Borg, 1963, p. 202).

The researcher determined that a field test be conducted in order to determine whether or not the agenda played an important role in the relationships of board members and the superintendent. It was determined that the field-testing group closely resembled the target population in the projected study. The field test was therefore conducted in one intermediate school district with an attempt to reach all board presidents and the superintendent of schools. The field test was conducted by telephone over a one-week period in January, 1978. Eleven board presidents and a like number of superintendents of the same school system were surveyed. The results of the field testing confirmed that the questions being asked were appropriate. The results of the pilot study, as suggested by Parten (1966, p. 496), were used to assume sufficient reliability. No other test of reliability was made.

The survey revealed that of those board presidents and superintendents surveyed, 100 percent believed that the agenda for

board meetings was of considerable or moderate importance. A large number, 73 percent, of the presidents felt the Sunshine Law had only a slight or trivial change in the determination of agenda items. The superintendents believed in 54.6 percent of the cases that the Sunshine Law had a considerable or moderate amount of change on the agenda.

In all other areas surveyed the board presidents and superintendents agreed by at least 54.6 percent that all areas questioned were of considerable or moderate importance.

Table 3.1 is a breakdown of the responses obtained in the telephone survey of board presidents. Table 3.2 is a breakdown of the responses obtained in the telephone survey of school superintendents. Table 3.3 is a comparison of the results of the telephone survey of board presidents and superintendents. The tables may be found in Appendix D.

With the determination that the agenda does play an important part in the board-superintendent relationship, the decision was made to further investigate the question.

#### Response Categories

To insure as little overlap of the responses as possible, the respondents were asked to reply to nine questions in terms of relative importance as they pertained to the welfare of students in their district. A table of numerical values and statistical optimal scales for the expression of overlap developed by Bass, Cscio, and O'Connor (1974, pp. 313-20) was used to insure an overlap among

the four categories of less than 1 percent. The categories were: (1) of considerable importance, (2) of a moderate amount of importance, (3) of a slight amount of importance, and (4) of a trivial amount of importance.

The same table was used to develop the responses to the 20 board of education meeting agenda items. They also were developed to insure an overlap of less than 1 percent. The categories were: (1) completely, (2) almost completely, (3) to some extent, and (4) not at all.

#### Development of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into three parts and may be found in Appendix E. First, the researcher requested personal information about the board member or the superintendent. Second, the questionnaire dealt with the amount of relative importance various areas have as they pertain to the welfare of students in the respective school districts. Third, the respondents were asked to identify the amount of influence they had on the placement of actual board meeting agenda items on the agenda. The agenda items were taken from the actual agendas of each school district from the period of July 1, 1977, through December 31, 1977. Each item, except the routine items of board minute approval, payment of bills, and adjournment, was numbered. A table of random numbers was used to select 20 items from each set of agendas.



Administration of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were prepared for mailing along with an appropriate cover letter explaining to potential respondents the researcher's purpose in conducting the research (see Appendices B and C). The instrument was short in length in an attempt to obtain optimal returns. A return envelope with postage was provided. According to A. N. Oppenheim (1966),

The mailed questionnaire has advantages for survey research that include access to a population that may be widely distributed geographically and uniformity in the questionnaire and its instructions which usually provide better understanding by different groups of respondents (pp. 24-47).

The questionnaire was mailed during the week of February 13, 1978. A cut-off date for receiving usable replies was set as March 13. The decision was made not to do a follow-up mailing if the criteria for the study were attained by the cut-off date. By March 13, 107 usable questionnaires had been returned. Of those returned, 100 percent of the superintendents had returned theirs and at least three members of each board of education had responded. The response record is presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4.--Questionnaire response record.

Position	Number Sent	Number Returned	Usable N	%
Superintendents	18	18	18	100
Board presidents	18	16	16	89
Board vice-presidents	18	12	12	67
Board secretaries	18	17	17	94
Board treasurers	18	14	14	78
Board trustees	54	32	30	56
Total	<u>144</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>74</u>

### Description of Boards of Education

The composition of the boards of education involved in the study was important and since the information might prove valuable for future comparative studies, the following questions were included:

1. What is your present age?
  - Up to 25
  - 26 through 35
  - 36 through 45
  - 46 through 55
  - Over 55
  
2. I am a
  - Male
  - Female
  
3. How many years have you served on the board of education?
  - Up to 2
  - 3 through 5
  - 6 through 10
  - Over 10
  
4. What is your present position on the board?
  - President
  - Vice-President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Trustee
  
5. How did you become a board of education member?
  - Elected
  - Appointed

Evidence of the face validity of this study rested somewhat upon the proportionate distribution of responses made by various members of the board of education. This distribution was evidenced as follows:

1. Each board of education had one president out of seven members; hence, approximately 14 percent of the returns should have come from presidents.

2. Each board of education had one vice-president; hence, approximately 14 percent of the returns should have come from vice-presidents.

3. Each board of education had one secretary; hence, approximately 14 percent of the returns should have come from secretaries.

4. Each board of education had one treasurer; hence, approximately 14 percent of the returns should have come from treasurers.

5. Each board of education had three trustees. Trustees are normally the newer members of the board and possibly may not be as communicative as the older members. Approximately 44 percent of the returns should have come from trustees.

6. All board members' questionnaires were coded so all board members responding were accounted for.

#### Description of the Superintendents

The personal characteristics of the superintendents in the study were important and since the information might prove valuable for future comparative studies, the following questions were included:

1. What is your present age?
  - Up to 25
  - 26 through 35
  - 36 through 45
  - 46 through 55
  - Over 55
  
2. I am a
  - Male
  - Female

3. How many years have you been a superintendent of schools?       Up to 2  
 3 through 5  
 6 through 10  
 Over 10
4. What is your highest degree earned?       Bachelor  
 Masters  
 Specialist  
 Doctorate

#### Description of School District

In order to determine if there was a significant relationship between student enrollments and the frequency the superintendent meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items, the following question was included on the superintendent's questionnaire:

5. What is the student enrollment of your school district?       Less than 1000  
 1001 through 2500  
 2501 through 5000  
 5001 through 10000  
 Over 10,001

#### Frequency of Meeting to Discuss Agenda Items

In order to determine if there was a significant relationship between the size of a school district, the number of years an administrator has been a superintendent, and the degree held by the superintendent, the following question was asked of the superintendents and board members:

6. How frequently do you meet with individual board members/the superintendent to discuss agenda items?       Once or less per month  
 Twice per month  
 Three times per month  
 Four or more times per month

### Board-Superintendent Relationship

In order to determine what relationship, if any, there was between the board meeting agenda and the relations between the board members and the superintendent, the following question was included in the student welfare section of the questionnaire:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. How important is the agenda for board meetings in your relations with your board members/superintendent? | <input type="checkbox"/> Of considerable importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A moderate amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A slight amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A trivial amount of importance |
|---|--|

### Effects of the Sunshine Law

Since it was assumed that the Michigan Sunshine Law, which provides for all meetings of the board to be open, has had an effect on determining agenda items, the following question was included:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2. Has the Sunshine Law changed the relative importance in the determination of agenda items? | <input type="checkbox"/> Of considerable importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A moderate amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A slight amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A trivial amount of importance |
|---|--|

### Placement and Wording of Agenda Items

Since boards of education exist to serve the needs of the students in their district, it was important to determine the importance of the placement and wording of items on the agenda as they

related to what is trying to be accomplished for them. Therefore, the following question was included:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 3. Of what importance is the wording and placement of an item on the agenda in relation to what you are trying to accomplish for students? | <input type="checkbox"/> Of considerable importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A moderate amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A slight amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A trivial amount of importance |
|--|--|

#### Board-Superintendent Input

It was necessary to determine if board members and the superintendent felt that their personal input on agenda items was of importance. The following question was included to provide this information:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4. How important is your input in the wording and placement of items on the board meeting agenda? | <input type="checkbox"/> Of considerable importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A moderate amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A slight amount of importance<br><input type="checkbox"/> A trivial amount of importance |
|---|--|

#### Welfare of Students

It was considered important for board members and the superintendent to appraise the areas that were of importance as they worked together for the welfare of the students in their district. In order to determine the extent of their concern in various areas, the following question was included:

5. Of what relative importance are each of the following as they pertain to the welfare of students in your district?

- A. Evaluation of teachers
- ( ) Of considerable importance
  - ( ) A moderate amount of importance
  - ( ) A slight amount of importance
  - ( ) A trivial amount of importance
- B. Student discipline
- ( ) Of considerable importance
  - ( ) A moderate amount of importance
  - ( ) A slight amount of importance
  - ( ) A trivial amount of importance
- C. Construction of the board meeting agenda
- ( ) Of considerable importance
  - ( ) A moderate amount of importance
  - ( ) A slight amount of importance
  - ( ) A trivial amount of importance
- D. Negotiations
- ( ) Of considerable importance
  - ( ) A moderate amount of importance
  - ( ) A slight amount of importance
  - ( ) A trivial amount of importance
- E. Problem of school finance
- ( ) Of considerable importance
  - ( ) A moderate amount of importance
  - ( ) A slight amount of importance
  - ( ) A trivial amount of importance

### Hypotheses and Analysis of the Data

Eleven hypotheses were formulated prior to collecting the data for this study. In order to usefully draw inferences from the study, it was necessary that the hypotheses be tested. The data were analyzed at the Michigan State University Computer Center using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The researcher obtained assistance in the computer programming and the testing of the hypotheses from Dr. Fred Ignatovich of the College of Education at Michigan State University and William Brown of the Michigan State University Computer Center.

