DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES OF SUBURBAN SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS: The Management of Information

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

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1978

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Adviser
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For my grandmother, in lieu of great-grandchildren.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What does a superintendent do in the school organization by virtue of his being a superintendent? How does he spend his day? His week? His year?

These questions could be posed to any individual or group within the educational organization--board members, principals, teachers, students--as well as parents and citizens. More than likely the responses would vary, not only between groups but within them as well. Most people have only a partial or distorted idea of the superintendent's work because their conclusions are based upon limited contacts with the superintendent.

The superintendent's authority is formally derived from state law and in rules and regulations of boards of education which outline the responsibilities, powers, and duties of the superintendent. The statutory provisions in Ohio serve as an example:

The superintendent of schools is the chief executive and advisory officer in city, exempted village, and county school districts (RC 331901).

The superintendent is appointed by the board of education, and is responsible to it for all instructional and supervisory aspects of education as well as for financial and business affairs of the district except as provided in RC 3319.03 and 3329.04 (RC 3319.01).
The Ohio Revised Code continues,

In a strict legal sense, a board of education cannot be relieved of the responsibility of providing educational opportunities for children and youth in their respective districts. To execute this responsibility, however, Ohio boards of education generally delegate to the superintendent of schools, as their chief executive officer, the responsibility for every aspect of administration, both business and educational, in the school district. The superintendent of schools attends all board meetings as chief executive officer of the school district. He administers the schools in conformity with policies adopted by the board, the rules and regulations of the state board of education, and provisions of law. He provides the board of education with information needed for the formulation and adoption of school policies and presents such other information as is necessary in the appraisal of existing policies.¹

Descriptions of the nature of the superintendency, which indicate that statutory provisions do not serve as accurate guides for this office, are evident in The First Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence:

The source from which the superintendent's authority is derived is much more largely from common consent than from State law or resolution of the board of education. This indicates that the personality, administrative skill, and superior training of the superintendent must be large factors in the work which he will perform, and in the success which he will attain.²

Frederick Bolton remarked several years later that, "... the statements [of rules and regulations] are of little significance. The real superintendent does far more than any rules or statutes might prescribe."³ Archie Dykes explains that while "complete executive and legislative power over schools" is granted by the legal structure to the board, "the


²The First Yearbook, Department of Superintendence, 1923.

participation of the superintendent in board decision making is determined by the board, not by law." Dykes continues, "the degree to which the superintendent shall participate . . . is dependent upon the board's wishes and desires." A similar picture is rendered by Harmon Zeigler and M. Kent Jennings:

In the case of our study, school boards have the potential power to exert leadership over local educational policy by virtue of their formal authoritative positions within educational systems. If superintendents emerge as the dominant factors in school governance, it is because the boards have given way.

David Miner's study of suburban school superintendents also reported that school boards give their statutory power to the superintendent. He found that,

... in low conflict, high status districts it appeared that superintendents had a great deal of latitude for independent action. Boards in such places were inclined to validate the superintendent's actions and to be concerned chiefly with broad policy issues.

Along this line, Zeigler and Jennings noted that:

It is a curious anomaly in American popular attitudes that while the concept of local, lay control of public schools is valued so highly, the alien educational expert is accorded greater deference than perhaps any other professional in public life.

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7 Zeigler and Jennings, Governing American Schools, p. 50.
Although boards of education have the statutory authority to exercise lay control, they do not. Based upon these comments about the nature of the superintendency, the inference can be drawn that the authority of the superintendent—and, thus his duties, responsibilities, and role—appears to be negotiated between the superintendent and the board.

The previous discussion suggests that legal provisions do not specify the everyday activities of the superintendency. Information about the superintendent's position, however, permeates the literature in the form of analyses, research reports, descriptive accounts, folklore, and prescriptions; all document and suggest some characteristic of the superintendent's position. Academicians, as well as educational practitioners, have studied or commented on the personal and professional requirements expected of superintendents, the historical development of the position, the interaction between the superintendent and specific groups such as the board of education, and the tasks and functions of the position. The literature primarily focuses on specific details or segments of the superintendent's activities; none gives an integrated account of his everyday activities.

The problem is that a complete understanding of the superintendency is not derivable from the parts in summation. This assertion is supported by Wilson's statement:

No one can answer these questions. For example, [how does a superintendent spend his day?] except a person who is or has been a superintendent of schools... His secretary would have the most complete picture of the real function of the
position, but even she is near the scene of action only when he is in the office.\textsuperscript{8}

This is further supported in\textit{Hints to the Beginning Superintendent of Schools:}

In the process of self analysis and job analysis, it might be well to get assistance from a wise administrator or knowledgeable professor who knows the difficulties which will have to be met and the skills, knowledges, understandings, and personal qualities essential for success in this particular undertaking.\textsuperscript{9}

Larry Cuban as recently as 1975 remarked that, "while we know to the penny what salaries administrators received, what degrees they earned, and where they were born, we know very little about what they as executives, actually do each day."\textsuperscript{10} Clearly, this information gap can be narrowed to arrive at more mature understandings of the office of superintendent and how the school social system functions at this point of juncture.

A study of the structure and content of the superintendent's work-related activities was needed. One way to approach the problem was to consider the superintendent as a part of a sociocultural system which carried with it some implicit assumptions:

1. there are patterns or regulations in human behavior; 
2. these patterns are interconnected through organizational or structural principles;


3. these patterns have functions which are not necessarily conscious but are revealed in the belief systems of the members of a culture;

4. these patterns are dynamic, subject to change over time;\textsuperscript{11}

5. these patterns or regularities are enacted behaviorally and perceptually in school social systems through status/role positions, relationships, behaviors, expectations, and sanctions;\textsuperscript{12}

6. each member of a given school social system has an understanding of the underlying status/role positions, relationships, behaviors, expectations, and sanctions and of the other fundamental organizational principles.\textsuperscript{13}

A research methodology consistent with the field study methods conventional within the discipline of anthropology was used in this research. Anthropological fieldwork (ethnography) characteristically involves a long stay among the members of a society enabling the ethnographer to yield a systematic study of the complete sociocultural system, although field methods in the study of education have recently focused on a systematic study of interaction behaviors and meanings attached to behaviors. Cusick's study of the student's world inside a


\textsuperscript{12}Neal Gross, W. S. Mason and A. W. McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958).

\textsuperscript{13}See, for example Frederick O. Gearing, "Where We Are and Where We Might Go: Steps Toward a General Theory of Cultural Transmission," in CAE Newsletter, Vol. IV, No. 1, February, 1973.
high school, Wolcott's study of the elementary principalship, and Becker's study of the effects of medical school upon medical students are consistent with the traditional ethnographic approach. Cicourel's study of school counselors and Mehan's examination of the process of measurement in the administration of individualized educational tests reflect field studies based on the interactional premise. Both approaches used in the study of schools hold in common an inductive inquiry into and detailed descriptions of systematic patterns of routine behaviors. The more recent approach adds a concern with the structuring activities (interactional processes) that generate these patterns.

Essentially, the ways in which the superintendent operates—the techniques, devices, procedures, relationships and contents—that distinguish his work was of interest. The major premise on which the study was based is that the incomplete knowledge or picture of the


17 Aaron Cicourel and J. I. Kitsuse, The Educational Decision Makers (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963) suggests that student's careers are not the direct result of genetic or environmental factors.


superintendency can be addressed by drawing on the concepts and field study methods of anthropology. The work is in some sense, anthropological; it emphasizes the methodologies of observation and open-ended interviewing.

Research Problem

An investigation that would fully treat this problem would require a team of researchers intensively investigating the position in educational social systems over an extended period of time; however, the aim was to investigate the structure and content of the superintendent's position within the educational organization within a narrow period of time and with a limited number of subjects; to present the literature of educational administration concerning the superintendency; and to draw on this literature and data to assemble a more complete picture of the everyday life of the superintendent. The research problem succinctly stated was:

1. To investigate the structure and content of the position through examination of the literature focusing on the superintendency and collection of observation data on the position in three school districts.

2. To generate from this investigation a clarification of some of the administrative processes in the everyday life of the school organization and a description of the ways in which the office operates—the techniques, devices, procedures, relationships and contents.

Description of the Research

The research reported in these pages represents an effort to understand the structure and content of the superintendent's work day. The research problem was pursued through comparison of incumbents of
the superintendent's position in three suburban, unified school districts of a large midwestern city. A field study designed to investigate and compare superintendent behavior was conducted; data were collected in a non-participant observer role in order to document systematic patterns of routine behaviors that occur, and subjective interpretations of the superintendency were obtained through structured open-ended interviewing. Descriptions of observed events, for example a verbal contact or a piece of incoming mail, plus enumeration to document their frequency; and the rules, strategies, or tactics of administrative action superintendents used to reduce uncertainty surrounding the school organization are reported. The results of the study are reported in the following manner:

Chapter II. Review of the Literature describing the superintendency is reviewed, specifically that describing the structure and content of the superintendents' daily activities.

Chapter III. Methods and Procedures reports on the selection of sample, the process of observing and interviewing subjects, and the construction of three frameworks for the recording and coding of observations.

Chapter IV. Presentation and Analysis of the Data displays, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered.

Chapter V. Case Studies of individual superintendents are presented which show how each superintendent attempted to clarify internal and external organizational events from a rational perspective and acted as interpreter of these events for organizational members and outsiders.
Chapter VI. Summary and Conclusions review the basic findings of the research and discuss implications for educational administrators, further research, and the training of practitioners. Final conclusions are drawn.

Significance of the Research

The intent was to present an interpretation of the superintendency and of public schools that ties together a number of empirical and theoretical schemes. The incomplete knowledge surrounding the content and structure of the activities of the superintendency justified this study. A greater awareness of what superintendents do, and why they do those things, would help designers of programs for practitioners to identify tools and strategies congruent with the nature of the work of the superintendent. Those tools and strategies needed to perform the work as it is typically done, as well as those tools and strategies needed to change the work, are suggested. The study could be valuable in the training of educational administrators and will provide a different and useful perspective for individuals already serving in administrative positions in school districts.

The significance of this research can be asserted: The information presented on the superintendency is substantially different from other information found in the educational administration literature, and it includes an analysis of the entire course of interaction among participants (with the focal position of the superintendent) in social events. However, a more prolonged study (a random observation schedule over a period of a year) is necessary to ascertain the cycles of
activity suggested by the data. The results imply that educational managers enact a variety of roles which they report to be contradictory. Deeper penetration into how these roles might encroach upon one another is needed.
CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE ON THE SUPERINTENDENCY

Introduction

The legal provisions for the position of the school superintendents presented in Chapter I did not adequately clarify the nature of the superintendent's work. Specifically, it did not describe the structure and content of the superintendent's work-related activities.

The literature on the superintendency was reviewed for clarification of some of the characteristics of the everyday life of the superintendent in public, K-12 educational organizations in contemporary American society. All aspects of the educational organization were not examined; the focus was on the position of the superintendent and on securing a general picture of his everyday activities. As a consequence, certain information on the superintendency was not included in this review. For example, the historical development of the position has been adequately covered by Reller, Gilland, Callahan, and Griffiths, and will not be presented.¹ Two points emerged from their works,

however, which should not be ignored: the growth in the complexity and intensity of problems of administering and supervising schools had purportedly rendered the solution of these problems beyond the capabilities of lay boards of education; and struggle for power between boards of education and superintendents has been with us since the position's inception. The evolution of the superintendency, then, has been characterized by sustained increases in prestige and influence. As Griffiths added, "throughout its existence the superintendency has had ambiguity regarding its primary function."2

A large portion of the information about the superintendency is the result of survey research into the demographic characteristics of persons selected into the status of the superintendency. Although the research has yielded a plethora of statistics, simply noting superintendents have these characteristics has not been informative of the structure and content of the superintendent's work. A sampling of these studies points to the inadequacy of these data for describing what it is superintendents actually do each day.

The Department of Superintendency in its first yearbook (1922) established the precedence for drawing a profile of the superintendent on a national scale. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has subsequently assumed primary responsibility for collecting and disseminating this information. Various AASA Yearbooks included descriptions of the typical superintendent, that is, the superintendent's

2Daniel E. Griffiths, The School Superintendent, p. V.
personal dimensions, professional experience, and educational background.

In 1932, an inquiry by Frederick Bair which assessed the superintendent's potential as a change agent uncovered aspects of his personal history having a direct bearing upon his views of social problems in relation to the schools. Bair noted that incumbents of the superintendency were the oldest of a large family of children; were born, reared, and schooled either on the farm or a tiny hamlet; and were of "deeply religious stock." Bair drew attention to the religious nature of incumbents of this position:

This may be extrinsic, but it is very easy to underestimate its root significance in his equipment as a teacher, an interpreter, and a prophet in a changing world.

A study by AASA in 1960 focusing on biographical characteristics disclosed that superintendents were less transient than commonly thought with nine years the average time in their present position. In addition, 22 percent held doctorates and reported that "higher salaries" was the prime reason for entering administration. A special AASA Commission constructed a national picture in 1971 of the personal and professional characteristics of the superintendent. The typical superintendent was a forty-eight year old, white male with origin in a small or rural community. He started his career in education at twenty-three years old.

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5 AASA, Profile of the Superintendent, p. 63.
as a science, math, or social studies teacher in a high school; coached
a sport; and spent six to seven years teaching before holding his first
administrative position and his first superintendency at thirty-six.
Most superintendents had completed graduate work and 20.2 percent had
doctorates.6

The tenure of superintendents and their career mobility were
frequently reported characteristics in these profiles. The claim that
short tenure is a recent phenomenon is erroneous as the First Yearbook
demonstrates:

The tenure of the city superintendent is from one to forty-one years.7 The middle 50 percent are in office from two to
six years.7

Similar conclusions were made by Chase and Sweitzer in a study of 12
midwestern states in which they found that the average tenure of a
superintendent was less than six years, with some districts changing
superintendents each year.8 A summary profile of big-city superinten-
dents by Cuban, however, showed the average number years in their cur-
rent position in 1953 at 6.5 dropping to 5.5 in 1963 and 4.1 years in
1971.9 An analysis of the backgrounds of superintendents fifty years
later by Cuban sustained the observation that superintendents come from

7Department of Superintendence, First Yearbook.
small town and agrarian backgrounds. Knezevich also noted that localism was most profound; careers of superintendents were essentially statebound.\(^{11}\)

In a few cases, as exemplified by Bair's and John Miner's studies, measures of individual motives, personality characteristics, biographical, and ability indexes are correlated with various measures of superintendent's job performance; nonetheless, most characteristics are presented as "only numbers."\(^{12}\) The point made is: while these studies are numerous, they proved to be inadequate for describing the structure and content of the superintendent's work-related activities. Studies which describe what it is that superintendents do by virtue of their being in this position in an educational organization were sought.

The following review of the literature examined and interpreted two major themes which relate to the structure and content of the work-related activities of the superintendent. This chapter is devoted to ascertaining (1) the day by day, ongoing activities and interactions of the superintendent, and (2) the network of relationships of which the superintendent is a part by virtue of his being a superintendent.

**The Everyday Activities of Superintendents**

The content of the everyday activities of superintendents is suggested in listings of the major functions of superintendents.

\(^{10}\)Ibid.


Studies are made periodically in which superintendents identify a number of functions they perform in their work. These functions are often re-ranked after some elapse of time; different rankings have been interpreted to reflect environmental or organizational changes. Although these listings are not sufficiently detailed, they do give some general idea of the content of the superintendent's work-related activities. The ranking of three groups of functions by superintendents in 1923 and again in 1933 is presented in Table 1. The numerous functions of the superintendent are also mentioned in an Educational Policies Commission report, The Unique Role of the Superintendent of Schools, which specified how they are interrelated:

The superintendent has many functions, but all are focused on a single goal: to provide for the best possible education in his community. This means creating the conditions in which the teacher can perform to the best of his ability . . . assisting the school board in the formulation of policies governing the school system . . . . Aspects of his job include management, school budget, finding solutions of day-to-day problems, morale of the staff and the art of human relations. In short, the superintendent is a teacher, politician, philosopher, student of life, public relations counselor, and businessman. All of these aspects are involved in the central role of leadership.¹³

While the Commission report specified some general categories of work-related activities of superintendents, and a complex role set, the behavior of incumbents of the position cannot be inferred from this information.

Overall, the interest was with finding data which focused on the adaptation between the chief executive and the organization. Examples

### Table 14

**Functions of Superintendents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rank in 1923</th>
<th>Rank in 1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of principals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of new policies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal of associates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of subjects in curriculums</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of instructional supplies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of textbooks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of associates</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of budget</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of the content of subjects</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of non-educational supplies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision of classroom instruction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Twelve Functions to Execute Which Superintendents Ranked First in 1923, and the Ranks of These Same Functions in 1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rank in 1923</th>
<th>Rank in 1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision of instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of content of subjects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of subjects of curriculums</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of instructional supplies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of associates</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making routine rules</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of textbooks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement of attendance laws</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of non-educational supplies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of principals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction of medical inspection</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ten Rights of Approval Mentioned Most Frequently by Superintendents in 1923, and the Ranks of These Same Items in 1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rank in 1923</th>
<th>Rank in 1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase and sale of buildings and grounds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of plans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of janitors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of buildings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of budget</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking census</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance-repairs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of attendance officers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction of medical inspection</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent of buildings and grounds</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Eleventh Yearbook, Department of Superintendence, 1933, pp. 122-23.*
of literature describing the behavior of individuals in the superintendent's position include a list of actual situations encountered by a superintendent during a three year period reported by Robert Wilson,\textsuperscript{14} a collection of descriptions from superintendents of how they established relations with their boards of education by Ralph Hunkins,\textsuperscript{15} a categorization of problem areas perceived by superintendents to be especially bothersome by Keith Goldhammer,\textsuperscript{16} a comparative study of six urban superintendents by Marilyn Gittel and T. Edward Hollander,\textsuperscript{17} a comparative study of three urban superintendents by Larry Cuban,\textsuperscript{18} and a study of executive succession and organizational consequences of succession by Richard Carlson.\textsuperscript{19} Each study will be examined separately in some detail.

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\textsuperscript{15}Ralph V. Hunkins, \textit{Superintendent and School Board} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1949).


A concern with the inadequacy of questionnaires for revealing the specific duties of superintendents prompted Robert E. Wilson to present a list of experiences submitted by a superintendent during a three year assignment in a medium-sized "average" city. Wilson noted that "these are the types of situations which develop in a school system to absorb a sizable proportion of the superintendent's time but which are rarely found listed in a professional treatise in administrative duties." \(^{20}\) A partial listing of actual situations encountered by a superintendent during a three year period follows:

- Established new boundary lines for city's elementary school districts.

- Male teacher found guilty of sodomy with high school boys.

- A local patriotic lodge demanded an investigation of all history books to determine extent of anti-American propaganda.

- Jehovah Witness group requested use of school building for worship service.

- Vandals caused over $2,000 damage to a school building.

- Teachers' union pressured for an increase of teachers' salary maximum.

- Sixty pupils suffered poisoning attributed to food consumed at school cafeteria.

- A rival contractor publicly accused the school building contractor of faulty and hazardous workmanship.

- Athletic booster club conducted stealthy campaign to have basketball coach dismissed.

Although Wilson presented a lengthy list of diverse situations encountered by a superintendent, his list was insufficient for describing

the superintendent's behavior. Wilson did not indicate the relationships between the activities or events. Among many unanswered questions are: were some events, for example, unintended consequences of other situations or decisions? What was the temporal arrangement of these incidents; how did the superintendent respond; or was he able to exert influence?

The connectiveness of these events in the school district is suggested through an analogy. Wilson noted the striking likeness in the methods of operation of a Modern quarterback in football and a school superintendent.

A reliable quarterback masterminds the action; so should a superintendent. The quarterback evaluates his team's progress after each play, appraises the opposition, checks the timing, perhaps seeks a signal from the coach, accepts suggestions from his teammates in the huddle, and then calls the play. While each step is important for his success, it should be underscored that he calls the play.

An effective superintendent follows these same procedures. He is constantly evaluating the progress of the administrative staff's last action; he is alert to the forces that might block his team's action; he knows that accurate timing of every new plan is as important as the idea itself; he looks to the board for counsel; he goes into a huddle with his staff specialists at regular intervals to solicit their contributions to the decision at hand; and then makes the decision. Regardless of who or what influenced the decision, it is his decision.21

The members of the educational organization, and especially the superintendent's cadre, are described as a team. The assertion is made that if one knew what the content or strategies of superintendents were, one would not need an analogy. Since an analogy was made, one can infer that it was not clear how the superintendent "made things work."

21Ibid., p. 108.
The query is posed: Does this comparison elucidate something that is hard to understand (that is, how superintendents manage their everyday affairs)? Once again, the analogy (like the listing) fails to answer certain critical questions—is the same sequence followed each time; is each play as equally well planned; are no plays spontaneous; what is the relationship of the strategies to the content of the superintendent's activities? Wilson's statement, "A reliable quarterback masterminds the action; so should a superintendent" suggests that he used this analogy in a highly normative way to describe the kind of superintendent he wished to have in school districts. Wilson used this analogy—prescriptive metaphor—as a normative design principle, to describe what ought to be. The analogy failed to provide a description of what superintendents actually do during a typical working day.

In a collection of descriptions of methods for reporting to the board of education and preparing the annual report, an attempt is made by Ralph Hunkins to describe the behavior of superintendents with respect to specific tasks. Hunkins presented a responsibility of the superintendent, as exemplified by this excerpt,

A major function of the superintendent of schools at meetings of the board of education is to make reports on the progress and the business of the schools. The nature of such reports and how they are to be presented will be of concern to the beginning school superintendent.22

He followed with descriptions of "how they handled it." For example, one superintendent responded to the above responsibility as follows:

A board meeting each month is one of the best opportunities for keeping the board in touch with the general activity

22Hunkins, Superintendent and School Board, p. 25.
and progress of the schools. From time to time the super-
intendent will want to report on school enrollment. This
will be particularly the case at the first meeting after
the schools have started in a new year. Such a report will
be in order, too, when there is some unusual increase or
reduction in enrollment.

At times in connection with enrollment reports there will
need to be stress on the pupil load per teachers. Such a
report, for example, would be in order when there is an
approaching need for an increase in the number of teachers. 23

While another superintendent offered these suggestions:

In addition to giving much information orally to his
board members, it is a good plan for the superintendent to
provide each board member with a loose-leaf notebook in
which there is placed from time to time material of interest
to board members. Following are some materials which might
appropriately find a place in such a notebook:

1. The rules and regulations of the board.

2. An organizational chart showing administrative rela-
tionships of the staff members of the school organi-
zation.

3. A map of the school district showing the population
served by the several school buildings.

4. The minutes of the board dating back six months or
a year. . . . 24

Hunkins' deductive method was based upon the assumption that if a number
of administrators in different environments possess certain qualities in
common, then other superintendents (the book appears to be directed at
the novice) who adopt these characteristics should also be successful. 25

23 Ibid., p. 25.

24 Ibid., p. 29.

25 See James C. March and James G. March, "Almost Random Careers:
The Wisconsin School Superintendency, 1940-1972," Administrative Science
The particular characteristics which an acknowledged group of successful school superintendents possessed in common are extracted and presented within a cookbook format.

A study of problems facing superintendents undertaken by Keith Goldhammer revealed that educational change, teacher militancy, administrative leadership, critical social issues, instruction, and finance were viewed as especially bothersome issues by superintendents.\textsuperscript{26} A problem confronting every superintendent was obtaining adequate information upon which to base decisions in all phases of school administration--particularly problems of negotiating with staff, evaluating the curriculum, recruiting teachers, and advising the board. It was reported that many decisions were made on the basis of fuzzy generalizations rather than facts; although a great deal of data were available, time and personnel needed to review and organize it were not.\textsuperscript{27} Basing decisions on financial criteria rather than educational criteria was also problematic for this educational expert. Superintendents viewed themselves as a link between schools and broader society, no longer the director of the organization, but the mediator between groups.\textsuperscript{28} The superintendent was more the individual helping to structure the process through which the decisions were made rather than the one who formulated the decision.

"A near schizoid condition for many superintendents," reported Goldhammer, resulted from accepting money from the federal government,\

\textsuperscript{26}Keith Goldhammer, et al. \textit{Issues and Problems in Contemporary Educational Administration}.

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 135.
with concomitant controls, juxtaposed against an ideology of local control:

Many have felt that after acceptance [of federal monies] they had to demonstrate to their boards and communities some resistance to federal regulations, in order to justify their protection of their independence in decision making powers of the local school district. Many have had to defend the federal program against a whole new group of school critics who are opposed to all federal subventions and the local school districts became a partner to the crime by participating in a federally financed program. In conforming to highly emotionalized community pressures some superintendents publicly criticized federal guidelines even though they privately admitted that they are essential to implement congressional objectives for establishing programs and that definite educational benefits have accrued from them.29

Once again, in terms of explaining the structure and content of the superintendent's work, this study is inadequate. While Goldhammer used interviewing techniques to uncover problems, Knezevich used a forced-choice questionnaire to identify the current educational issues or challenges perceived as most critical to superintendents.30

Superintendents ranked a list of eighteen "issues and challenges" identified by Knezevich as follows:

- Financing schools to meet increasing current expenditures and capital outlay.
- Demands for new ways of teaching or operating the educational program.
- Greater visibility of the superintendent.
- Changes in values and behavioral norms.
- School staff relations, strikes, sanctions, or other forms of teacher militancy.

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29 Ibid., p. 142.

Growing federal involvement in education. . . \(^{31}\)

Superintendents saw their effectiveness inhibited by: inadequate financing, the numerous insignificant demands upon the position, problems caused by inexperienced, unqualified, or unprepared staff members, limits of their personal or professional capabilities, and problems in working with school boards.\(^ {32}\) Both studies were directed toward problematic aspects of the superintendency but gave no indication of the frequency of these problems within the framework of his everyday work-related life.

A comparative analysis of large city school systems probed into the fiscal and administrative operations of six large city school systems—Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Invariant as well as distinguishing characteristics of superintendents were extracted from a chronology of events. The status of large city superintendents was characterized as "limited" or "strong" by Marilyn Gittel and T. Edward Hollander which was based upon their tenure, salary, control of budget, power of appointment, relations with the board and extent of municipal and state involvement.\(^ {33}\) Relationships with administrative staff were ranked according to these guidelines:

- **Powerful**: Formal organization recognized by school board; makes public policy statements on own initiative; disagrees publicly with superintendent; communicates directly with board members; staff not appointed by superintendent in office; participates in appointment of superintendent.

\(^{31}\)Ibid.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 60.

Limited Power: Informal association; meets periodically with superintendent as group; issues public statements on own initiative but is supportive of superintendent.

Little Power: Serves at pleasure of superintendent; limited power for defined roles; implements directives of superintendent; communicates to board through superintendent.  

While this represents an attempt to get at the interactions between two positions in the school districts--the superintendent and his staff--the behavioral specifications are sufficiently vague and ambiguous to make it difficult to infer the everyday activities of superintendents.

Another comparative study of urban superintendents by Larry Cuban raised the question: how did big-city superintendents respond to outside pressure? Cuban found that superintendents Benjamin Willis, Carl Hansen, and Harold Spears showed similar patterns of response to critical incidents. After reconstructing the events, he interpreted the organizations' response:

Since there was a lack of control over the organization, decisions were more or less automatic, with the school chief usually following the traditional ways to outside pressure. In effect, the three superintendents' responses to demands were system solutions for which each large organization had already developed programmed procedures.  