Crosstabs was chosen for the statistical analysis. According to Nie, Bent, and Hull (1970),

A crosstabulation is basically a joint frequency distribution of cases according to two or more classificatory variables. The display of the distribution of cases by their position on two or more variables is the component of contingency-table analysis and indeed the most commonly used analysis method in the social sciences (p. 116).

All hypotheses were tested at the .05 alpha level. A significance level of .70 or above was considered as indicating a significant relationship between the variables (Kaiser, 1962, pp. 155-62).

The analysis of the data for the purpose of examining the hypotheses was founded upon the assumptions adopted earlier:

- (1) that more than an adequate sampling of subjects was used and the sample size was a sufficient one from which to draw inferences,
- (2) that board members and superintendents would provide a true expression of their opinions, and
- (3) that the three-part



questionnaire would provide a detailed expression of the board members' and the superintendents' opinions.

#### Hypothesis Number One

Board members over 35 have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those 35 and under.

In response to the 20 board of education agenda meeting items for their school board meetings, it was predicted that there would be a significant difference in the amount of influence board members of different ages would have.

If the responses showed no significant difference in influence by board members over 35, the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses showed a significant difference in influence by board members over 35, the hypothesis was retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Two

Female board members have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than male board members.

If the responses by sex showed no significant difference in influence by female board members than male board members, the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses by sex showed a significant difference in influence by female board members than male board members, the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Three

Board members who have served on the board of education six or more years have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those with less than six years on the board.

If the responses showed no significant difference in influence by board members who have been on the board six or more years, then the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses showed a significant difference in influence by board members who have been on the board six or more years, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Four

The presidents of boards of education have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than other members of the board.

It was predicted that the person elected to the highest position on the board of education would have more influence on the placement of items on the board meeting agenda than any other member of the board.

If the responses showed no significant difference in influence by the board president than all other board members, then the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses showed a significant difference in influence by the board president than all other board members, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Five

There is no significant difference between the frequency board of education officers meet to discuss board meeting agenda items than trustees on the board.

Since the officers of the board comprise the majority of the board, it was predicted that they would have more influence on the placement of items on the board meeting agenda.

If the responses showed a significant difference in influence by the board officers than the trustees, then the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses showed no significant difference in the influence by the board officers than the trustees, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Six

Elected board members have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than appointed board members.

It was predicted that board members who were appointed would be more reserved and therefore would be less likely to have as much input on the board meeting agenda as those board members who were elected.

If the responses showed no significant difference in the influence by elected board members than those who were appointed, then the hypothesis was not retained.

If the responses showed a significant difference in the influence by elected board members than those who were appointed, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Seven

There is no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda.

If the responses showed no significant difference in the influence of age on the amount of influence on agenda items, then the hypothesis was retained.

If the responses showed a significant difference in the influence of age on the amount of influence on agenda items, then the hypothesis was not retained.

### Hypothesis Number Eight

There is no significant difference between the superintendents' influence on the placement of items on the agenda and board members' influence.

Question Number 1 was designed to test this hypothesis. It was predicted that the superintendents would have the most influence on the placement of items on the agenda. If this occurred, the hypothesis was not retained. If it did not occur, the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Nine

There is no significant relationship between the size of a school district and the frequency the superintendent meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

Questions Number 5 and 6 were designed to test this hypothesis. If superintendents and board members in the larger size school districts, those over 2501 students, met more frequently than those from districts under 2501, then the hypothesis was not retained. If this did not occur, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Ten

There is no significant relationship between the number of years an administrator has been a superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

If superintendents who have been a superintendent six or more years meet with board members more frequently than those with less than six years experience as a superintendent, then the hypothesis was not retained. If this did not occur, then the hypothesis was retained.

### Hypothesis Number Eleven

There is no significant relationship between the degree held by the superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

Question Number 4 was designed to test this hypothesis. If those superintendents with a degree beyond the Masters met more frequently with board members than those with a Masters, the hypothesis was not retained. If this did not occur, the hypothesis was retained.

### Summary

The population of the subjects in this study was comprised of those board members and superintendents who were in their respective positions in one intermediate school district at the time the study was conducted.

The instrumentation used in this study consisted of three parts. The first part included six questions that were used to gain information that described the board member responding,

described the superintendent responding, described the size of the school district and the frequency with which the superintendent and board members met to discuss board meeting agenda items.

The second part of the instrument consisted of nine questions designed to gain information on board member-superintendent relations, effects of the Sunshine Law, wording and placement of items on the agenda, and the importance of the evaluation of teachers, student discipline, construction of the board meeting agenda, negotiations, and the problem of school finance as they pertained to the welfare of students in the various districts.

The third part included 20 actual board meeting agenda items that appeared in each school district's agenda over a six-month period.

Inferences were drawn from the relationship of the specific and general factors as they were analyzed. A discussion of the field testing and administration of the survey instrument was included, and 11 hypotheses were formulated.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

#### Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the analysis of the data obtained in this study under the same headings as were presented in Chapter III: Population, Instrumentation, Hypotheses and Analysis of the Data, and Summary.

The researcher will also present specific data to either retain or not retain each hypothesis.

#### Population

In Chapter I the researcher described the procedural steps and methods utilized in obtaining the names of the superintendents and board of education members to be included in this study. As was indicated in Chapter III, questionnaires were sent to the 18 superintendents and the 126 board of education members. It was determined that for a district to be included in the analysis of the results it was necessary that a response be received from the superintendent and at least two board members. It was determined that a minimum of 94 responses would constitute an adequate sampling. Since each superintendent and at least three board members responded for a total of 107 responses, the minimum requirement for sampling of the cases was met.

There were 89 board members who responded with a completed questionnaire. Two questionnaires were returned but were not completed and were not used. A breakdown of responses was included in Chapter III in Table 3.4.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first requested personal information about the board members or the superintendent.

### Description of Boards of Education

It was of interest to know something of the composition of the boards of education included in the study. This need was predicated upon the possibility of future studies necessitating comparative information. Questions One, Two, Three, Four, and Five provided information regarding the composition of the boards. These questions were answered as follows:

1. What is your present age?

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Up to 25	0	0.0
26 through 35	8	9.0
36 through 45	46	51.7
46 through 55	22	24.7
Over 55	13	14.6

The greatest number (51.7 percent) of those board members who responded were in the 36 through 45 year age range. There were no board members in the 0-25 year age group.



2. I am a

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	69	77.5
Female	20	22.5

It was necessary for board members to indicate their sex. This information was necessary in order to determine if there is a difference in the influence board members have on the placement of items on the agenda by sex. It was found that the greatest number (77.5 percent) of members of boards of education were males.

3. How many years have you served on the board of education?

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Up to 2	22	24.7
3 through 5	28	31.5
6 through 10	27	30.3
Over 10	12	13.5

The greatest number (31.5 percent) of board members had served on the board of education from three to five years. A total of 61.8 percent had served from three to ten years.

4. What is your present position on the board?

(16)	President
(12)	Vice-president
(17)	Secretary
(14)	Treasurer
(30)	Trustee

Evidence of the face validity of this study rested somewhat upon the distribution of responses by various members of the boards of education. It was presumed that a necessary balance of responses of a typical board of education should be required. The data were also necessary to make comparisons of the influence different board members in different positions would have on placing items on the

board meeting agenda. Question Number Four provided the data for this analysis. Estimates as explained in Chapter III are compared with the responses received in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.--How board members responded to the questionnaire by board position--estimates compared with actual.

Office	Percent Responses		Acceptable
	Presumed	Actual	
Presidents	14	18.0	Yes
Vice-Presidents	14	13.5	Yes
Secretaries	14	19.1	Yes
Treasurers	14	15.7	Yes
Trustees	<u>44</u>	<u>33.7</u>	Yes
Total	100%	100.0%	

5. How did you become a board of education member?

<u>How</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Elected	81	92
Appointed	7	8

One board member did not respond to this question. The greatest number (92 percent) of board members were elected to their position. Caution was used in drawing conclusions because of the small number of appointed board members. This information was needed to make a comparison between the influence of elected and appointed board members on the placement of items on the agenda.

### Description of the Superintendents

The personal characteristics of the superintendents in the study were needed in making comparisons of influence on board agenda items by different characteristics. Questions One, Two, Three, and Four on the superintendents' questionnaire provided this information. These questions were answered as follows:

1. What is your present age?

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Up to 25	0	0
26 through 35	0	0
36 through 45	7	39
46 through 55	6	33
Over 55	5	28

The greatest number (39 percent) of superintendents were in the 36 to 45 age range. There were no superintendents whose age was below 35.

2. I am a male/female?

One hundred percent of the superintendents were male.

3. How many years have you been a superintendent?

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Up to 2	5	27.8
3 through 5	3	16.7
6 through 10	2	11.1
Over 10	8	44.4

The greatest number (44.4 percent) have been a superintendent over ten years. Over half (55.5 percent) have been a superintendent of schools for six or more years. This information was necessary to determine if the number of years an administrator has been a

superintendent has a relationship with his influence on board meeting agenda items.

4. What is your highest degree earned?

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Bachelor	0	0.0
Masters	8	44.4
Specialist	5	27.8
Doctorate	5	27.8

The greatest number (44.4 percent) in any degree category were found to have a Masters degree. The majority of superintendents (55.6 percent) have a degree above the Masters degree. This information was needed to determine if there is a relationship between the degree a superintendent has and his influence on the placement of items on the board meeting agenda.

Description of School District

Enrollments of the school districts were needed in order to determine if there was a relationship between student enrollments and the frequency the superintendent meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items. Question Number Five was included to obtain this information. The question was responded to as follows:

5. What is the student enrollment of your school district?

<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than 1000	0	0.0
1001 to 2500	7	38.9
2501 to 5000	8	44.4
5001 to 10000	3	16.7
Over 10000	0	0.0

The greatest number (44.4 percent) of the school districts were in the 2501 to 5000 enrollment range. There were no school districts with enrollments of less than 1000 or over 10000 students.

Frequency of Meeting to  
Discuss Agenda Items

The frequency with which superintendents and board members meet to discuss board meeting agenda items was considered necessary to determine if there was a relationship between the size of a school district, the number of years an administrator has been a superintendent, and the degree held by the superintendent. Question Number Six for both the superintendents and board members provided the data for this analysis. Responses received are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.--Frequency distribution of meetings of superintendents and board members.

Frequency	Board Members		Superintendents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Once or less per month	58	65.9	5	27.8
Twice per month	24	27.3	7	38.9
Three times per month	1	1.1	2	11.1
Four or more times per month	<u>5</u>	<u>5.7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>22.2</u>
Total	88	100.0	18	100.0

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the amount of relative importance various areas have as they pertain to the welfare of students in the respective school districts. Table 4.3 compares the mean and the standard deviation of superintendents and board members on the nine areas they responded to. Their combined responses are also presented.

Table 4.3.--A comparison of means and standard deviations of board members and superintendents on the nine areas of importance to the welfare of students, as identified in part two of the questionnaire.

Area of Importance	Superintendents		Board Members		Combined Superintendents-Board Members	
	(N = 18)		(N = 89)		(N = 107)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	1.39	.70	1.58	.84	1.55	.82
2	3.11	.96	2.87	1.07	2.91	1.05
3	1.94	.87	2.20	1.20	2.15	1.56
4	1.28	.46	2.63	1.05	2.40	1.10
5	1.33	.77	1.16	.37	1.19	.46
6	1.33	.59	1.19	.47	1.22	.50
7	2.06	.87	2.21	.92	2.19	.91
8	1.33	.49	1.53	.72	1.50	.69
9	1.11	.32	1.24	.50	1.22	.48

The rating of importance portion of the questionnaire provided board members and superintendents with an opportunity to appraise what they believed was important as they worked together for the welfare of students. Each of the nine questions asked provided for a rating scale from one to four. One represented of considerable

importance, two represented a moderate amount of importance, three represented a slight amount of importance, and four represented a trivial amount of importance. A mean of the responses of all board members responding and a mean for all superintendents responding was computed. The percentage distribution of the responses to each of the nine questions is provided in Tables 4.4 through 4.12.

Table 4.4 indicates that the greatest number (72.2 percent) of superintendents and the greatest number (59.6 percent) of board members believe the agenda is of considerable importance in their relations with each other.

Table 4.4.--Importance of board meeting agenda in relations with board members/superintendents by percentage of responses.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	13	72.2	53	59.6
2	33	16.7	24	27.0
3	2	11.1	8	9.0
4	0	0.0	4	4.5

- <sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.5 indicates that the greatest number (44.4 percent) of superintendents and the greatest number (32.6 percent) of board members believe the Sunshine Law is of a slight amount of importance. Over half (83.3 percent) of the superintendents and over half

(58.4 percent) of the board members rated it as of slight or of trivial importance.

Table 4.5.--Rating of importance of Sunshine Law.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	2	11.1	10	11.2
2	1	5.6	23	25.8
3	8	44.4	29	32.6
4	7	38.9	23	25.8

- <sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.6 indicates that the greatest number (44.4 percent) of the superintendents believe the placement and wording of agenda items is of moderate importance. The greatest number (38.2 percent) of board members believe the placement and wording of items on the agenda is of considerable importance. Over half (77.7 percent) of the superintendents and over half (65.2 percent) of the board members rated it as of moderate importance or above.

Table 4.7 indicates that a large (72.2 percent) number of the superintendents believe their input is of considerable importance. The greatest number of board members (39.5 percent) believe their input is of moderate importance. The majority (51.7 percent) of the board members believe their input is of slight or trivial



importance, while 100 percent of the superintendents believe their input is of moderate or of considerable importance.

Table 4.6.--Rating of placement and wording of agenda items.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	6	33.3	34	38.2
2	8	44.4	24	27.0
3	3	16.7	14	15.7
4	1	5.6	14	15.7

<sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.7.--Rating of board-superintendent input.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	13	72.2	14	15.7
2	5	27.8	28	31.5
3	0	0.0	25	28.1
4	0	0.0	21	23.6

<sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.8 indicates that the greatest number (77.8 percent) of the superintendents believe the evaluation of teachers is of considerable importance. The greatest number (84.3 percent) of the board members believe this also. The board members rated this the highest of all nine areas they were asked to respond to, with 100 percent of them placing this at the moderate or at the considerable importance level.

Table 4.8.--Rating of welfare of students/evaluation of teachers.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	14	77.8	75	84.3
2	3	16.7	14	15.7
3	0	0.0	0	0.0
4	1	5.6	0	0.0

- <sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.9 indicates that the greatest number (72.2 percent) of the superintendents believe student discipline is of considerable importance. The greatest number (84.3 percent) of the board members believe this to be of considerable importance.

Table 4.10 indicates the greatest number (44.4 percent) of the superintendents believe the construction of the board meeting agenda is of a moderate amount of importance. The greatest number

(40.4 percent) of the board members believe the construction of the board meeting agenda to be of moderate importance. The majority (72.2 percent) of superintendents and the majority (64 percent) of board members believe the construction of the agenda to be of moderate or of considerable importance.

Table 4.9.--Rating of welfare of students/student discipline.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	13	72.2	75	84.3
2	4	22.2	11	12.4
3	1	5.6	3	3.4
4	0	0.0	0	0.0

<sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.10.--Rating of welfare of students/construction of the board meeting agenda.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	5	27.8	21	23.6
2	8	44.4	36	40.4
3	4	22.2	25	28.1
4	1	5.6	6	6.7

<sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.11 indicates that the greatest number (66.7 percent) of the superintendents believe negotiations is of considerable importance. The greatest number (59.6 percent) of board members believe negotiations to be of considerable importance. All (100 percent) of the superintendents and a majority (88.8 percent) of the board members believe negotiations is of moderate or of considerable importance.