Cuban further suggests that:

Imitation might further explain the similarity of responses from urban school chiefs. Caught by forces which they could not manipulate, superintendents learned from one another, copying the more successful of their colleagues. Professional meetings, phone calls, and a keen eye on news items from other cities provided paths to learning. Executives desirous of surviving learned quickly which behaviors promised the most

staying power on those issues largely beyond their control. Adaptation, not aggressive initiative, was the best they could hope to achieve.\textsuperscript{36}

The observation that superintendents learn from one another is viewed from a different perspective by Richard Carlson. Carlson focused on the patterning of advice seeking among superintendents in the diffusion and adoption of educational innovations.\textsuperscript{37}

The impact of professional socialization limited the range of superintendent responses to particular traditional problems suggested Cuban:

\ldots taught to be professional, each superintendent had to define the problem, study it, weigh alternatives, and choose the one that maximized the organization's goal.\textsuperscript{38}

He further noted that "evidence suggests that rationality, impartiality, acceptance of authority and hierarchy, emotional restraint are but a few of the organizational traits acquired in the process of schooling, teaching, and administering."\textsuperscript{39} Another group of studies attempted to explain variations in careers as consequences of personal, temporal, or organizational factors.

Richard Carlson sought to explain variations in career patterns among school superintendents and in doing so revealed some patterns of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., pp. 107-108.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Richard O. Carlson, Adoption of Educational Innovations (Eugene, Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965).
\item \textsuperscript{38}Cuban, Urban School Chiefs Under Fire, p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 167.
\end{itemize}
behavior of superintendents. He identified two types of superintendents, place-bound and career-bound, and conveyed important distinctions and the latent functions of the two types. Carlson pointed out the functional significance of rule-making for a successor. Place-bound superintendents concentrated on publicizing and reinforcing old rules and assessing the extent to which they were taken into account. The career-bound superintendent tended to "fill in the gaps" and supplanted old rules, so as to modify and redefine the communication of the social system. In addition,

Career-bound men are significantly more involved in the network of interaction of the social structure and hold significantly higher status in the social structure of the school system.

Three ideas significant to his study summarized his perspective:

an enduring organization must cope with the continual need of making replacements; when key positions are involved, the process of replacing individuals can be disruptive; and, the replacement process may influence organizational adaptation and development.

While Carlson noted that the replacing of individuals in an organization may be disruptive, Victor Thompson points out that, "an organization is a structure made up of positions and roles that people move in and out of without destroying the organization."

40 Richard O. Carlson, School Superintendents: Careers and Performance.

41 Ibid., p. 71.

42 Ibid., p. 1.

Regardless of which claim is accurate, career mobility has been the focus of numerous studies in educational administration. Succession is a critical decision in an organization and is frequently affected by political influences.

Much of the literature on careers in educational administration, like the literature on careers in other managerial fields, seeks to explain variations in career and chronologies as necessary consequences of personal, temporal, or organizational factors. Individuals with long careers are characteristically described as having properties that produce long careers; organizations with high turnover are characteristically described as having properties that produce high turnover. The events of some time periods are seen as conducive to long careers, other times to short ones. The result is that there is considerable care and some data about what kinds of administrator's succeed--have long careers--when and what kinds of districts are attractive--have low turnover--to whom.44

Carlson's study exemplified the work which seeks to explain variations in career patterns while Cuban's study suggested that the events of some time periods are conducive to short careers--or they, at least, shorten careers:

Superintendents such as Hansen, Willis and Spears had to face unfamiliar demands, expectations, and groups. The world seemed to have changed on them. What worked for them in the 1950's seemingly failed a decade later. Carl Hansen, darling of the liberal, integrationist community in the 1950's was tagged as a racist a decade later. Unsurprisingly, superintendent attrition rates in big cities reflected the shift. In twenty-five cities during the 1950's, six cities had superintendents that lasted the decade; only two had made it through the 1960's. Three cities lost two or more executives in the 1950's, compared to seven cities in the following ten years.45

James C. March and James G. March, contrariwise, questioned the assumption that differences in career outcomes reflect roughly


45Cuban, Urban School Chiefs Under Fire, p. 169.
proportional differences in behavior or performance. Differences with a group of people or jobs (in this case, superintendents) in such things as length of service or employee turnover were not thought of as due to underlying differences among members.

... Most of the time most superintendents are organizationally nearly indistinguishable in their behaviors, performances, abilities, and values. This is partly a consequence of the filters by which they come to the role, partly a consequence of the ambiguity of inference in educational settings, partly a consequence of the long-run stability of educational activities and organization, partly a consequence of a lifetime spent in educational institutions. Goldhammer, Cuban, and March appeared to agree on the effects of "a lifetime spent in educational institutions" on the behaviors, abilities, and values of superintendents; but March and March came to a startling conclusion:

Within the population of superintendents, success is almost random, as it is within any control process if the process is effective enough. ... and suggested that much of the time,

not only are superintendents almost indistinguishable, they are also almost indistinguishable from the pool of potential superintendents. If executives are indistinguishable but jobs are not, success will be random but movement will not be; and reputations of individuals will depend more on the job they hold than will the reputations of jobs depend on the individuals holding them. Thus, in a hierarchy of appointment of a person from a lower to a higher level position enhances the reputation of the individual more than it enhances the reputation of the job.


47 Ibid., pp. 405-406.


49 Ibid.
In other words, March and March claimed that the same behaviors, abilities, and values that "produce successful careers will produce unsuccessful ones." As noted previously, they concluded that, "little can be learned about how to administer schools by studying successful-high-level administrators that could not be learned by studying unsuccessful ones." Essentially, they are suggesting that the observed effects of a leader on an organization's performance would be small because those obtaining leadership positions are selected, their discretionary behavior is constrained, and they can affect only a few variables.

The purpose in reviewing the aforementioned studies was to secure information about the superintendency: what are the everyday activities of superintendents? The previous section dealt with the literature which described the content of their work-related activities, but did not specify how these activities were apportioned into the time and space available for them. The literature which describes the structure of these activities was also examined.

The structure of their everyday activities as suggested in the amount of time superintendents spend engaged in activities related to their position has frequently been a subject of inquiry. For instance, a study of the clerical duties of district superintendents revealed that in 1929 the average district superintendent spent "411 hours, 45

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50 Ibid., p. 408.
51 Ibid.
minutes, or 51.47 eight-hour days, or 8.58 six-day weeks, or 2.15 months" preparing regular reports for the state department of education.52

According to the 1952 study by the American Association of School Administrators, superintendents spend approximately sixty hours per week to fulfill their professional role. The distribution of their time is shown on Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average hours per week</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officially scheduled hours</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra hours on office work</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings, dinner, etc.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional trips out of town</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total hours, on the average</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Wilson described the typical day of the superintendent as "harum-scarum" and "chaotic pyrotechnics," and asserted that the "most typical characteristic of the superintendent's day is its dissimilarity

to the day before." Although his descriptions lacked clarity, he suggested that the superintendent "must systematize his duties by setting aside certain times of the day for recurring certainties," such as reading mail, telephone calls, paper work and school visitations. Three obstacles, noted Wilson,

inhibit the smooth operation of this technique: there are enough developments during the day that qualify as emergencies which provide almost a continual parade of interruptions. Superintendents are expected to be available when people want him for any of a thousand concerns of theirs; and the superintendent is called upon directly by many people for insignificant matters that could and should be handled by a teacher or a subordinate administrator.

He further characterized the superintendency as a position of: risk, pressure, compulsory emotional control, loneliness and unpleasantness.

The emphasis on scheduling the recurring activities of the superintendent has remained a recurring theme of those offering advice to the superintendent. For example, Frederick E. Bolton (1937) suggested that the superintendent should not leave to chance his schedule of activities:

His standardized functions should be as definitely arranged and scheduled as the class work of students.... For example, he should set apart a specific time to go through his mail, to dictate his letters, to visit classes, to hold teacher's meetings, to confer with student representatives, and to have office hours for callers. Each day should have a liberal allowance of time for undisturbed study of major problems. Those may be the preparation of the annual budget,

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54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
the selection of teachers, the school building program, improvement of supervision, school statistics, the athletic situation. . . . 57

The apportioning of activities into blocks of time continues to be emphasized in contemporary times as evidenced by the numerous "time management" workshops and seminars sponsored by professional organizations. Wilson, Bolton, and current supporters of time management workshops have been prescriptive, however, and not descriptive of the ways in which superintendents actually organize their work days.

More recently Knezevich has collected data on the superintendents' work day.

. . . about 85 percent of the superintendents reach their desk by 8:10 a.m.; 10.9 percent are there before 7:20 a.m. The typical administrator is at work before 8:00 a.m. It is the rare man whose day starts as late as 9:00 a.m. . . . (T)he first phase of the superintendent's work schedule reaches a temporary terminal point around 5 p.m. It is a temporary hiatus, a recess rather than a real end. . . . His 'workday' includes evening functions and many Saturdays and Sundays as well. . . . All dedicate at least one evening a week to professional responsibilities, 57.8 percent spend three or more evenings on the job and almost 4 percent are involved with professional responsibilities during five evenings or more a week. . . . The median number of Saturdays worked during a month is 2.0 . . . and dedicate at least one Sunday a month to professional responsibilities. 58

In this 1971 study, superintendents again estimated the number of hours worked per week and the results were consistent with the 1952 study as shown in Table 3. Superintendents report working approximately fifty-six hours per week. The AASA studies give some idea of the temporal


58 Knezevich, The American School Superintendent, pp. 54-56.
### TABLE 3a

**SUPERINTENDENTS' ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total hours of work</th>
<th>National Weighted Profile Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40 hours</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44 hours</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49 hours</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54 hours</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59 hours</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 hours or more</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>57.8</td>
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</table>

---


Aspects of the superintendent's day; the superintendent devotes a good chunk of his life to "professional responsibilities."

Although not a study of superintendents per se, a suburban school superintendent was one of five managers included in a structured observation study by Henry Mintzberg. Mintzberg focused on both the structure and content of managerial work. He suggested that:

Managerial activities may be divided into three groups--those that are concerned primarily with interpersonal relationships, those that deal primarily with transfer of information, and those that essentially involve decision-making. Mintzberg delineated ten roles or functions that are divided into three groups--three interpersonal roles, three informational roles, and four

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60 Ibid.
decision roles. The roles of figurehead, liaison, and leader emanated from his interpersonal role which placed the manager in a unique position to obtain information. The three informational roles—monitor, disseminator, and spokesman—gave the manager unique access to information, and coupled with his special status and authority, placed him in a position where organizational decisions were made. He specified the decisional roles as entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. 61

Mintzberg, in comparing the suburban superintendent to the other subjects of his study, noted that,

there were more scheduled meetings, more clocked meetings, more formal authority requests, and a tendency to present analyses in the form of printed reports. 62

Based on one week of observations, Mintzberg reported the distribution of the activities of the subject superintendent of schools which is reported in Table 4. 63 A discrepancy between the total hours worked reported by superintendents in the 1952 and 1971 AASA questionnaires (approximately sixty hours per week) and the observation made by Mintzberg that the subject superintendent worked a total of forty hours calls for some explanation. While it is difficult to draw inferences from one case, it is also important to clarify that responses in questionnaires and in interviews consistently have not provided adequate

61 Ibid., p. 59.
62 Ibid., p. 263.
63 Ibid., pp. 242-43.
<table>
<thead>
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<td>Hours of evening meetings (included)</td>
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<td>Total amount of mail</td>
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<td>Average amount of mail processed per day</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Time on telephone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average duration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of time</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Proportion of time</td>
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<td>Average duration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of time</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of tours</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on tours</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average duration</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of time</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Proportion of activities lasting less than nine minutes | 51% |
| Proportion lasting longer than sixty minutes           | 12% |

information about observed actions. It is not suggested that superintendents were trying not to be genuine in responding to such instruments, but that providing accurate information about their usual behavior in real, complex settings is difficult.

According to Mintzberg's study, the superintendent distributed his forty hour work week into scheduled meetings (approximately thirty hours), unscheduled meetings (one hour), telephone calls (two hours), and desk work (six hours). Half of the observed activities were completed in less than nine minutes, and only one-twelfth took more than an hour. Mintzberg emphasized the fragmentation and interruption in managerial work. Mintzberg made a conclusion which contradicts Sune Carlson's contention that managers can easily lengthen the average duration of their activities by making better use of their secretaries and by delegating work. Mintzberg noted that managers,

... chose not to free themselves of interruption or to give themselves much free time. To a large extent, it was the chief executives themselves who determined the duration of their activities. For example, the tours that they chose to take could not be interrupted by the telephone, yet they lasted, on the average only eleven minutes. Furthermore, the managers, not the other parties, terminated many of the meetings and telephone calls, and the managers frequently left meetings before they ended. They frequently interrupted their desk work to place telephone calls or to request that subordinates come by.

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66 Mintzberg, The Nature of Managerial Work, p. 34.
Mintzberg claimed that managers tolerated interruptions so as not to discourage the flow of current information. He concluded that:

... we have further indication that the manager adopts particular behavior patterns as a result of the nature of his work. The pressure of the managerial environment does not encourage the development of reflective planners, the classical literature notwithstanding. The job breeds adaptive information-manipulators who prefer the live, concrete situation. The manager works in an environment of stimulus response, and he develops in his work a clear preference for live action.67

Mintzberg also analyzed the mail received and sent out by the managers as well as their verbal contracts (telephone calls and meetings). The data collected on the superintendent, especially his network of contracts, was compared with the studies which describe the interaction between the superintendent and specific groups such as the board of education.

The Superintendent as an Interacting Member of a Social System

In the preceding section the lack of information surrounding the everyday activities of the superintendent was shown; other sources of information about the superintendency can be derived from studies which regard the superintendent as an interacting member of a social system. One might be inclined to look for a study of the "total position" of the school superintendent in the sense that there would be an interest in examining all of its positional sectors, that is, its relationship to all relevant counter positions. The lack of studies along this line prompts an alternative strategy. Glimpses of how the superintendent fits into the organizational structure, and how he

67 Ibid.
behaves in this unique position are available primarily in studies which deal with the superintendent in relation to a specific group, such as the school board and central office staff. A discussion of the literature naturally followed that pattern.

Two quite different portraits of the superintendent are prevalent in the literature. 68 The superintendent is often regarded as an educational expert who dominates policy making as a result of his access to information, claims of technical expertise, and command of specialized language. This can be contrasted to the other image which suggests that the superintendent is a "beleaguered public official, typically beset from all sides, constantly facing conflictual situations and being forced to seek support and build coalitions in order to gain the acceptance of even part of his preferred education program." In either case, the superintendent is considered in relation to other individuals and groups.

The Board of Education. The superintendent is involved in a number of relationship systems, some of which are in part formally derived in the statutes. By legal definition, the school board is the formal policy-making organ of a public school system, and the superintendent is its executive officer. The board is superordinate to the superintendent; it hires and fires him. The observation by William Boyd that two dichotomous portraits of the superintendent emerge in the literature suggests a reason for the literature depicting the

relationship between the board of education and the superintendent. Some of the studies reveal behavioral specifications for both positions. In centering attention on the superintendent-school board relationship, several studies are significant: (1) Gross explores the degree of consensus within the board and between the board and superintendent for the superintendents' role; 69 (2) Abbott examined the influence of values upon the superintendent-school board relationship; 70 (3) Minar investigates the degree of latitude for independent action of suburban school superintendents; 71 (4) Zeigler and Jennings present data which support the deference to the educational expert model; 72 and (5) Cuban corroborates Zeigler's thesis, but shows how superintendents faced with crises sometimes encounter a decided shift of power away from them. 73

An interest in the expectations for and the actual behavior of incumbents of positions in social systems prompted Neal Gross, et al. to investigate the superintendency and to account for the variability of


the behavior of incumbents of that position. Essentially, superintendents and school board members were asked to what extent they felt a superintendent (or school board member, where appropriate) was obligated to do (or "be like") with respect to specified behavioral items. Several instruments were used to ascertain the allocation of responsibilities between the superintendent and school board (division of labor), the expectations for superintendent attributes, and the expectations for superintendent performance. Gross questioned (1) the degree of role consensus required for a system to maintain itself, (2) how much disagreement a system can tolerate, and (3) how much disagreement is needed. The extent to which there is consensus on role definitions may be an important variable in an incumbent's behavior. Gross postulated that there may be a number of ranges associated with a position, in this case the superintendency.

In that expectation items were derived and selected after "an examination of hortative, periodical, and textbook literature in the field of educational administration, after informal discussions with faculty members in the field of educational administration in the

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74 Gross, et al., Explanations in Role Analysis.

75 Andrew Halpin revealed not only the lack of agreement between groups (board members, central office staff, staff members, principals, teachers) concerning their expectations as to how superintendents should behave, but also a lack of agreement between groups concerning their perception as to how the superintendent does, in fact, behave. See Andrew W. Halpin, The Leadership Behavior of School Superintendents (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1959), p. 76.
university, and after participating in conferences one cannot be certain that their behavioral specifications were more normative than descriptive in nature. The primary emphasis in this work was the testing of theoretically derived hypotheses pertaining to role theory, not in describing the superintendency.

Max Abbott found that board members whose values were most similar to those of their superintendents expressed higher confidence in those superintendents than did board members whose values were least similar. Board members were less confident in accepting recommendations from their superintendent than they were in accepting information from them or in permitting them to take action to implement board decisions without prior board approval.77

David Minar's study indicates that the role of the superintendent is influenced by the socioeconomic status of his community. Boards in high status suburban districts were inclined to validate the superintendent's action and to be concerned primarily with broad policy issues. He further indicated that superintendents in higher status districts exercise considerable prerogative in all phases of the governing process and filter available information.78 Norman Kerr documents an array of factors which tend to promote the likelihood that board members will

76 Gross, et al., Explanations in Role Analysis.
77 Abbott, "Values and Value-Perceptions in Superintendent-School Board Relationships."
78 Minar, Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities.
have an attenuated relationship with the community and be socialized into adopting the superintendent's perspective. 79

The notion that superintendents have, by any measure, a great amount of initiative and control is supported by Harmon Zeigler. 80 Zeigler notes that the superintendent emerges as the dominant actor in the agenda setting at school board meetings which puts him in a powerful position:

The power to decide what will be discussed is important in both a positive and negative sense. It is important in a negative sense because it presumably includes the power to decide what will not be discussed. In the absence of discussion, the status quo continues, and policy review, evaluation, and change are impossible. It is important in a positive sense because whoever decides what will be discussed also tends to establish the boundaries and the rules of discussion. The power to limit the topics and policy alternatives which will be entertained gives the controller of the agenda considerable power in determining what policies will be adopted. 81

It is evident that in addition to agenda-setting, the supplying of information and the making of suggestions are powers more or less shared by superintendents and boards of education. A superintendent's knowledge, professional stature, duration in office, and staff assistance, however, are factors which tend to enhance the role of the superintendent in the governing process. The board is almost totally dependent on data gathered, interpreted, and presented by the superintendent and

80 Zeigler and Jennings, Governing American Schools.
his staff, on alternatives and priorities established by them, and on their specific policy recommendations.

**The Community.** An issue underlying most of the educational politics literature is whether influence is in the hands of power elites or other community forces (such as community organizations or the electorate) or with persons who hold official positions in educational institutions. It would be an unwieldy task to review all this literature which would not prove fruitful for ascertaining detailed descriptions of superintendent behavior. Stephen Hencley, using a forced-choice questionnaire which included behavioral descriptions related to performance in task and role categories, constructed a typology of five distinct types on conflict with reference groups.\(^8^2\) A study by Donald McCarty and Charles Ramsey found an association between the type of power structure present in the community and the structure of power in the board of education, with the latter determining the role the superintendent played.\(^8^3\) They identified four significant roles based on this observation: functionary, political strategist, professional advisor, and decision maker. McCarty suggests that if one understands the type of community and the methods employed in selecting board members, the superintendent can make valid predictions concerning board members' motives. With this knowledge, the superintendent can determine

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the role he can play in policy making. Providing detailed descriptions of superintendent behavior was not crucial to this research.

Other studies report the role played by the superintendent with respect to a specific issue or policy. The cycle of influence between communities and their school boards and their superintendents is best illustrated by Laurence Iannaccone and Frank Lutz.\(^{84}\) They note that significant socioeconomic changes in a community lead to the defeat of an incumbent school board member, a subsequent power struggle within the board, followed by the involuntary separation of the superintendent, replaced by a superintendent whose values are congruent with the new school board. They hypothesized that the high attrition of superintendents in changing communities was partially due to insensitivity—arising from ideological blinders—to the need to change their role behavior.

A study by David Kirby et al. documents the superintendent's role in northern school desegregation. They reported that "action to desegregate results from superintendent action under elite pressure" and further suggested that "once the basic policy had been decided, the school board's role was diminished and the administrative skill of the superintendent was considered more crucial."\(^{85}\)

The superintendent's role in the governing process during the turbulent sixties is elucidated in two works by Larry Cuban. Cuban

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reports that Carl Hansen (former superintendent of the Washington, D.C. schools),

determined what got put on and what was left off Board of Education agendas . . . determined what alternatives (including the search to support those alternatives) were presented to the Board and the order of their presentation . . . determined what the budget priorities were (and) approved all major appointments. He installed two instructional programs from kindergarten through high school that exemplified order, efficiency and basic skills. In short, Carl Hansen managed closely the administrative machinery of schooling.\textsuperscript{86}

This superintendent-dominant/board-compliant relationship was altered when the board of education received information which portrayed a school system in serious trouble. A Columbia University study by A. Harry Passow, coupled with the court decision in Hobson vs. Hansen, condemned Hansen's policies and called for the abolition of the Track System. A similar case is made by Paul E. Peterson regarding the Chicago school system under Benjamin C. Willis in the sixties. Two major reports--one by Philip Hauser, a demographer at the University of Chicago which substantiated a high degree of pupil segregation in the Chicago school system and another by Robert Havighurst, an educator at the University of Chicago, which stressed the need for integrating the schools and recommended decentralizing the administrative structure of the school district--were rejected by the superintendent of the Chicago schools.\textsuperscript{87} In both cases outside experts were called upon to supply


\textsuperscript{87} Paul E. Peterson, School Politics Chicago Style (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).
information when superintendents had previously controlled access to information.

Cuban's study of three urban superintendents—Carl Hansen, Harold Spears, Benjamin Willis—during the turbulent sixties, also emphasizes that superintendents moved from the role of educational experts to embattled public officials. At first glance, Callahan's "vulnerability thesis" finds support in Cuban's works. Cuban suggests, however, that though superintendents have been vulnerable, they found ways of dealing with ever-threatening, turbulent surroundings. Cuban suggests that superintendents develop defenses and patterned responses to external pressure:

Each generation of schoolmen developed defenses and patterned responses to external pressure. From experience grew a folk wisdom worn smooth and polished into principles, and from these principles grew accepted practices. Some may call these principles and accepted practices the care of professionalism; others may call the very same things myths.89

Professional Peers. A study by Richard Carlson has as a major emphasis the school superintendent as an element of a social system (with incidental attention given to other actors of the school system) and looked at his role in the adoption and rates of diffusion of new

88Raymond E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Callahan viewed superintendents as vulnerable to attack from the public and especially the local boards of education. He viewed their adoption of businessmen practices and the influence of scientific management in education as "capitalization." Decisions were made, not on educational grounds, but as a way to placate critics so as to maintain their positions in the school.

89Cuban, Urban School Chiefs, p. 136.
educational practices (in this case, modern math).\textsuperscript{90} Insight into peer relationships among superintendents is gleaned from his work. Carlson assumed the rate of acceptance of a new practice or idea by an individual or adopting group was predicated on: (1) the characteristics of the adopting unit, (2) the way the adopting unit is joined to communication channels and sources of information, and (3) the position the adopting unit holds in the social structure of like units. Carlson found differential rates of interactions and status among superintendents which correlated with their districts' implementation of a modern math curriculum.

The studies by Gross, Zeigler, Minar, Cuban and Carlson are limited in that they look at the superintendent's position in dyadic relationship to one other position. No source by itself provides a complete description of superintendent's behavior with the exception of two studies, one undertaken by the Midwest Administration Center in 1958\textsuperscript{91} and another by Henry Mintzberg in 1973;\textsuperscript{92} both offer a more complete picture of the frequency and type of contacts of school superintendents.

\textbf{Observational Studies}

The Midwest Administration study used the constructs--initiating structure and consideration--proposed by John Hemphill to analyze and

\textsuperscript{90}Carlson, \textit{School Superintendents}.

\textsuperscript{91}Roald F. Campbell, \textit{et al.}, \textit{The Suburban Superintendent} (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, 1958).

\textsuperscript{92}Mintzberg, \textit{The Nature of Managerial Work}. 
classify incidents collected in structured and unstructured observations. In their study of suburban superintendents, Roald Campbell et al. used the LBDQ dimensions to screen for observing the behavior of the superintendents and as a scheme for a post hoc analysis of the incidents recorded during observations. They found that three-fourths of the superintendents' interactions were unclassifiable into the consideration-initiating structure framework, with a range of 50 to 90 percent of behavioral incidents from which neither of the dimensions could be inferred. Another "startling finding was the paucity (less than 4 percent) of incidents from which the dimension of initiating structure would be inferred." Their findings prompted them to stress that no claims were made by Hemphill as to the "breadth" of the LBDQ as a scheme for classifying behavior incidents.

In addition to obtained quantitative scores for each superintendent, excerpts of incidents observed were reported, so protocols of superintendents' interaction behaviors are available. Examples of these protocols illustrate the unique aspects of the data. The following clear-cut incident serves as an example of "initiating structure":

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93 Initiating structure refers to the leader's behavior in delineating the relationship between himself and members of the work group, and in endeavoring to establish well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication and methods of procedure. Consideration refers to the behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in the relationship between the leaders and members of his staff. John K. Hemphill, "Administration as Problem Solving," in Administrative Theory in Education (ed.) Andrew W. Halpin (Chicago: MidWest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1958), pp. 89-118.

94 Campbell, Observations of Administrative Behavior, p. 48.

95 Ibid.
Administrator I

With: The Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds (SBG) and the Director of Adult and Vocational Education (DAVE)

About: Personnel, In-service Training

The superintendent briefed the Director of Adult and Vocational Education concerning the problem of revising the training program for supervisors of custodians. They discussed the inadequacies of a job-analysis approach and the advantages of a leadership approach utilizing materials prepared by a national organization for the training of job foremen.

Supt: What about time? Do they want to do this on company time?
SBG: No, not all of it. They would be willing to give part time on their own.
Supt: What time do most of the supervisors finish work?
SBG: Around three.
Supt: If we let them off at around 2:15, allowed thirty minutes to drive here, and asked them to give about an hour, would that work?
SBG: Yes, I'm sure.

It was decided that the leadership training programs would be of interest to the supervisors--that the SBG would explain the programs to his Problems Committee, and that the SBG would work with the DAVE in determining who would participate and for what length of time. The three men were already familiar with the leadership training programs and the SBG was to meet with the custodians' Problems Committee to explain the programs in detail.

Supt: Then after meeting with your Committee, you'll get with the DAVE and work out the details, and report this back to the Committee?
SBG: Yes, I think this is the exact angle that the men will go for. I'll be calling you for help, Tom.
DAVE: Fine. I have scads of material and I'll be glad to help. . . . I was reluctant to push this area, but if the men are asking for leadership training I think it will help morale, as well.96

While another serves as an example of "consideration":

96Ibid., p. 34.
Administrator S

With: Equipment and Construction Committee

About: School Plant, Equipment

Supt: O.K. let's go down the line here and see where we stand on the $890,000 total for purchases. What is this $1500 kitchen equipment?