Table 4.11.--Rating of welfare of students/negotiations.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	12	66.7	53	59.6
2	6	33.3	26	29.2
3	0	0.0	9	10.1
4	0	0.0	1	1.1

- <sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

Table 4.12 indicates that the greatest number (88.9 percent) of the superintendents believe the problem of school finance is of considerable importance. The greatest number (79.8 percent) of the board members believe this to be of considerable importance.

The problem of school finance was rated the highest (88.9 percent) of all areas by the superintendents. The lowest (44.4

percent) area of importance rated by the superintendents was the Sunshine Law.

The board of education members rated two areas the same (84.3 percent) in the amount of importance. The areas of evaluation of teachers and student discipline were of their greatest importance.

Table 4.12.--Rating of welfare of students/problem of school finance.

Rating <sup>a</sup>	Superintendents		Board Members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	16	88.9	71	79.8
2	2	11.1	15	16.9
3	0	0.0	3	3.4
4	0	0.0	0	0.0

- <sup>a</sup>1 = Of considerable importance  
 2 = A moderate amount of importance  
 3 = A slight amount of importance  
 4 = A trivial amount of importance

#### Agenda Item Influence

The last section of the questionnaire, as detailed in Chapter III, consisted of 20 items taken from each board of education's agenda over a six-month period. Board members and the superintendent were asked in each school district to rate the amount of influence they believed they had in placing each item on the agenda. The rating scale for the items was from one to four. One represented completely; two represented almost completely; three represented to

some extent, and four represented not at all. The rating, therefore, ran from complete responsibility for the placement of an item on the agenda to no responsibility for the item appearing on the agenda.

Table 4.13 indicates the specific areas by the amount of influence checked by board members on their 20 agenda items. Cross-tabulations provided the data.

Table 4.13.--A comparison of the percentage of responses of board of education members by categories on agenda item influence (N = 89).

Categories	Completely	Almost Completely	To Some Extent	Not At All
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
35 and under	5.6	4.3	39.1	50.9
Over 35	7.0	9.6	33.3	50.1
Male	6.4	10.4	36.2	47.0
Female	6.7	5.1	26.4	61.8
Up to six years on board	3.4	6.4	35.3	54.9
Six or more years on board	10.7	12.0	32.5	44.8
Presidents	8.9	9.5	38.4	43.2
Other board members	6.0	9.1	33.0	51.9
Elected	5.5	8.9	34.7	50.9
Appointed	15.6	12.8	26.2	45.4

There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items of those board members over 35 than those members who were 35 or under.

There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by female board members over male members.

There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by board members who had been on the board six or more years over those who had been on the board for less than six years.

There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by board presidents than other members of the board.

In the overall influence of elected board members, there was no significant difference between them and appointed board members. In one category, of considerable importance, there was a significant difference of the appointed board members over the elected board members.

Table 4.14 presents the frequency with which officers of the board in comparison to trustees of the board meet with the superintendent to discuss board meeting agenda items. It indicates there is no significant difference between the frequency board officers meet with the superintendent and the frequency trustees meet with the superintendent.

Table 4.14.--A comparison of the frequency board officers and trustees meet with the superintendent on agenda items.

Position	<u>Once</u> Percent	<u>Twice</u> Percent	<u>Three</u> Percent	<u>Four or More</u> Percent
Officers	61.0	30.5	1.7	6.8
Trustees	75.9	20.7	0.0	3.4

Table 4.15 presents the frequency superintendents meet with board members to discuss agenda items by size of school district. It indicates there is a significant difference in the frequency that small (enrollment of 1001 to 2500) district superintendents meet with boards over larger (2501 to 10000) school district superintendents. The smaller districts meet more frequently.

Table 4.15.--A comparison of the frequency superintendents meet with board members by size of school district.

Enrollment	<u>Once</u> Percent	<u>Twice</u> Percent	<u>Three</u> Percent	<u>Four or More</u> Percent
1001 to 2500	14.3	28.6	28.6	28.6
2501 to 5000	37.5	50.0	0.0	12.5
5001 to 10000	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3

Table 4.16 presents the frequency superintendents meet with board members to discuss agenda items by the degree which the superintendent holds. It indicates there is no significant difference in the frequency superintendents meet with board members and the degree they hold.

Table 4.17 indicates the influence superintendents and board members have on the placement of items on the agenda by age groups. It indicates there is no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendents on the influence they have on placing items on the board meeting agenda.



Table 4.16.--A comparison of the frequency board members meet with the superintendent by degree.

Degree	<u>Once</u> Percent	<u>Twice</u> Percent	<u>Three</u> Percent	<u>Four or More</u> Percent
Masters	25.0	37.5	12.5	25.0
Specialist	40.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Doctorate	20.0	60.0	0.0	20.0

Table 4.17.--A comparison of the influence on agenda items of superintendents and board members by age.

Age	<u>Completely</u> Percent	<u>Almost Completely</u> Percent	<u>Slight</u> Percent	<u>Trivial</u> Percent
<u>26 to 35</u>				
Board	5.0	4.3	39.4	51.3
Superintendent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<u>36 to 45</u>				
Board	2.3	8.6	32.6	56.5
Superintendent	46.8	18.0	29.5	5.7
<u>46 to 55</u>				
Board	11.9	11.4	35.6	41.1
Superintendent	24.2	40.0	32.5	3.3
<u>Over 55</u>				
Board	13.4	10.5	32.8	43.3
Superintendent	44.0	27.0	22.0	7.0

Table 4.18 indicates the influence superintendents and board members had on the placement of items on the board meeting agendas. It indicates there is a significant difference between the superintendents' influence on the placement of items on the agenda and board members' influence. A comparison between the means of the superintendents and board members on all 20 agenda items shows a difference of 1.04. Although the agenda items are from 18 different school districts, there is a significant difference in the influence superintendents have over the influence board members have on placing items on the agenda.

Table 4.18.--A comparison of the influence on agenda items by superintendents and board members.

Agenda Item	Superintendents (N = 18)		Board Members (N = 89)		Combined (N = 107)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	1.94	1.01	3.57	.80	3.30	1.04
2	2.00	.91	3.30	.87	3.01	1.00
3	1.78	.88	3.11	1.04	2.89	1.13
4	2.11	.83	3.40	.81	3.19	.94
5	1.83	.92	3.33	.94	3.74	1.09
6	2.00	.97	3.42	.82	3.18	1.00
7	2.00	.97	3.28	.94	3.07	1.06
8	2.28	.96	3.34	.92	3.16	1.00
9	2.28	.83	3.29	.94	3.12	1.00
10	2.06	1.16	3.33	.89	3.11	1.05
11	2.00	1.08	3.26	.89	3.05	1.03
12	2.28	.96	3.34	.98	3.16	1.05
13	2.22	.88	3.26	.92	3.08	.99
14	2.00	.91	3.24	.93	3.03	1.03
15	2.17	1.10	3.31	.89	3.12	1.02
16	1.83	.92	3.31	.92	3.07	1.08
17	1.94	1.00	3.33	.97	3.09	1.10
18	1.83	.99	3.30	.87	3.06	1.04
19	1.72	.83	3.35	.84	3.07	1.03
20	2.00	1.03	3.30	.92	3.08	1.06

Table 4.19 indicates the frequency the superintendent meets with board members in relationship to the number of years experience the superintendent has. It indicates there is a significant difference between the frequency which superintendents with six or more years of experience meet with board members to discuss meeting agenda items over those with less than six years experience. The superintendents with six or more years of experience meet more frequently with board members.

Table 4.19.--A comparison of the frequency the superintendent meets with board members and the number of years as a superintendent.

Years	Percent Who Met Once	Percent Who Met Twice	Percent Who Met Three	Percent Who Met Four or More
0 to 2	20.0	40.0	0.0	40.0
3 to 5	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
6 to 10	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0
Over 10	37.5	37.5	12.5	12.5

#### Hypotheses and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of board of education members and the role of the superintendent of schools in establishing board of education meeting agenda items. In order to accomplish that objective, 11 hypotheses were tested and the results are discussed on the following pages.

### Hypothesis Number One

Board members over 35 have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those 35 and under.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the amount of influence board members of different ages would have.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was no significant difference in the amount of influence on agenda items by age. Table 4.13 provides this evidence. In both age categories, over 50 percent (50.9 percent for those 35 and under and 50.1 percent for those over 35) of the time they believed they had no input at all on the agenda items.

Hypothesis Number One--Not Retained.

### Hypothesis Number Two

Female board members have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than male board members.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the influence of female board members on the placement of items on the agenda over the male board members' influence.

If the responses by sex showed no significant difference in influence by female board members, then the hypothesis was not retained. In the analysis of the data in Table 4.13, evidence is provided that there was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by female board members over male board members. On

61.8 percent of the agenda items the female board members responded that they had no input at all.

Hypothesis Number Two--Not Retained.

### Hypothesis Number Three

Board members who have served on the board of education six or more years have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those with less than six years on the board.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in influence by board members who have been on the board six or more years. Question Number Three along with the responses to their influence on the board meeting agenda items were used in the analysis of this hypothesis.

If the responses by years of service on the board of education showed no significant difference in influence by members who have been on the board six or more years, then the hypothesis was not retained.

Table 4.13 provides the evidence that there was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by board members who had been on the board six or more years over those who had been on the board for less than six years.

Hypothesis Number Three--Not Retained.

### Hypothesis Number Four

The presidents of boards of education have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than other members of the board.

It was necessary to tabulate the responses for the board presidents separately from all other board members on their influence on the board meeting agenda items.

It was predicted that the person elected to the highest position on the board would have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the board meeting agenda than the other members of the board. Table 4.13 provides the evidence that there was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by the board president than all other board members.

Hypothesis Number Four--Not Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Five

There is no significant difference between the frequency board of education officers meet to discuss board meeting agenda items than trustees on the board.

The responses to Questions Number Four and Six on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference between the responses of the board officers and the trustees.

Since the officers of the board comprise the majority of the board, it was predicted that they would meet more frequently with the superintendent on agenda items than the trustees of the board.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was no significant difference between the frequency board of education officers met to discuss board meeting agenda items with the

superintendent than the trustees on the board. Table 4.14 provides this evidence.

Hypothesis Number Five--Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Six

Elected board members have significantly more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than appointed board members.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the amount of influence elected board members would have over board members who were appointed.

The responses to Question Number Five on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference between the amount of influence elected board members and appointed board members had on the placement of items on the agenda.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was no significant difference in the influence that elected board members had on the placement of items on the agenda over those board members who were appointed. Table 4.13 provides this evidence.

Hypothesis Number Six--Not Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Seven

There is no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the

superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the board meeting agenda.

The responses to Question Number One on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference in the influence board members and the superintendent had at different age levels.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda. Table 4.17 provides this evidence.

Hypothesis Number Seven--Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Eight

There is no significant difference between the superintendents' influence on the placement of items on the agenda and board members' influence.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the amount of influence superintendents would have over board of education members on the placement of items on the board meeting agenda.

The mean ratings for all 20 of the agenda items were presented in Table 4.18. Individual group means, and the grand mean for all respondents (N = 107), were presented.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that the mean score for the superintendents on each item was less than the mean score for the board of education members. Therefore the evidence indicates that there is a significant difference in the influence that



superintendents have in the placement of items on the agenda over the influence that board members have.

It was predicted that the superintendents would have the most influence on the placement of items on the agenda. Since this occurred, the hypothesis was not retained.

Hypothesis Number Eight--Not Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Nine

There is no significant relationship between the size of a school district and the frequency the superintendent meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the frequency superintendents in the larger (enrollment of 2501 to 10000) school districts meet with board members to discuss agenda items than the frequency small (enrollment 1001 to 2500) district superintendents meet with their board members.

The responses to Question Number Six on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference in the frequency superintendents of different sized school districts met to discuss board meeting agenda items with board members.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was a significant difference in the frequency that superintendents meet with board members in larger sized school districts over those in smaller districts. If superintendent and board members met more frequently in one sized district over the other, the hypothesis was

not retained. Since this occurred, the hypothesis was not retained. Table 4.15 provides this evidence.

Hypothesis Number Nine--Not Retained.

#### Hypothesis Number Ten

There is no significant relationship between the number of years an administrator has been a superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the frequency superintendents who had been superintendents for six or more years would meet with board members than those who had been a superintendent for less than six years.

The responses to Questions Number Three and Six on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference in the frequency superintendents with six or more years of experience met with the board members over those with less than six years experience.

Analysis of the data provided evidence that there was a significant difference in the frequency that superintendents with six or more years of experience met with board members over those with less than six years experience. If superintendents with six or more years experience met more frequently, then the hypothesis was not retained. Since this occurred, the hypothesis was not retained. Table 4.19 provides this evidence.

Hypothesis Number Ten--Not Retained.

### Hypothesis Number Eleven

There is no significant relationship between the degree held by the superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the frequency superintendents with a degree beyond the Masters meet with board members than those who did not hold a degree above a Masters.

The responses to Questions Number Four and Six on the first part of the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there was a significant difference between the frequency superintendents with degrees above a Masters meet with board members to discuss board agenda items than those superintendents without a degree above a Masters.

If those superintendents with a degree beyond the Masters met more frequently than those with a Masters, the hypothesis was not retained.

Table 4.16 indicates the frequency superintendents with various degrees meet with board members to discuss board meeting agenda items. Analysis of the data indicates there is no significant relationship between the degree held by the superintendent and the frequency he meets with individual board members to discuss agenda items.

Hypothesis Number Eleven--Retained.

### Summary of the Hypotheses

Eight of the hypotheses were not retained and three were retained in the analysis of the data.

#### Hypothesis Number One--Not Retained

Board members over 35 do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those 35 and under.

#### Hypothesis Number Two--Not Retained

Female board members do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than male board members.

#### Hypothesis Number Three--Not Retained

Board members who have served on the board for six or more years do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than those with less than six years experience.

#### Hypothesis Number Four--Not Retained

Presidents of boards of education do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda than other board members.

#### Hypothesis Number Five--Retained

Board officers do not meet more frequently with the superintendent than trustees of the board.

#### Hypothesis Number Six--Not Retained

Elected board members do not have more influence on the placement of items on the agenda over the appointed members.

Hypothesis Number Seven--Retained

There is no significant relationship between the age of board members and the age of the superintendent on the influence they have on placing items on the agenda.

Hypothesis Number Eight--Not Retained

Superintendents have more influence than board members on the placement of items on the agenda.

Hypothesis Number Nine--Not Retained

Superintendents in the smaller school districts meet more frequently with board members than those in larger districts.

Hypothesis Number Ten--Not Retained

Superintendents with six or more years experience meet more frequently with board members than those with less than six years experience.

Hypothesis Number Eleven--Retained

Superintendents with degrees beyond the Masters do not meet with board members to discuss agenda items more frequently than those with a Masters degree.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the analysis and findings of the data collected from 18 superintendents and 126 board of education members who were contacted. Of the 18 superintendents who were contacted, 18 responded for a 100 percent return. Of the 126 board of education

members contacted, 89 usable returns were received. This represents a return of 71 percent of the potential.

Eleven hypotheses were tested by employing crosstabulations for significant differences. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10 were not retained, while Hypotheses 5, 7, and 11 were retained.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Summary

The researcher's purpose in this research was to determine the role of board of education members and the role of the superintendent of schools in establishing board of education meeting agenda items in selected Michigan school districts. The researcher sought to ascertain who influenced and who was responsible for issues being placed on the board meeting agenda, and to develop a modelling process for agenda construction.

The names and addresses of the superintendents and board members in the intermediate school district selected for the study were obtained from the office of the intermediate school district superintendent. These superintendents and board members were the source of information for the study.

A research instrument was used which requested answers to specific questions and also included 20 agenda items taken from the actual agendas of each school district from the period of July 1, 1977, through December 31, 1977.

Three basic assumptions were employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The assumptions were: (1) that more than an adequate sampling of subjects was used and the sample size was a

sufficient one from which to draw inferences, (2) that board members and superintendents would provide a true expression of their opinions, and (3) that the three-part questionnaire would provide a detailed expression of the board members' and the superintendents' opinions.

### Findings

The findings of this study were clearly viewed by an examination of the tabulation of responses to the three-part questionnaire. Tabulation of the responses received to the questions in Part I of the questionnaire revealed the following:

1. The greatest number of those board members who were serving on the board of education at the time of the study were in the 36 through 45 age range.
2. The greatest number of board members are male.
3. The greatest number of board members have served on the board of education three or more years.
4. Predicted responses of board members by position provided evidence of face validity of the study.
5. The greatest number of board members have been elected to their position on the board.
6. The greatest number of superintendents at the time of the study were in the 36 through 45 age range.
7. All the superintendents were male.
8. The greatest number of superintendents have been a superintendent of schools for over ten years.



9. The majority of superintendents hold a degree above the Masters.

10. The greatest number of superintendents held their positions in school districts with enrollments of 2501 to 5000 students.