The business manager responded to this and the superintendent appeared satisfied with the explanation.

Supt: (Joking) Well, you seem to have redeemed yourself on this Home Ec equipment. Is this figure right?

Bus. Mgr: Yes. (He went on to explain how he had managed to get a special price.)

Supt: Do you know how much more is needed?

Bus. Mgr: That's pretty hard to say

Supt: (Joking) You've covered yourself with glory on this science equipment too. Does this include it all?

Bus. Mgr: Maybe. It's pretty hard to tell.

Prin: We just can't get a straight answer from (the Bus. Mgr.) today--he keeps hedging about all the padding he's put in this budget.

Everyone laughed.

Supt: (To Bus. Mgr.) Say, what are we going to do with all this money you've saved?97

As was noted, the researchers found that many of the interactions appeared to be unclassifiable or miscellaneous incidents; they labelled these routine social exchanges, aimless conversation, and attending to personal matters as "Ministería."98 An example of an incident that served to fill up time and space follows:

Administrator I

With: Finance Officer

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97 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
98 Ibid., p. 61.
Social Exchange

F.O.: Hi! I just dropped in. Is anything cooking?
Supt.: No. I guess not. See you today at Kiwanis, though.
F.O.: O.K. Surely will. I'll be interested in what the old gal has to say.99

Campbell, et al. also examined superintendent behavior in the performance of administrative tasks through interaction with major reference groups. Specifically, they sought answers to these questions: with whom does the superintendent interact, and what prompts interaction? Intra- and extra-organizational relationships were examined. They noted that superintendents interact with four major groups: community, professions, school board, and the school organization, itself (see Table 5). An analysis of 711 interactions observed revealed that "15 percent of them were with community groups, 3 percent with professional groups, 12 percent with the school board and 70 percent with the school organization."100 (See Figure 1) A preponderance of superintendent interactions were with the individuals and groups within the school organization. Also, superintendent interactions with other professionals were labeled "scarce:

The number of observed administrator-profession interactions may tend to suggest that this reference group is overemphasized in much of the literature.101

They add, however, that though,

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 103.
101 Ibid.
| TABLE 5a |
| MAJOR REFERENCE GROUPS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT |

**COMMUNITY**

- **Governmental**
  - Federal
  - State
  - Local

- **Non-Governmental**
  - Service Groups
  - Special Interest Groups
  - Vendors
  - Interstitial Groups
  - Non-Parents
  - Parents
  - Pupils
  - Communications Media

**PROFESSION (Groups and Individuals)**

- National
- Regional
- State
- Sub-State
- School District
- University

**SCHOOL BOARD**

**SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

- Teachers
- Line Officers
- Administrative Staff
- Under Special Contract
- Non-Instructional Personnel
- Administrative Council
- Committees

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*aAdapted from Roald Campbell, et al., Observations of Administrative Behavior, (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, 1958).*
FIGURE 1
PERCENTAGE OF EACH SUPERINTENDENT'S TOTAL INTERACTIONS
WITH EACH OF FOUR MAJOR REFERENCE GROUPS

the relative number of interactions with this reference group is small, the influence that these few interactions have on administrator behavior may be relatively great.\textsuperscript{102}

Of course, this is the point later substantiated by Richard Carlson in his study of the superintendent's role in the diffusion of innovations previously mentioned.

In addition to the information in this 1958 study, more recent data on a superintendent's network of contacts is found in Henry Mintzberg's study of managerial work previously cited. An analysis of the relationship of a suburban superintendent revealed that 65 percent of his contacts were with subordinates, 11 percent with the school board, 3 percent with his professional peers, 6 percent with clients, 10 percent with associates, and 4 percent with others.\textsuperscript{103}

Mintzberg considered--in addition to participants in interactions--the media and size of interactions and their location. Telephone calls accounted for 38 percent of the superintendent's contacts, 42 percent were scheduled meetings, 17 percent unscheduled meetings, and 3 percent observational tours. Mintzberg also looked at the number of participants in meetings and found that 48 percent were comprised of the superintendent and one other person, 11 percent included 3 people, 7 percent with 4 people, and 33 percent with more than 4 people. The

\textsuperscript{102}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{103}Mintzberg clarified the meaning of these categories: 'peer' refers to executives of organizations having no direct relationship with those of the managers (e.g., personal contacts, competitors, co-directors on external boards); 'client' includes parents associated with the school system; and 'independent' refers to individuals with no relevant affiliation (e.g., job seekers, members of the general public, students doing research).
superintendent's days, then, were characterized by a large number of brief, informal two-person contacts, the majority of which (85 percent) were conducted in his office. The figures are broken down in terms of media, number of participants, form of interaction, and location, on Table 6.104 Campbell's findings are substantiated in Mintzberg's research: subordinates consume a large portion of the superintendent's time. Mintzberg elaborates in that he shows that the superintendent contacts, compared with the other executives of his study, are characterized by greater formality. Meetings are generally scheduled, and he argues that "public organizations adopt formalized patterns of behavior because of the complex system of forces in which they find themselves."105

Summary

This chapter revealed that integrated accounts of the superintendent's daily activities are scarce. To suggest, however, that information about the superintendency does not exist would be overstating the case. In fact, a plethora of statistics describes demographic characteristics of persons selected into the status of the superintendency. As recently as 1975, Larry Cuban remarked that, "While we know to the penny what salaries administrators received, what degrees they earned, and where they were born, we know very little about what they, as executives actually do each day."106

105 Ibid., p. 263.
106 Cuban, Urban School Chiefs, p. xiv.
# TABLE 6a

## ANALYSIS OF THE CONTACT RECORD
(Based on five weeks of observation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Composite</th>
<th>Manager A</th>
<th>Manager B</th>
<th>Manager C</th>
<th>Manager D</th>
<th>Manager E (Supt.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total time in verbal contact</td>
<td>158 hrs.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of verbal contacts</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Media: % of Contacts/% of Time**

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>36%/86%¹</td>
<td>42/14</td>
<td>49/12</td>
<td>42/8</td>
<td>21/5</td>
<td>38/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled meetings</td>
<td>29/76</td>
<td>25/60</td>
<td>25/75</td>
<td>38/79</td>
<td>17/69</td>
<td>42/88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled meetings</td>
<td>27/13</td>
<td>15/10</td>
<td>25/13</td>
<td>14/11</td>
<td>52/23</td>
<td>17/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours</td>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>18/16</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>3/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Size of: Scheduled Meetings/Unscheduled Meetings/Tours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>44%/92%/77%</th>
<th>37/100/67</th>
<th>29/93/-</th>
<th>61/100/67</th>
<th>28/86/89</th>
<th>48/100/100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent with 2 people</td>
<td>14/4/12</td>
<td>25/-/-25</td>
<td>14/-/-</td>
<td>4/-/-</td>
<td>22/4/-</td>
<td>11/-/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with 3 people</td>
<td>9/3/4</td>
<td>13/-/-</td>
<td>14/11</td>
<td>4/-/-</td>
<td>11/3/11</td>
<td>7/-/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with more than 4 people²</td>
<td>34/1/8</td>
<td>25/-/-25</td>
<td>43/-/-</td>
<td>32/-/-33</td>
<td>39/2/-</td>
<td>33/-/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants: % of Contacts/% of Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>64%/48%</th>
<th>66/60</th>
<th>59/34</th>
<th>54/50</th>
<th>77/39</th>
<th>65/61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>6/2</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>14/10</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>11/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>14/12</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>1/0.2</td>
<td>1/0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codirector</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>10/28³</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>3/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer and trade organization</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>6/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>8/6</td>
<td>20/48</td>
<td>1/0.3</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>10/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier and associate</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>18/8</td>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>4/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Form of Initiation: % of Total Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>32%</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Location: % of Contacts/% of Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>75%/39%</th>
<th>87/39</th>
<th>86/38</th>
<th>66/41</th>
<th>75/38</th>
<th>85/47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager's office</td>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>22/18</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>8/6</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>1/0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of subordinate</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>7/1</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>-/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall or plant</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>5/28</td>
<td>8/16</td>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference or board room</td>
<td>8/38</td>
<td>5/21</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>10/36</td>
<td>8/43</td>
<td>13/48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ This means 36% of all verbal contacts and 8% of all time in verbal contacts were spent on the telephone.
² Most involved more than eight people.
³ Includes one seven-hour conference.
Accounts of personal adaptations to the position are also abundant in the literature. These descriptions portray the real world of the superintendent and offer a compendium of procedures each has found useful in dealing with specific problematic situations. By no means, however, do these accounts give more than a glimpse of what one needs to know to be a superintendent in a school district. George Spindler made an insightful observation that, primarily, men in positions of educational power rely on oral tradition to train, to incorporate, and to replace one another. 107

Some scholars have provided us glimpses of the superintendent and his actions, strategies, and processes. Zeigler and Minar, for example, described how school boards and superintendents negotiate domains. Although Cuban supplied some information about the activities of the superintendency, he focused on the behavior of superintendents in response to critical events, that is atypical cases. The dynamics portrayed are derived from interpretations made after the fact; Cuban's story describes organizations and environments that no longer exist.

An alternative method for analyzing the dynamics surrounding the superintendency was needed to expand our knowledge and understanding of the position. Instead of focusing on the superintendent in relation to abnormal internal events or solely on crises originating in the environment, one needs to investigate the everyday patterns of managerial activities as events are experienced by the superintendents.

The studies by Roald Campbell et al. (the Midwest Administration Center) and by Henry Mintzberg typify this approach. This stance did not, however, negate the possibility of crises or difficulties impinging upon the subject school districts and superintendents.

The available information surrounding the superintendency confirmed that a study was needed which treated the commonplace activities of the superintendent's daily life as a topic of empirical study. The contribution of this study was in dealing specifically with the position of the superintendency and the ordinary, artful ways incumbents produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

To this point discussions have been presented concerning the literature pertinent to understanding the activities of superintendents. There has been some discussion about the inadequacy of these data in providing a complete picture of the superintendent's everyday life, with the notable exceptions of the study of suburban superintendents under the direction of Roald Campbell and Luvern Cunningham and a study of five executives, one of whom was a suburban superintendent, by Henry Mintzberg.

Taken collectively the literature leaves some unanswered questions. Specific details or segments of the activities of superintendents are available, but an integrated account of their everyday activities is not. The ways in which the superintendent operates--the techniques, devices, procedures, relations, and content--that distinguish this position from others in the educational organization are of interest. A desire to fill this void became the impetus for this research into the mundane and commonplace world in which the superintendent finds himself and must act.

A study which involved lengthy observational data collection was undertaken to describe the superintendent as an interacting member of
a social system. Several questions guided the inquiry into the actual
job—its structure and content—of the superintendent and are listed as
the following:

1. Where does the superintendent spend his time? What kinds
of information does he process? With whom must he work
and at whose request? What is the purpose and duration
of each activity and contact?\(^1\) Is it as Wilson suggests
that the most typical characteristic of the superin-
tendent's day is its dissimilarity to the day before?\(^2\)

2. Do superintendents differentiate their role behavior, as
Halpin\(^3\) indicates, when dealing with different interest
groups?

3. Are superintendents, as March\(^4\) claims, nearly indis-
tinguishable in their behaviors, performances, abilities
and values?

4. What recurring and useful rules, strategies, or tactics
of administrative action are used to cope with the
uncertainty surrounding an educational organization?

Methodology

To discover answers to these questions and thus to provide a
description of the everyday life of a school superintendent, an empiri-
cal study based on the direct observation of the superintendency posi-
tion in three suburbs contiguous to a large midwestern city was

\(^1\)These questions were borrowed from Henry Mintzberg, The Nature
of Managerial Work (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 23 because of
their demonstrated utility in Mintzberg's work.

\(^2\)Robert Wilson, The Modern Superintendent: His Principles and

\(^3\)Andrew Halpin, Leadership Behavior of School Superintendents,
School Community Development Monograph No. 4 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio

\(^4\)James C. March and James G. March, "Almost Random Careers: The
Wisconsin School Superintendency, 1940-1972," Administrative Science
undertaken. Consideration was given to the extent to which structure, or frame of reference, would be utilized in the collection of data. A combination of structured and unstructured observation was deemed necessary. An attempt was made to record completely and objectively everything that occurred; the observed behavior was then categorized according to a pre-imposed structure developed by Henry Mintzberg.\(^5\) In using both structured and unstructured observation, the emphasis remained upon securing an accurate description of incidents of superintendent behavior.

This study was designed to focus on the job rather than the man, on the basic similarities in superintendent's work rather than on differences, and on the essential content of the work rather than its peripheral characteristics.\(^6\) In other words, the points of focus were observed behavior, not on traits or capacities of the superintendent; descriptions of behavior (frequency and type) not evaluations of behavior; and behavior of the superintendent, not others in the school district.

The techniques of description necessitated adopting the role of an observer. John Lofland characterizes the role of the participant observer as that of a reporter:

> Using the term 'reporter' in the general sense of 'he who makes a report' it can be said, first, that the reporter should have himself been close to the people he reports on.

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\(^6\)For this reason, well-known superintendents were not selected for this study as they were in Cuban's *Urban School Chiefs Under Fire*. 
By the term 'close' I refer to four types of proximity. (1) He should have been close in the physical sense of conducting his own life in face-to-face proximity to the persons he tells about. (2) This physical proximity should have extended over some significant period of time and variety of circumstances. (3) The reporter should have developed closeness in the social sense of intimacy and confidentiality. . . . (4) He should have conducted his recording activities in such a way that his reportage can give close and searching attention to minute matters.

Second, the report should be truthful. It should describe what the reporter in good faith believes actually went on; it should be factual.

Third, the report should contain a significant amount of pure description of action, people, activities, and the like.