11. The greatest number of board members meet only once or less per month with the superintendent to discuss agenda items.

12. The greatest number of superintendents meet twice per month with various board members to discuss agenda items.

Tabulation of the responses received to the questions in Part II of the questionnaire revealed the following:

1. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe the agenda is of considerable importance in their relations with each other.

2. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe the Sunshine Law is of a slight amount of importance in the determination of agenda items.

3. The greatest number of superintendents believe the placement and wording of agenda items is of moderate importance.

4. The greatest number of board members believe the placement and wording of agenda items is of considerable importance.

5. The greatest number of superintendents believe their input on agenda items is of considerable importance.

6. The greatest number of board members believe their input on agenda items is of moderate importance.

7. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe the evaluation of teachers is of considerable importance.

8. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe student discipline is of considerable importance.

9. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe the construction of the board meeting agenda is of moderate importance.

10. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe negotiations is of considerable importance.

11. The greatest number of superintendents and board members believe the problem of school finance is of considerable importance.

Tabulation of the responses received to the amount of influence superintendents and board members had on placing 20 items on board meeting agendas over the six-month period of July 1, 1977, through December 31, 1977, revealed the following:

1. There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items of those board members over 35 than those who were 35 or under.

2. There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by female board members over male board members.

3. There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by board members who had been on the board six or more years over those who had been on the board for less than six years.

4. There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by board presidents than other members of the board.

5. There was no significant difference in influence on agenda items by elected board members over appointed members.

6. There was no significant difference in the frequency board officers meet with the superintendent to discuss agenda items and the frequency trustees meet with the superintendent.

7. There was a significant difference in the frequency smaller district superintendents meet with board members over larger school district superintendents. The smaller districts meet more frequently.

8. There was no significant difference in the frequency superintendents meet with board members to discuss agenda items and the degree they hold.

9. There was no significant difference in the influence superintendents and board members have on the placement of items on the agenda in relation to their ages.

10. There was a significant difference in the frequency superintendents with six or more years of experience meet with board members to discuss agenda items. Those with six or more years experience meet more frequently.

11. There was a significant difference in the influence that superintendents have over board members in the placing of items on the board meeting agenda. The superintendents have more influence.

### Conclusions

Even though narrow in scope, the findings of this study have important implications, not only for the groups sampled in the study but also for other school district superintendents and board of education members. If the role of the superintendent and the role

of the board of education members in agenda construction are recognized as important, then a coordinated effort should be undertaken to overcome any lack of convergence between the professionals charged with implementing policy and board of education members who set policy. The researcher in this chapter, under a section entitled "Observations," will present a modelling process for agenda construction. The following conclusions are based upon the evidence obtained in this study. The inference is made that if the data are valid for those superintendents and board members included in this study, the data are also valid for other Michigan school district superintendents and boards.

1. The agenda is important in the superintendent-board member relationship

The data indicate that 88.9 percent of the superintendents and 86.6 percent of the board members considered the relationship with each other to be of moderate or considerable importance. Only 4.5 percent of the board members considered it to be of trivial importance.

2. The Sunshine Law has not changed the relative importance in determining agenda items.

The data indicate that 83.3 percent of the superintendents and 58.4 percent of the board members indicated that the Sunshine Law had a slight or trivial effect in changing agenda items. Only 11.1 percent of the superintendents and 11.2 percent of the board members indicated that the law was of considerable importance in determining agenda items.

3. The wording and placement of items on the agenda is important in what superintendents and board members are trying to accomplish for students.

The data indicated that 77.7 percent of the superintendents and 65.2 percent of the board members indicated that the wording and placement of items on the agenda was of moderate or considerable importance as they relate to the welfare of students. Only 1 superintendent and 14 board members indicated it was of trivial importance.

4. The superintendent's input on agenda items is of more importance than the board members' input.

The data indicated that 72.2 percent of the superintendents indicated their input on agenda items was of considerable importance. Only 15.7 percent of the board members indicated their input was of considerable importance. The majority of board members (51.7 percent) indicated their input was of slight or trivial importance.

5. The evaluation of teachers is the area of greatest importance to board members.

The data indicate that 77.8 percent of the superintendents and 84.3 percent of the board members indicated the evaluation of teachers is of considerable importance. This area was rated the highest of all areas by the board members. None of the board members and only one superintendent indicated that this area was less than considerable or of moderate importance.

6. Student discipline is of considerable importance to superintendents and board members.

The data indicate that 94.4 percent of the superintendents and 96.7 percent of the board members indicated that student

discipline is of moderate or considerable importance. Only one superintendent and three board members indicated student discipline was of slight importance.

7. Construction of the board of education meeting agenda is important to superintendents and board members.

The data indicate that 72.2 percent of the superintendents and 64.0 percent of the board members indicated that the construction of the board meeting agenda is of moderate or considerable importance. One superintendent and six board members indicated it was of trivial importance.

8. Negotiations is important to superintendents and board of education members.

The data indicate that 100 percent of the superintendents and 88.8 percent of the board members indicated negotiations is of moderate or considerable importance. Only one board member indicated it was of trivial importance.

9. The problem of school finance is of considerable importance to superintendents and board members.

The data indicate that 100 percent of the superintendents and 96.7 percent of the board members indicated that the problem of school finance is of moderate or considerable importance. This area was rated the highest by the superintendents, with 88.9 percent indicating it was of considerable importance. None of the board members indicated the problem of school finance was of trivial importance and only three board members indicated it was of slight importance.

### Observations and Reflections

In the preparation of the last part of the questionnaire, the researcher examined over 100 different agendas from the 18 different school districts. This was necessary to obtain the 20 agenda items that superintendents and board members would reflect their influence on. It became evident to the researcher that the agendas were not all alike. They varied in format and in the amount of information that was included on the actual agenda. Supporting documents for the various agenda items were not requested from the superintendents who furnished the agendas to the researcher.

When examining the data returned by individual school districts, the researcher noted that in one district on one agenda item all respondents had replied that they were completely responsible for that particular item being placed on the agenda. It became evident to the researcher that participatory democracy must take place in the decision to place an item on the agenda. Board members must know they have an important function in determining what will be discussed at their meetings.

### Implications

The researcher concluded from this research that the agenda is an important aspect of the school superintendent-board member relationship and therefore presents the following observations on how an agenda should be constructed and an illustration of a model agenda. (See Appendix F.)

The following suggestions are made for the agenda modelling process:

1. The superintendent should develop file folders, which preferably are kept in a vertical file drawer of the superintendent's desk, for each month of the year.

2. The superintendent should place a list of perennial items in each of the appropriate months' folders. An example would be a list of those items and resolutions that are needed for the July reorganization meeting.

3. Develop with the administrative staff a system of deadline dates for items to be included in the agenda. If board of education regular meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, require reports for the board agenda to be in the superintendent's office by 9:00 A.M. on the first Monday of the month.

4. Develop with the board of education, policies and by-laws for board meetings. Include the format for the agenda and a provision for the superintendent to meet with the board president prior to each board meeting. Preferably this should be one week prior to the board meeting.

5. Prepare a written list of board meeting agenda items and go over the items one week prior to the board meeting with the board president. It will help him in leading the discussion on items to be presented and will help the superintendent in anticipating questions that may arise.

6. Develop a system of using a board bulletin each week to keep board members informed on the day-to-day operations of the



school as well as serving to remind board members of items that will be appearing on future agendas.

7. The agenda for a board meeting on a Monday should be mailed from the superintendent's office on the Wednesday before the meeting. This will provide four days for board members to request any clarification or additional material they may need for making a decision on any agenda item. Agendas should be mailed to all news media.

8. An identical agenda and supporting documents should be prepared for the actual board meeting and placed in a three-inch three-ring notebook. The notebook should contain dividers by months for each reference by board members to previous action by the board. Any additions to the agenda after the date on which the agenda has been mailed should be printed on a different colored paper to signal to all board members that it is additional information.

9. Prepare more than sufficient copies of the agenda items to distribute to all board meeting visitors.

10. Immediately following the agenda item list should be the recommendation of the superintendent to the board. Each item should be numbered to correspond with the item on the agenda.

11. Provide in the agenda format for the following:

a. Provide for audience response early in the meeting (preferably right after the roll call).

b. Adoption of the agenda for the meeting with all additions added from board members and members of the audience. (This should

be done after an invitation to the audience for items they may have.)

c. Provide for a coffee break after no more than an hour and a half after the meeting has begun.

d. Include a summary and total of bills payable.

e. Provide for reports from standing committees.

f. Provide for items of information that do not require action near the end of the agenda.

g. As the last item on the agenda before adjournment, request items from board members for the next meeting's agenda.

12. Immediately following the board meeting the superintendent should prepare a "board meeting brief" to be distributed to all employees informing them of the action that took place at the board meeting. This should also be sent to all news media.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were listed for further research and investigation:

1. Research is necessary to determine what institutions of higher education are doing to prepare superintendents to fulfill their responsibilities in construction of the board meeting agenda.

2. Research is necessary to determine what school board associations are doing to prepare board of education members for their responsibility in board agenda construction.

3. Research is necessary to determine the influence negotiating units in a school district have on the input on agenda items.

4. Research is necessary to determine if superintendents and board members in school districts of over 10,000 students experience the same influence on agenda items as those in this study.

5. Replicate the present study with other Michigan school districts on a random sample basis. Further research in Michigan will amplify the findings of this study.

6. Replicate the present study in a state where formal negotiations do not take place to determine whether or not such factors as area and negotiations vary in the effect they have on agenda construction in different parts of the United States.

## APPENDICES

## PREFACE TO APPENDICES

The agenda items in the questionnaire in Appendix C are an example from one school district in the study. The items were taken from each school district's board of education meeting agendas over a six-month period. Therefore there were 18 separate questionnaires for this part of the study. The questionnaire was developed by using a table of random numbers to select 20 agenda items from each school district. These were sent to the 18 superintendents and the 126 board members. The number of board meeting agenda items over the six-month period ranged from a low of 59 to a high of 220 items.

The tables in Appendix D indicate the responses to the pilot telephone survey of 11 superintendents and their board of education presidents. With the results of the survey the researcher determined that the agenda does play an important part in the board-superintendent relationship, and therefore the decision was made to further investigate the question.

**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FROM THE INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FROM THE INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT



ent intermediate school district

Albert L. Deal, Superintendent

December 16, 1977

Mr. Harold E. Whipple  
6453 Broadmoor, S.E.  
Caledonia, MI 49316

Dear Bud:

I have reviewed the proposal you have developed relative to your proposed doctoral thesis.

You are to be commended for this undertaking and I do wish to indicate my positive endorsement. The Open Meeting Act has assured once and for all that public business is to be transacted in public. The image of a public body and its administrative personnel before its constituency takes on a completely new significance. Failure on the part of a public body and its agent to perform the public's business without proper organization or without adequate information only serves to sow the seeds of mistrust.

Be assured of my willingness to publicize your endeavors to assure maximum input from board members and superintendents.

Best wishes for the Holidays.

Sincerely,

Albert L. Deal  
Superintendent

ALD:fs

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER SENT TO THE 18 LOCAL SCHOOL  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS**



APPENDIX B

LETTER SENT TO THE 18 LOCAL SCHOOL  
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

Harold E. Whipple  
6453 Broadmoor S.E.  
Caledonia, Mich. 49316

Superintendent's Name  
Superintendent's Address

Dear Superintendent:

I am presently involved in gathering data for my doctoral dissertation. The title of this dissertation is "A Study of the Role of Board Members and the Superintendent in Agenda Construction."

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence superintendents and board members have on placing items on the board meeting agenda. A model process for construction of board meeting agendas will be developed from the research.

I have received excellent support and cooperation from Albert Deal, Kent Intermediate School Superintendent. The results of the study will be of great value to boards of education and school superintendents in the state of Michigan.

Your school is one of the eighteen school districts chosen for this study and it is very important that your response be returned. This survey will be valid only if you will give factual and complete information. The questionnaire is easy to complete and will require about ten minutes of your time. Your confidence will be honored. I pledge complete secrecy of individual responses. The results will be reported in statistical form only. No individuals or districts will be identified.

I will be looking forward to your prompt reply. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed. I will provide you with a summary of the results of the study, which may also be distributed to your board members. Remember, all information will be held in strict confidence. Thank you for your time and interest; they are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Harold E. Whipple  
Candidate for Ph.D.  
Michigan State University

APPENDIX C

LETTER SENT TO THE 126 LOCAL BOARD OF  
EDUCATION MEMBERS

APPENDIX C

LETTER SENT TO THE 126 LOCAL BOARD OF  
EDUCATION MEMBERS

Harold E. Whipple  
6453 Broadmoor S.E.  
Caledonia, Mich. 49316

Board Member's Name  
Board Member's Address

Dear Board Member:

I am presently involved in gathering data for my doctoral dissertation. The title of this dissertation is "A Study of the Role of Board Members and the Superintendent in Agenda Construction."

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence superintendents and board members have on placing items on the board meeting agenda. A model process for construction of board meeting agendas will be developed from the research.

I have received excellent support and cooperation from Albert Deal, Kent Intermediate School Superintendent, and your superintendent. The results of the study will be of great value to boards of education and school superintendents in the state of Michigan.

Your school is one of the eighteen school districts chosen for this study and it is very important that your response be returned. This survey will be valid only if you will give factual and complete information. The questionnaire is easy to complete and will require about ten minutes of your time. Your confidence will be honored. I pledge complete secrecy of individual responses. The results will be reported in statistical form only. No individuals or districts will be identified.

I will be looking forward to your prompt reply. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed. I will provide your superintendent with a summary of the results to be distributed to you. Remember, all information will be held in strict confidence. Thank you for your time and interest; they are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Harold E. Whipple  
Candidate for Ph.D.  
Michigan State University

**APPENDIX D**

**PILOT STUDY TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS**

APPENDIX D

Table 3.1.--Telephone survey results of board of education presidents (N = 11).

Survey Questions	Considerable Importance		Moderate Importance		Slight Importance		Trivial Importance	
	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent
1. Board-superintendent relationships	9	81.8	2	18.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
2. Sunshine Law	1	9.1	2	18.2	4	36.4	4	36.4
3. Wording and placement of agenda items	4	36.4	3	27.2	4	36.4	0	0.0
4. Input	3	27.3	6	54.5	2	18.2	0	0.0
5a. Evaluation of teachers	9	81.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	18.2
b. Student discipline	6	54.5	4	36.4	0	0.0	1	9.1
c. Construction of the agenda	2	18.2	4	36.4	3	27.2	2	18.2
d. Negotiations	6	54.5	3	36.4	1	9.1	1	9.1
e. Problem of school finance	4	36.4	4	36.4	2	18.2	1	9.1

Table 3.2.--Telephone survey results of school superintendents (N = 11).

Survey Questions	Considerable Importance		Moderate Importance		Slight Importance		Trivial Importance	
	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent	Raw Score	Percent
1. Board-superintendent relationships	8	72.7	3	27.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
2. Sunshine Law	4	36.4	2	18.2	3	27.3	2	18.2
3. Wording and placement of agenda items	6	54.5	3	27.3	2	18.2	0	0.0
4. Input	11	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5a. Evaluation of teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
b. Student discipline	5	45.4	4	36.4	2	18.2	0	0.0
c. Construction of the agenda	2	18.2	5	45.4	2	18.2	2	18.2
d. Negotiations	5	45.4	5	45.4	1	9.2	0	0.0
e. Problem of school finance	7	63.6	3	27.3	1	9.1	0	0.0

Table 3.3.--Telephone survey results comparing board presidents' and superintendents' responses.

Survey Question	Considerable Importance		Moderate Importance		Slight Importance		Trivial Importance	
	Sup't. Percent	Pres. Percent	Sup't. Percent	Pres. Percent	Sup't. Percent	Pres. Percent	Sup't. Percent	Pres. Percent
1. Board-superintendent relationships	72.7	81.8	27.3	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2. Sunshine Law	36.4	9.1	18.2	18.2	27.3	36.4	18.2	36.4
3. Wording and placement of agenda items	54.5	36.4	27.3	27.2	18.2	36.4	0.0	0.0
4. Input	100.0	27.3	0.0	54.5	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0
5a. Evaluation of teachers	72.7	81.8	27.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2
b. Student discipline	45.4	54.5	36.4	36.4	18.2	0.0	0.0	9.1
c. Construction of the agenda	18.2	18.2	45.4	36.4	18.2	27.2	18.2	18.2
d. Negotiations	45.4	54.5	45.4	36.4	9.2	9.1	0.0	9.1
e. Problem of school finance	63.6	36.4	27.3	36.4	9.1	18.2	0.0	9.1

**APPENDIX E**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO ALL SUPERINTENDENTS  
AND BOARD MEMBERS**



(Board Members)

Code # \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire has three parts to it. The first part requests personal information about you. Since the questionnaire is completely confidential, you may answer all of the questions freely without any concern about being identified. It is important to the study to obtain your answer to every question.