Fourth, fully to capture the reality of a place, the report should contain direct quotations from the participants as they speak and/or from whatever they might write down.7

The task of the reporter, then, is to get involved in the world of the participants within a given organization while at the same time maintaining enough detachment from that situation so as to be able to identify the manner in which participants structure, order, and account for their experiences. There are a range of roles open to researchers employing anthropological methodology. Lutz and Iannaccone indicate that three roles are meaningful for the study of educational organizations: (1) the participant as observer, (2) the observer as a limited participant, and (3) the observer as a non-participant.8 The participant as observer is a "person who, by chance or intent, is entitled to a


role in the system he intends to study. He does not have to be invited in; he is in." The role of the observer as a participant differs in that "the observer does not naturally occupy a role that would exist whether or not he was doing research." This was the role assumed by William Whyte in *Street Corner Society*: "it allows the researcher more freedom to withdraw from certain activities and to interact with different and opposing groups." The observer as non-participant is "one that makes every effort not to impinge upon the social system."^9^

The observer assumed a non-participant rather than a participant observer role in this study. Maintaining a non-participant status was difficult. On numerous occasions, the superintendents attempted to draw the observer into a consultant role. It was especially difficult to maintain this relationship when superintendents were alone in their offices; they appeared to be uncomfortable being watched. They felt obliged to discuss out loud what they were discussing with themselves internally. It was difficult, but necessary, to breach the social situation and not respond in a contributory manner. The potential effect of the observer on the research situation became strikingly apparent during a late afternoon lunch with a superintendent on the last day of observation. The superintendent was discussing his proposal to the school board to "go on split sessions" at the middle school. In clarifying the organization of split sessions, the observer inquired as to how students were scheduled during a temporary closedown of some buildings during energy shortages the previous year. This mere inquiry suggested an

^9^ibid., p. 111.
alternative to the superintendent which he presented to an informal meeting with two principals after lunch. One might even wonder if the superintendent felt obliged to use this idea as an act of courtesy to the researcher.

The rationale for pursuing anthropological methodology was that almost no attention has been given in the literature on school administration to what school superintendents actually do. That is not to imply a lack of any information, but that most of the literature tends to be prescriptive in its approach—it tells superintendents and would-be superintendents what they ought to do and remains seemingly unaware of what is actually going on. What little data exist on the actual daily behavior of school administrators depend mostly on self-reporting bordering on folklore. To a literature dealing almost exclusively with the behavior of superintendents as it ought to be or as it is interpreted and reported by the person performing the role, this study adds another dimension: what a superintendent actually does as observed by someone else.

Methods used in data collection included: observation and recording of descriptive data, structured interview guides, interaction frequency tallies, and review of written records (newspaper articles, official minutes, letters, and speeches). At first, in each case, superintendents described their paths to the position, explained the organization and its procedures to the observer, and provided copies of the superintendent's annual report and other written documents pertaining to policies and operations in the school district. This body
of preliminary data was collected before the actual observation began. 10

Three strategies were employed to gather information on the structure and content of the superintendents' activities: unstructured observation to describe incidents, structured observation to gather enumeration data to document frequency of certain events, and open ended interviewing to learn institutional norms and statuses and to clarify administrative processes of the superintendency. During the observation phase, two types of data were collected, anecdotal and structured. The anecdotal data included detailed descriptions of critical or interesting activities, exhibits of correspondence, and background notes relevant to activities. Structured data were collected on the pattern of activity throughout every minute of the workday and were maintained in three records: a detailed chronology of the activities of the superintendent's day, a record of all items of written communication (inter- and intra-office mail plus incoming and outgoing mail), and a detailed record of all verbal contacts (meetings, tours, and phone calls).

Selection of Subject Superintendents

Due to limitations of time and financial resources, participating school districts were limited to those located in proximity to a midwestern city. Three superintendents were observed for one week each and interviewed subsequent to the observation phase. The field study

10 The preliminary interview served several purposes, most important of which was establishing a non-threatening relationship with each superintendent.
methodology had further implications for subject selection. Potential subjects were contacted, the study briefly described, and copies of the research proposal with an explanatory cover letter sent to superintendents who expressed initial interest. Of the five superintendents initially contacted, only two agreed to participate. A third volunteered during a second round of contacts. Reasons for non-participation, as well as for willingness to participate, varied. One superintendent returned the copy of the research proposal with a letter indicating that, "this is the time in my yearly workload that I visit schools to observe in the classrooms... I'm not sure of the effect upon your [sic] staff during visitations..." Another superintendent delayed making a commitment either way. At one point in time he indicated that, "last week would have been perfect for observation; I was busy in negotiations and had meetings every night." It was inferred that he did not want to be observed during a depressed cycle of activities.

Perhaps it was not coincidental that two of the three subject superintendents arranged to be observed during the week in which a regularly scheduled board of education meeting was to be held. The third subject superintendent who volunteered began to recruit additional subjects during a luncheon meeting of area district superintendents. The superintendents permitted the observer to watch them in almost all types of work situations including board meetings, staff meetings, conferences with staff, conferences with citizens, and moments alone.

Common to all at the time of study were two basic factors. (1) Their position: each was a superintendent of a unified suburban school district. (2) Certain basic aspects of their socialization:
all were in their first superintendency; all were "cosmopolitans" as opposed to "locals" (using Alvin Gouldner's categorization); all had previous experience in an educational organization; and all received advanced graduate training (two had Ph.D.s while the other was completing a dissertation).

The Results of the Study

Each of these superintendents was observed at work for one week which included observing evening meetings when possible. The superintendents, all together, worked an excess of 130 hours. In total, 269 pieces of written communication reached their desks, 105 pieces were sent out, and 307 distinct verbal contacts were made. In all, the written communication and contact records contained 681 entries, categorized in a number of ways following Mintzberg's scheme. Before explicating the categorization process, aspects of Mintzberg's work which proved to be problematic for the researcher shall be explained.

Problems Encountered with Mintzberg's Work

Mintzberg criticized Peter Drucker for excluding certain activities that managers do as inherently nonmanagerial. Mintzberg refers to what Drucker has written:

Every manager does many things that are not managing. He may spend most of his time on them. A sales manager makes a statistical analysis or placates an important customer. A foreman repairs a tool or fills in a production report. A manufacturing manager designs a new plant layout or tests new materials. A company president works through the details of a bank loan or negotiates a big contract—or spends dreary hours presiding at a dinner in honor of long-service employees. All these things pertain to a particular
function. All are necessary, and have to be done well. But they are apart from the work which every manager does whatever his function or activity, whatever his rank and position, work which is common to all managers and peculiar to them.11

Mintzberg further suggests that Drucker operates from a "preconceived notion of the job" which may not be consonant with the facts.12 Erving Goffman makes an important and useful distinction which illustrates Drucker's concern:

I suppose one might want to ask what a salesgirl does in a store by virtue of her being a salesgirl. The test of close analysis, however, is to study what a person who is a salesgirl does in a store that persons who are not salesgirls do not do, for much of what only salesgirls do in stores is not done by them qua salesgirls and has nothing to do with sales.13

Drucker's "preconceived notion" seems to make sense, for in general not everything a person does while on the job is a job related activity, and is not, in a strict sense, part of that job. Yet, Mintzberg's own account may be suspect, for it seems that either he has done exactly what he accuses Drucker of doing, or he has presented us with a distorted picture of the managerial workday.14

14 It seems to make good sense to presuppose, or at least hold open the possibility that not all things that the manager does are managerial. In other words I do not hold that what Drucker has done is necessarily a methodological mistake. The way that I account for non-managerial activities will be explained below, and contrasted with Mintzberg's approach.
One way to present the problem with Mintzberg's study is to note the unclarity surrounding his accounting for 100 percent of the manager's time in the chronology record. This figure must represent either (a) 100 percent of managerial time in which case Mintzberg must have ignored what he took to be nonmanagerial activities, and in which case he has done what he accuses Drucker of having done; or (b) the figure of 100 percent represents the total time spent "on the job." If this is the case, then Mintzberg must hold that everything the manager does is managerial, but this is quite a difficult position to hold. It appears that managers are, for the most part, typical human beings with families to attend to, errands to run, friendships to pursue, and meals to eat. It can be safely assumed that at least some of the workday is spent dealing with these and other non-managerial tasks, so that part of that 100 percent is non-managerial. Views are expressed which suggest that 8 to 12 percent of the workday is "wasted," and the present study shows that some time cannot be accounted for as inherently managerial. The point is, though, that Mintzberg's data must be distorted in that (1) he does not show the manager as being a typical human being during the day, but instead presents him as spending the entire workday engaged in work; and (2) we are unable to tell wherein the error lies; that is, we do not know under what category he placed these nonmanagerial activities, and cannot detect which category(ies) is distorted.

There is reason to believe that Mintzberg does present a distorted picture of managerial work. For one thing, he notes that there
was only one instance in which he encountered something that he took to be non-managerial:

In only one case did a manager undertake work that was considered to be nonmanagerial—in this instance he was involved in the specialized work of his organization. Even in this case it was his managerial skill that caused the manager to become involved. Manager A was asked to "role play" director of a company to which a consulting report of his firm was submitted for preliminary review. The work was part of a consulting contract; his time was billed to the client; and although he was acting as manager, Manager A was actually performing as consultant.15

It is rather difficult to believe, in light of what has been said above, that there was but one instance of non-managerial activity in 202 hours of observation. Indeed, this mention of "role-playing" by the manager suggests that Mintzberg gives a distorted account, since it is odd that he should present this as a nonmanagerial activity when it is at least a borderline case, and may well be a clear case of managerial activities of the sort of influence-building, hegemonic activities (a sort of "godfather" activity, doing a favor for another so that he can collect a "debt" at a later time).

In addition, this research focusing on the superintendency indicates what anyone would assume to be the case: not all the manager's day is managerially consumed. During nine percent of the 129 composite hours worked, superintendents were engaged in clearly non-managerial activities of the type mentioned above; and in addition, lunch taken alone and time taken out of the day for personal errands such as getting a haircut or a dental appointment were excluded from the total hours worked. However, cases exemplified by a situation in which a

superintendent went to get a cup of coffee and "ran into" the members of a screening committee for the selection of the junior high principal were counted as managerial activities. These serendipitous encounters were instrumental in informally securing important information.

Another aspect of Mintzberg's methodology which emerged as problematic was the equivocation of 'role', 'purpose' and 'function.' Mintzberg states that "each role refers back to a set of observable activities from which it derives." In fact, Mintzberg's notion of roles appears to be a redefinition of his purpose categories. For instance, the negotiations purpose becomes the negotiator role, the problems purpose becomes the disturbance-handler role, and the giving information purpose becomes the disseminator role. There appear to be two overlapping problems. It is unenlightening to simply take the categories and relabel them. It is almost as though the use of these (purpose) categories begs the question as to what these roles are, for they are to become the roles. By definitional fiat the categories are turned into the roles which tells us nothing about the roles themselves. The concept 'role' is rather vague and nondefinitive. Mintzberg, however, used the concept without any attempt to define or delimit the concept as if he assumed an immediate consensus.16

Since Mintzberg emphasizes that "the key to our study was the categorization of the purpose," and "for each distinct activity one

question was asked repeatedly—why did the manager do this?" close analysis of his purpose categories is in order. This close examination of the different categories revealed a confusion between the purpose of a written communication or verbal contact and its function in the organization. This is best clarified through examples. The category authority requests describes the purpose of certain pieces of written communication:

An average of once per day the managers received a written authority request from a subordinate (a) seeking authorization for an exception to normal operating procedures (to show a client an internal report, to allow a teacher to take a leave of absence), (b) seeking approval for a new program or procedure (to approve a new pay scale), or (c) seeking acceptance for a decision or report, usually associated with a resource or policy commitment (to give the go-ahead on construction or to bring in a consultant). In essence, the manager was presented with one alternative, and was asked to give a yes-or-no answer.

while the category reference data clearly points to how the information functions in the organization, not its purpose:

A large proportion of mail—1 piece in 7—contained information which was to be used for reference only. (a) Some came from the organization—meeting agendas, resumes of new employees, for example. (b) Another large portion came from outside organizations, not so much for the manager as for his organization: annual reports of clients, address changes, statements of industrial policy by trade organizations, and so on. (c) Finally, trade organizations and external boards of directors sent correspondence concerning scheduling arrangements. Reference mail received cursory attention.

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18 Ibid., p. 247.
19 Ibid., p. 246.
The equivocation of 'purpose' and 'function' is particularly noticeable in the category problems and pressures:

An infrequent but important type of mail was the correspondence that carried information related to clearly-defined problems, demands, and pressures. These came from subordinates, and from outside associates, like clients and suppliers. The managers reacted frequently, replying or forwarding the correspondence to a subordinate. The examples were varied: a charity organization asking why the firm did not make a donation, a change demanded by a client in work done, a petition from department heads requesting creation of a new committee, a clipping of a competitor's advertisement with a letter noting infringement of copyright, a request by a parent to redistrict so that his children could attend school closer to home.20

It seems to be the case that to categorize a piece of information as a problem is to state how it functions in the organization. His charity organization example could be easily categorized as solicitation or a status request. His category 'idea' is another example of this confusion:

Occasionally--on the average of twice per week--a letter containing an unsolicited idea reached the managers' desks. Some of these came from subordinates, others from personal contacts, still others from independents hoping their ideas would receive consideration. These ideas were not ignored. Most were acknowledged or replied to, or were forwarded to the appropriate person. In one case a letter came from a friend of Manager A advising him of the opportunity for a consulting contract in a large school system; in another case a consultant gave Manager B information on a possible acquisition; Manager D was informed of a new invention.21

Since the purpose of sending an idea might be (a) to give the manager some information he does not have or (b) a strategy to build a coalition

20 Ibid., p. 248.
21 Ibid.
of support, providing a separate category for ideas appears to be an unnecessary distinction.

Especially confusing is Mintzberg's lumping together that mail which the manager initiates, for whatever reason, as "self-initiated mail":

Only once per day, on the average, the manager initiated a piece of mail. More often than not it was an inconsequential one--acknowledging a visit, a presentation, or a verbal request, or scheduling an appointment. The few more important pieces of self-initiated mail were designed to (a) pressure a subordinate to complete overdue work, (b) inform directors of the docket for a meeting (one included the chief executive's annual statement), and (c) inform subordinates of the events of a recent trip.22

A lack of discrimination among mail falling into this category dismisses that part of the manager's work which, to some extent, is created by him. Some insight might also be derived from these activities. The three superintendents of the observer's study initiated a total of 37 pieces of mail compared with the 25 pieces of mail initiated by the five managers of Mintzberg's study. This self-initiated written communication represented 35 percent of the total output as compared with 11 percent in Mintzberg's study.