The second part of the questionnaire deals with the amount of relative importance various areas have as they pertain to the welfare of students in your school district.

The third part of the questionnaire asks you to identify the amount of influence you have on actual board meeting agenda items. It has been found that the time to complete the questionnaire is approximately ten minutes. The numbered boxes in front of each question are for data-processing purposes. The code # is used to send a follow-up request for those questionnaires not returned in one week.

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. What is your present age?
  1. Up to 25
  2. 26 through 35
  3. 36 through 45
  4. 46 through 55
  5. over 55
2. I am a
  1. Male
  2. Female
3. How many years have you served on the board of education?
  1. Up to 2
  2. 3 through 5
  3. 6 through 10
  4. over 10
4. What is your present position on the board of education?
  1. President
  2. Vice-president
  3. Secretary
  4. Treasurer
  5. Trustee
5. How did you become a board of education member?
  1. Elected
  2. Appointed
6. How frequently do you individually meet with the superintendent to discuss agenda items?
  1. Once or less per month
  2. Twice per month
  3. Three times per month
  4. Four or more times per month

STUDENT WELFARE  
(Superintendents and Board Members)

Please respond to the following questions in terms of relative importance as they pertain to the welfare of students in your district.

1. How important is the agenda for board meetings in your relations with your superintendent/board members?
  1. Of considerable importance
  2. A moderate amount of importance
  3. A slight amount of importance
  4. A trivial amount of importance
  
2. Has the Sunshine Law changed the relative importance in the determination of agenda items?
  1. Of considerable importance
  2. A moderate amount of importance
  3. A slight amount of importance
  4. A trivial amount of importance
  
3. Of what importance is the wording and placement of an item on the agenda in relation to what you are trying to accomplish for students?
  1. Of considerable importance
  2. A moderate amount of importance
  3. A slight amount of importance
  4. A trivial amount of importance
  
4. How important is your input in the wording and placement of items on the board meeting agenda?
  1. Of considerable importance
  2. A moderate amount of importance
  3. A slight amount of importance
  4. A trivial amount of importance
  
5. Of what relative importance are each of the following as they pertain to the welfare of students in your district?
  - A. Evaluation of teachers
    1. Of considerable importance
    2. A moderate amount of importance
    3. A slight amount of importance
    4. A trivial amount of importance
  
  - B. Student discipline
    1. Of considerable importance
    2. A moderate amount of importance
    3. A slight amount of importance
    4. A trivial amount of importance
  
  - C. Construction of the board meeting agenda
    1. Of considerable importance
    2. A moderate amount of importance
    3. A slight amount of importance
    4. A trivial amount of importance
  
  - D. Negotiations
    1. Of considerable importance
    2. A moderate amount of importance
    3. A slight amount of importance
    4. A trivial amount of importance
  
  - E. Problem of school finance
    1. Of considerable importance
    2. A moderate amount of importance
    3. A slight amount of importance
    4. A trivial amount of importance

AGENDA ITEMS  
(Superintendents and Board Members)

Instructions: Given below is a list of twenty agenda items. They were selected at random from your board meeting agendas for the period of July 1, 1977, through December 31, 1977. Here you may express, as accurately as you can, how you think you influenced the placement of this item on the agenda. Please mark your answer by placing a circle around the number in front of the answer you select. In some cases it may be difficult to decide which response to mark. Make the best decision that you can.

-----

1. The following policies are presented for Board Member information at this time with action to be considered at the next regular meeting of the Board. Policy # 3450.1--Petty Cash; Policy # 2220.1 Asst. to Principal--H.S.; Policy # 2220.2 Asst. to Principal--Jr. H.
 

1. Completely	3. To some extent
2. Almost completely	4. Not at all
  
2. Progress Meeting.
 

1. Completely	3. To some extent
2. Almost completely	4. Not at all
  
3. It is recommended that the Board of Education renew its membership in the MASB for 1977-78.
 

1. Completely	3. To some extent
2. Almost completely	4. Not at all
  
4. In order to come under the Section 27 Act's regulations it will be necessary to call \$88,000 in bonds.
 

1. Completely	3. To some extent
2. Almost completely	4. Not at all
  
5. Cablevision Channel 10--Production Manager, Channel 10, is requesting permission to telecast athletic events during the school year.
 

1. Completely	3. To some extent
2. Almost completely	4. Not at all

6. Community Education Services' Director will present a status report about Community Education.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
7. Property Exchange--\_\_\_\_\_ will join the Board Meeting at 7:45 P.M. to discuss an exchange of property between the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
8. Campaign Financing Report--A follow-up on Wednesday, August 24th, with the staff person in the County Clerk's Office responsible for the campaign financing report law indicates that all Board Members and Candidates for a board position at the June 13th annual election have met the requirements of the law.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
9. Recreation--The Football Commissioner has presented a written request for the use of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ football fields for six (6) Saturdays--starting September 24th.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
10. Instructional Objectives Project--\_\_\_\_\_ has been working with principals and directors in developing the second phase of the instructional objectives project which was started last year.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
11. The Football Commissioner for \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation Association is requesting use of the \_\_\_\_\_ football field on Saturday, November 12, 1977.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
12. Legislation, Court and Labor Relations.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |

13. \_\_\_\_\_ has recommendations to present for each of the two assistant directorship positions at \_\_\_\_\_ H.S.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
14. It seems wise for a Board of Education to briefly review the various curriculum programs that lead to a high school diploma and authorize the continuation of such programs for the 1977-78 school year.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
15. Contacts with City Engineers indicated that Byron Center Road is currently scheduled for improvement between 36th and 44th Streets during the fiscal year July 1, 1980-June 30, 1981.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
16. O-K Red Division Meeting.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
17. \_\_\_\_\_, representing \_\_\_\_\_ Company, will join the Board meeting to review the 1976-77 financial audit.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
18. Adult Education Center Security.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
19. School Lunch Program 1978-79.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |
20. National School Boards Association Conference, April 1-4, 1978, Anaheim, California.
- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Completely        | 3. To some extent |
| 2. Almost completely | 4. Not at all     |

APPENDIX F

MODEL AGENDA

APPENDIX F

MODEL AGENDA

NUGGLES COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
Agate, Michigan

AGENDA

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Regular Meeting  
June 10, 1978  
Educational Services Center

- I. Call to Order--7:30 P.M.
  - A. Roll Call
    - 1. Present
    - 2. Absent
  - B. Interested Citizens
    - 1. School patrons attending the meeting will be invited by Marvin Everett, President, Nuggles Board of Education, to make known their interest in any agenda item or other item of business.
  - C. Acceptance of the Agenda
  - D. Approval of Minutes
    - 1. Regular Meeting of May 13, 1978 Page 3-5
- II. Financial Reports as of May 31, 1978
  - A. General Fund Balance \$745,010.92 Page 6
  - B. Building and Site Balance \$ 26,240.76 Page 7
  - C. Debt Retirement Balance \$ 86,693.72 Page 8
  - D. Bills Payable
    - 1. General Fund \$316,881.82 Page 10-16
    - 2. Debt Retirement \$ 10,263.00 Page 17
    - 3. Lunch Fund \$ 12,944.47 Page 18
- III. Unfinished Business
  - A. Retirement Compensation Policy #4146 Page 19

## IV. New Business

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A. Textbook Adoption  | Page <u>20</u>    |
| B. 1978-79 Calendar   | Page <u>21</u>    |
| C. Tennis Court Bids  | Page <u>22-26</u> |
| D. Appointments       |                   |
| 1. Professional Staff | Page <u>27</u>    |
| 2. Classified Staff   | Page <u>28</u>    |

## V. Communications and Reports

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A. Legislation and Court Action                 |  |
| 1. Legislation                                  |  |
| 2. Court  |  |
| B. Standing Committees                          |  |
| 1. Human Resources                              |  |
| 2. Education                                    |  |
| 3. Finance                                      |  |
| 4. Buildings and Grounds                        |  |
| C. Community Education                          |  |
| 1. Community Education Director's Status Report |  |

## VI. Future Plans

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. Reorganization Board Meeting                      |  |
| July 10, 1978--Educational Service Center, 7:30 P.M. |  |
| B. Facilities Tour--June 19, 1978                    |  |
| Leave E.S.C. Building at 8:00 A.M.                   |  |
| C. Items for Next Agenda                             |  |

## VII. Adjournment



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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