James March notes that Mintzberg made an important contribution in his careful look at how managers organize their time; however, his comments suggest some support for the criticism of Mintzberg put forth in this chapter:

Mintzberg also tries to identify the roles that a manager performs. His breakdown is based on data that are more difficult to interpret and, therefore, subject to greater doubt than the data on the allocation of time; but his categories

22 Ibid.
are more carefully based on empirical observations than others in the literature. . . . Although the process of deduction--first from data to roles and then from roles to the skills required--is not always clear, Mintzberg's judgments are informed by as good an understanding of what executives actually do as we are likely to obtain.\(^{23}\)

The contribution of Mintzberg's research and the problematic aspects of his interpretations had to be weighed by this researcher. His framework was followed because it enabled the researcher to investigate what administrators do and to ascertain the ordinary organization of the life of incumbents of the superintendency.

**Recording and Coding of Observations**

In the next section, the recording and coding of observations will be described to clarify the process that was used. A detailed example of a superintendent's morning will be presented, using incidents experienced by one of the superintendents of the study. The transcription of these data into the three records is also demonstrated.

The observer arrived at the superintendent's office at 8:00 a.m., and the superintendent was already meeting with a male high school teacher behind closed doors. Dr. Beta had scheduled this meeting yesterday afternoon for 7:35 a.m. so as not to conflict with the teacher's responsibilities. Dr. Beta requests that the teacher assume some extra responsibilities for the next school year, editing the district newsletter which is distributed quarterly to all residents of the community. Toward the end of the meeting, voices became audible behind the closed door. As soon as the door opens at 8:20 a.m. the secretary enters the office and reviews the day's schedule and messages received while in conference.

Dr. Beta begins to make call backs at 8:25; after an unsuccessful attempt to reach one person, he notes on

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the message slip the date and time he tried to return the call.

At 8:40 he calls his secretary using the intercom and asks her to get four people on the phone. (He also specifies the order.) He then proceeds to process his in-basket items when the telephone rings. The junior high school principal is returning the superintendent's call. "Would you check on the grade in math for student X?" As he hangs up, he returns to his desk work:

- A letter from an alumnus association specifies the agenda for an upcoming meeting. The letter is skimmed and filed by the superintendent.

- A courtesy copy of a memo from the Chairperson of the physical education department reports the minutes of the last department meeting. The memo is skimmed and put into the "out" basket for filing.

- A brochure from a publishing company "Essence of Adolescence" is skimmed, a routing slip directed to building principals is attached and put into the "out" basket.

- A book published by NIE, Violent Schools, Safe Schools is skimmed, a routing slip directed to building principals is attached, and put into the "out" basket.

At 8:45, the phone rings. A professor from a nearby university is returning the superintendent's call. The superintendent states that "Ms. X was critical of our physical education teacher and I wanted to straighten things out." The superintendent is told that the student teacher in question was reprimanded for her unprofessional behavior and at 8:48 hangs up and returns to processing in-basket items:

- A copy of the student high school newspaper informs the superintendent of operations in the high school. The newspaper is put into the "out" basket for filing.

- A luncheon invitation from an elementary school is read, and he writes a note to the secretary to R.S.V.P.

- A report from a principal informs the superintendent of the "Safety Patrol" at one elementary. This prompts the superintendent to write a note to the administrative assistant to put out another job description.

- A courtesy copy of a memo from the school nurse informs the superintendent of the upcoming posture screening program.
The superintendent glances at the letter and puts it into the "out" basket for filing.

At 8:52, the elementary principal in charge of special education telephones. "Dave, I sent you a note to have the school psychologist present at the board meeting, but I want to change that." The superintendent is lining up potential board meeting reports. "How about one on What School Psychologists Do? ... also, add the speech therapist, nurse, special education ... different programs ... kids going to Delta Schools, and so on ... Say, did you get my memo I sent on gifted kids? ... Okay."

At 8:57, he returns to his desk work:

- The superintendent dictates a letter to inform a teacher of the reasons for denial of a continuing contract.

- A report on the status of special education programs in the district from a principal is skimmed and put into the "out" basket for filing.

- A letter from a community citizen gives opinions on the recent failure of the bond issue. It is carefully read and put into the "out" basket for filing.

- A form from the state education department announces a bus driver course which the superintendent signs.

At 9:05, the administrative assistant drops in and inquires about the selection of a teacher for the gifted and talented program; he reminds the superintendent that the job must be posted.

While the administrative assistant is talking, the superintendent continues to process his mail. ... "I have a letter here from a teacher requesting a two year leave. Has that been done in the past?" The superintendent asks the administrative assistant to check in the policy book.

- A note from a principal requests information about the last day for custodians in classes at a nearby technical school. The superintendent writes on the note "Check with Marlan" and puts the note into the "out" basket.

To the administrative assistant: "Should we pursue the double session thing?" The administrative assistant responds "We have to be concerned with equitable assignments at the elementary." While he is talking, the superintendent
signs approximately twenty absence reports, purchase orders and supplemental pay forms. He also processes the following:

- A courtesy copy of a letter (from the high school principal) notifies the parents of the suspension of their son.

- Copies of honor roll lists from the high school and middle school are glanced at and filed.

- A copy of an exclusion list (of students without required immunizations) from the middle school principal is skimmed and filed.

- The superintendent signs a letter he dictated yesterday to the city solicitor requesting information on legal questions.

The superintendent talks while processing the above. "I want to make it difficult for the board to back down . . . get me information on the additional staff we'll need due to program expansion, split sessions, and expanded enrollment." Administrative assistant: "We should change language expression to an elective if you think reading is a higher priority, we must make the change."

Superintendent: "Let's go to a six period day." Administrative Assistant: "We'd have to cut out home arts." Superintendent: "Go to a three day cycle . . . you'd have longer periods. Administrative Assistant: "What about problems with standards . . . have to go to seven period day to offer reading . . . require art, music, or language expression . . . we could eliminate study halls."

The administrative assistant leaves, and the superintendent proceeds to file copies of school newsletters from three schools in the district.

At 9:30, the middle school principal enters his office and inquires about getting an additional secretary to type purchase orders at the end of the year. The superintendent laughs and agrees to give the principal an extra three days of secretarial time.

At 9:30, a scheduled meeting of all administrators begins.

The chronology record notes times and basic activities, and is cross-referenced with the other two records. It shows at a glance the distribution of scheduled and unscheduled meetings, desk work, phone
calls, and tours. The activities reported above are shown in Table 7. In the reference column, meetings, telephone calls and tours are annotated with sequential letters, and pieces of mail, with numbers.

### TABLE 7
A CHRONOLOGY RECORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Scheduled meeting</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>1 hr. 20 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>End of meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:21</td>
<td>Desk work</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>23 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:44</td>
<td>Phone call</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>1 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Desk work</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:47</td>
<td>Phone call</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:50</td>
<td>Desk work</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>2 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:52</td>
<td>Phone call</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:57</td>
<td>Desk work</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>8 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:05</td>
<td>Unscheduled meeting</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>25 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Desk work during meeting)</td>
<td>13-34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>End of meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:31</td>
<td>Unscheduled meeting</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>1 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:33</td>
<td>Scheduled meeting</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>1 hr. 27 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meetings are defined as **unscheduled** (by the superintendent) when someone just "drops in" for the purpose of meeting with him. **Encounter** refers to a chance meeting in the hall; while **tour** refers to promenades taken by the superintendent to observe activity or deliver
information. *Desk work* refers to the time the superintendent spends at
his desk either processing mail, writing memos, and scheduling
activities. *Duration* is recorded in minutes; activities lasting less
than one minute are recorded as lasting one minute.

The *written communications record* details the nature of the mail
received and generated by the superintendent. The written communica-
tions processed in the above example of a superintendent's morning are
presented in Table 8. *Form*, *sender*, and *attention* are straightforward
categorizations. Recorded in the *purpose* column however, was a brief
description of the content of the communication. Each communication was
later analyzed as to purpose and notations made, but the original con-
tent was not obliterated with the *purpose* categorization. This was done
because of the difficulty encountered with Mintzberg's categories.
*Action* indicates the manager's reaction to it (when it occurs during
the same day). The written communication originated by the superin-
tendent was also recorded similarly.

The *contact record* reports details on telephone calls, scheduled
and unscheduled meetings, tours and encounters. A contact record
developed for the above scenario is shown in Table 9. *Medium* is re-
corded as it is on the chronology record and position of participants
and number is also noted. (Participants are later categorized as to
subordinate, director, client, and so on.) *Initiation* describes the
stimulus for the contact--"self" for superintendent, "other" for the
other person in a contact, "clock" if the contact is regularly
scheduled (as in the case of board of education meetings). Again,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>SENDER</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>ATTN.</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>university alumni association</td>
<td>agenda for upcoming meeting</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>memo</td>
<td>P.E. chairperson (teacher)</td>
<td>minutes (informing)</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>brochure</td>
<td>publisher mailing list</td>
<td>info &quot;Essence of Adolescence&quot;</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>FYI: principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>NIE</td>
<td>info Violent Schools/Safe Schools</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>FYI: principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>high school principal</td>
<td>courtesy copy (informing)</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>FYI: principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>luncheon invitation read note to sec. to RSVP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>informing</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>FYI: AA to put other Job descrip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>letter  cc</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>informing re: post-screening</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>superintendent</td>
<td>to inform teacher of reasons for denial of contract</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>send out - sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>informing on special ed program</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>community citizen</td>
<td>opinion re: bond issue</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>form</td>
<td>state educ. assoc.</td>
<td>announce bus driving course</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>2 yr. leave of absence request</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>re: custodian work days</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>forms</td>
<td>teachers</td>
<td>Absence reports</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>superintendent</td>
<td>seek info re: legal questions fr. city solicitor</td>
<td>proof</td>
<td>sign - note to send</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>copy of letter to parents of suspended students</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>h.s. principal</td>
<td>honor roll lists</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>middle school principal</td>
<td>honor roll lists</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>memo    cc</td>
<td>nurse</td>
<td>exclusion lists due to immunization policy</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>report on statewide music competition</td>
<td>skim</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>newsletter</td>
<td>elem. principal</td>
<td>informing (cc)</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>newsletter</td>
<td>principal (elem.)</td>
<td>informing of school activities</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>newsletter</td>
<td>principal (middle school)</td>
<td>informing of school activities</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>form</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>bldg. use report (rental)</td>
<td>glance</td>
<td>file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>PARTICIPANT</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>INITIATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>scheduled</td>
<td>to request teacher to be editor of district newsletter</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>desk work</td>
<td>to review day and calendar, messages received and to arrange call backs</td>
<td>secretary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>phone call</td>
<td>to check on grade of student</td>
<td>high school principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>phone call</td>
<td>to check on student teacher remarks</td>
<td>professor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>phone call</td>
<td>to line up future reports for board meetings</td>
<td>elementary principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>unscheduled</td>
<td>seeks info re: selection of teacher for gifted and talented, program</td>
<td>administrative assistant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>and staff needs related to split sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>unscheduled</td>
<td>to request additional secretarial time</td>
<td>junior high principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>scheduled</td>
<td>to review incidental items, to seek input for board meeting with respect</td>
<td>5 principals administrative assistant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>to split sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
instead of noting "purpose" a description of the content of interaction was noted.

Each superintendent was observed for five days (in one case these days were not consecutive). Field notes were taken, and each evening the notes were transcribed into these records; anecdotal notes about the day's activities were also made. An analysis of these enumeration data follows in the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A description of the invariant aspects of the everyday work-related activities of school superintendents necessitates drawing a basic distinction between 'characteristics' and 'content' of the superintendent's weekday. 'Characteristics' refers to descriptive accounts of where superintendents work, with whom, how long, and with what media. On the other hand, 'content' refers to what activities superintendents carry out and why they do so. The conclusions of this chapter are based primarily on the findings of this empirical study juxtaposed with Mintzberg's findings in his study of the chief executives of five middle- to large-sized organizations.

Mintzberg examined six sets of characteristics of managerial work:

1. the quantity and pace of the manager's work,
2. the patterns in his activities,
3. the relationship, in his work, between action and reflection,
4. his use of different media,
5. his relationship to a variety of contacts, and
6. the interplay between rights and duties.¹

¹Mintzberg, The Nature of Managerial Work, p. 28.
The prominent propositions arising from his investigations are:

1. the manager works at an unrelenting pace;\(^2\)
2. his activity is characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation;\(^3\)
3. the manager gravitates toward the more active elements of his work;\(^4\)
4. he demonstrates strong attraction to verbal media;\(^5\)
5. he maintains communication relationships with three groups—superiors, outsiders, and subordinates;\(^6\) and
6. his job reflects a blend of rights and duties.\(^7\)

These propositions guide the discussion of the characteristics of the superintendents' work related activities.

The Structure of Superintendents' Work

The three subject superintendents' were observed to be working a total of 129 hours (based on three weeks of observation) which averaged 43 hours per week, with a low of 36 hours and a high of 52\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours. In addition to the data collected during the observation phase of the research, superintendents were asked to describe their typical working day plus specify any weekends or evenings in which they were engaged in work-related activities. The responses of the superintendents are

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 29.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 31.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 35.
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 38.
\(^6\)Ibid., p. 44.
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 48.
congruent with Knezevich's survey which indicates that superintendents of districts of comparable size report working a total of 55 hours per week. Mintzberg, Carlson and Whyte suggest that managers seldom stop thinking about their work. A similar conclusion can be derived from the following responses of the subject superintendents:

Superintendent A--I am in the office approximately 35 hours per week. I come to work about 9:00 a.m. (unless I have a scheduled meeting, like today I met with the negotiator for the teachers at 7:45) and leave around 4:30 p.m. Usually I take an hour and a half for lunch. Today I will not take that long because I have a meeting with a parent. The board gives me a half day off per week to write, play golf or consult, and I take it. The board also gives me 30 days off, or six weeks, a year. I don't take more than 3 weeks at a time, and I can leave virtually on a moment's notice. I don't take any reading--professional journals--home in the evening. I spend many hours thinking about this place, where it is going. Excluding nightmares, I probably spend 60 hours per week doing the job of superintending. I am a human being masquerading as a superintendent. I experience some role conflict when I must enact the figurehead role.

Superintendent B--I come to the office usually between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m.; spend the day in the office or a meeting; probably take 45 minutes for lunch; go home probably between 5:00 and 5:30 p.m.; and have at least three meetings a week usually from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Board meetings, of course, last longer. During the school year, you have to attend all the football games if possible, basketball games, and a couple of wrestling matches. I do very poorly on attending baseball games. I do not work on Saturdays. I tend to work at home on Sunday on school related things... mostly paper-work, organizing what I am going to do for the week... writing memos, maybe... lots of time financial things, budgets... things that really cannot be interrupted. I take home work every night. Sometimes I spend maybe an hour or two, and that is all... depends on how I feel... usually things I ought to do for the next day... reading.

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8Knezevich, The American School Superintendent, p. 56.

Superintendent C--I guess the last few years I have considered myself on duty all the time. I arrive at work early in the morning around 7:00 a.m.; I have breakfast after I arrive. In other words, I get things started and then leave here at ten minutes till 8 and return around 8:30, and stay through the day. Usually every evening... No, that's not fair... Four evenings a week I try to attend as many meetings and functions... as you get into the school year apparently four evenings are enough... these are usually ceremonial duties, making an appearance somewhere, a banquet or a meeting. Sometimes it is participatory decision-making, but it tends to lean toward the observing kind of role... attending a school play, PTA meeting, that kind of thing. I would suggest that four or five times a month I have to lead some kind of meeting. I usually try to avoid work related activity on Sunday. We may sometimes entertain people on Sunday who have, in one way or another, something to do with the school district or schools in general. Saturday... typically I'll work all Saturday morning, and then during the school year there is usually some kind of function to attend.

Carlson suggests that this pace has certain deleterious effects, including intellectual isolation and limited opportunities for friendships. 10

Superintendents, however, indicated unique ways for combating the intellectual isolation. One superintendent reported reading current novels and pseudo-psychological works (he named Passages) and spending spare time on his boat, and another enjoyed "catching the latest movies, preferably comedies and not the serious type of the late sixties."

Although Mintzberg found "no break in the pace of activity during office hours,"11 the superintendents seemed to be in control, whenever possible, of this pacing. Superintendents left the office for breakfast or coffee, ran official and personal errands, or made observational tours when time alone or just a slowed down pace was

10 Sune Carlson, Executive Behavior, p. 75.

needed. Superintendents came in later the morning following a board meeting and sometimes left earlier in the afternoon, as well. This was done only occasionally—and was balanced with those days the superintendent skipped lunch—but seemed to be one of the perquisites of the job.

Mintzberg documents the pace of activity of the five executives, "The mail, telephone calls, and meetings accounted for almost every minute from the moment these men entered their offices in the morning until they departed in the evenings." While the distribution of the superintendents' time is comparable to the five executives of Mintzberg's study, 9 percent of the superintendent's day was spent pacing, daydreaming, shining shoes, drinking coffee, shuffling papers, and so on. In spite of this, each superintendent averaged 22 pieces of written communication, 10 phone calls, 9 meetings, and 1 tour per day as shown on Table 10. The end of a scheduled meeting frequently became the beginning of an unscheduled meeting as subordinates quickly slipped into offices as doors opened. Two of the superintendents engaged in parallel processing--talked on the phone, opened mail, signed letters, met with other subordinates--while meeting with their administrative assistants.

The superintendents felt compelled to do a great amount of work, and the amount of available time was a critical factor in determining

\[12\] Ibid.
### TABLE 10
ANALYSIS OF THE CHRONOLOGY RECORD - DISTRICTS COMPARED
BASED ON THREE WEEKS OF OBSERVATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours Worked</strong></td>
<td>36 hr.</td>
<td>40 hr. 40 min.</td>
<td>52 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>129 hr. 10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours in Travel to Outside</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
<td>1 hr. 45 min.</td>
<td>2 hr. 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings (not included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Evening Meetings</td>
<td>8 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>4 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>10 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>23 hr. 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount of Mail</td>
<td>45 pieces</td>
<td>152 pieces</td>
<td>78 pieces</td>
<td>325 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Amount of Mail</td>
<td>19 pieces</td>
<td>30 pieces</td>
<td>16 pieces</td>
<td>22 pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed Per Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Activities</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESK WORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sessions</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Desk Work</td>
<td>8 hr. 43 min.</td>
<td>9 hr. 56 min.</td>
<td>7 hr. 2 min.</td>
<td>25 hr. 41 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
<td>14 min.</td>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TELEPHONE CALLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Telephone</td>
<td>2 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>4 hr. 47 min.</td>
<td>3 hr. 37 min.</td>
<td>10 hr. 54 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>4 min.</td>
<td>4 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Meetings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Meetings</td>
<td>16 hr. 30 min.</td>
<td>21 hr. 5 min.</td>
<td>27 hr. 57 min.</td>
<td>65 hr. 32 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
<td>76 min.</td>
<td>67 min.</td>
<td>70 min.</td>
<td>70 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNSCHEDULED MEETINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Meetings</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Meetings</td>
<td>3 hr. 39 min.</td>
<td>3 hr. 56 min.</td>
<td>5 hr. 39 min.</td>
<td>13 hr. 14 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOURS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tours</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Tours</td>
<td>41 min.</td>
<td>27 min.</td>
<td>1 hr. 50 min.</td>
<td>2 hr. 58 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
<td>22 min.</td>
<td>12 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROPORTION OF ACTIVITIES LASTING LESS THAN NINE MINUTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROPORTION LASTING LONGER THAN SIXTY MINUTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Heavy influx of employment inquiries screened by secretaries.
- Telephone calls screened or made by the secretary were excluded.
the attention given to issues and problems. Mintzberg summarizes his interpretation of the rhythm of the managerial workday.

Thus the work of managing an organization may be described as taxing. The quantity of work to be done, or that the manager chooses to do, during the day is substantial and the pace is unrelenting. After hours, the chief executive (and probably many other managers as well) appears to be able to escape neither from an environment that recognizes the power and status of his position nor from his own mind, which has been well trained to search continually for new information. The question—why do managers have this pace and workload—logically arises out of these observations. Mintzberg posits that the manager's job is inherently open-ended:

The manager must always keep going, never sure when he has succeeded, never sure when his whole organization may come down around him because of some miscalculation. As a result, the manager is a person with a perceptual preoccupation. He can never be free to forget his job, and he never has the pleasure of knowing, even temporarily, that there is nothing else he can do. No matter what kind of managerial job he has, he always carries the nagging suspicion that he might be able to contribute just a little bit more. Hence he assumes an unrelenting pace in his work.

The open-ended nature of the superintendency is further magnified by the limited input received from the board of education, the lack of evaluation of the superintendent's performance by the board, and the unclear goals of the educational organization. An analysis of the contacts with boards of education or individual board members accounts for 7 percent of the total number of verbal contacts and 16 percent of the total time

---

13 See Parkinson's Law "Work expands so as to fill the time available for completion."


15 Ibid., p. 30.
spent in verbal contact as displayed on Table 11. While this varies from the composite of all managers in Mintzberg's study (6 percent/7 percent), the superintendent of Mintzberg's study spent 11 percent of his total verbal contacts and 17 percent of his time in verbal contacts with the board of education. A large portion of time spent with board members was in public board of education meetings, although exceptions were noted. All superintendents noted the inhibiting effect of Sunshine Laws on their contacts with the board. Other forms of contact included: Superintendent B called individual board members daily (prior to a board meeting which was to deal with a politically sensitive issue); Superintendent C met with individual board members on two occasions (a meeting with one newly elected member desiring a more definitive role, and the other a statewide meeting on pending financial legislation attended by the superintendent and a board member, also newly elected); and Superintendent A received a phone call from a board member enacting an "influential parent" role (the computation of his daughter's grade point average was questioned).

Although this contact is more frequent than between the directors and managers of other organizations, a limited number of written and verbal contacts were initiated by board of education members which clarified their expectations for the position or guided the work of the superintendent. In addition to the expected limitations of their

16 See Table 6 on page 59.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS OF THE CONTACT RECORD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Time in Verbal Contact</td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>1660</td>
<td>2509</td>
<td>5596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Verbal Contacts</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Media: % Contacts/ % Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Calls</td>
<td>51%/10%</td>
<td>55%/16%</td>
<td>43%/8%</td>
<td>49%/11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled Meetings</td>
<td>16/71</td>
<td>18/67</td>
<td>24/74</td>
<td>20/71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled Meetings</td>
<td>25/17</td>
<td>23/14</td>
<td>28/13</td>
<td>25/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounters or Tours</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>5/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Size: % Scheduled/ % Unscheduled/ % Tour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Based on Number of Contacts)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(46)</td>
<td>(52)</td>
<td>(139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% With 2 People</td>
<td>10%/57%</td>
<td>28%/46%</td>
<td>15%/41%</td>
<td>18%/46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% With 3 People</td>
<td>10/---/--</td>
<td>6/7/1</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% With 4 People</td>
<td>2/---/2</td>
<td>3/---/2</td>
<td>2/---/1</td>
<td>2/---/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% With More Than 4 People</td>
<td>15/---/2</td>
<td>9/---/2</td>
<td>20/---/1</td>
<td>15/---/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participants: % Contact/ % Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>82%/63%</td>
<td>72%/61%</td>
<td>66%/37%</td>
<td>73%/54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>7/32</td>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>8/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer/Trade Organization</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>10/34</td>
<td>6/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier/Associate</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>3/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>8/12</td>
<td>6/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Form of Initiation: %**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Based on Number of Contacts)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite Party</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Location: % Contacts/ % Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent's Office</td>
<td>78%/38%</td>
<td>91%/69%</td>
<td>78%/37%</td>
<td>82%/48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Subordinate</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>3/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall or Building in District</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>7/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference or Board Room</td>
<td>11/51</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Away from Organization</td>
<td>--/--</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>5/24</td>
<td>2/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose of Contact: % Contacts/ % Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>14/3</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>11/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremony</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>7/28</td>
<td>3/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Board Work</td>
<td>--/--</td>
<td>--/--</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>1/--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SECONDARY</td>
<td>17%/12%</td>
<td>55%/13%</td>
<td>65%/15%</td>
<td>5%/5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Request and Solicitations</td>
<td>5/13</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions Requests</td>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>7/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Requests</td>
<td>14/3</td>
<td>13/10</td>
<td>15/2</td>
<td>14/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL REQUESTS AND SOLICITATIONS</td>
<td>27%/7%</td>
<td>26%/13%</td>
<td>25%/4%</td>
<td>25%/8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 11

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTACT RECORD (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Contact: % Contacts/ % Time (Cont.)</th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Tours</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>--/--</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>2/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Information</td>
<td>13/6</td>
<td>14/5</td>
<td>8/6</td>
<td>12/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Information</td>
<td>18/16</td>
<td>14/12</td>
<td>8/6</td>
<td>13/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>12/7</td>
<td>24/34</td>
<td>21/29</td>
<td>21/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL INFORMATION</td>
<td>45%/30%</td>
<td>53%/51%</td>
<td>46%/46%</td>
<td>48%/42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>6/30</td>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>7/16</td>
<td>7/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>6/22</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>3/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DECISION-MAKING</td>
<td>12%/52%</td>
<td>10%/34%</td>
<td>8%/19%</td>
<td>10%/35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Superintendent C was observed during a week in which the board of education did not formally meet. Also, school district C settled with the teachers organization in January, whereas, the others were engaged in negotiations during the observation phase.

- Contacts with secretaries were counted in the observation.
part-time role, much of the socialization of the board members appears to be done by the superintendent and in documents published by AASA.\textsuperscript{17}

Particularly conspicuous was the lack of formal evaluation of the superintendent's performance; only in one case was a superintendent formally evaluated by the board. When asked to respond to the following statements:

1. I am told how well I am doing my job, and

2. I do not know if my work will be acceptable to the board,\textsuperscript{18}

only the superintendent who received a recent formal evaluation was confident that the board believed he was doing a good job. This lack of formal evaluation created uncertainty for the man in the position. One superintendent, reflecting upon the perceived insecurity of the position, remarked "The only major educational innovation which has persisted over the years is: Fire the superintendent!"

The unclear goals of educational organizations\textsuperscript{19} also contribute to the open-ended nature of the job. Superintendent B felt that written goals and objectives tied him down too much and added, "We [the board and superintendent] have talked about them but have never set down written goals." Superintendent A indicated he formulated a few

\textsuperscript{17}Kerr documents factors that promote the likelihood that school board members will have an attenuated relationship with their constituents and will be socialized and coopted into adopting the school administrators' point of view in Norman Kerr, "The School Board as an Agency of Legitimation," Sociology of Education, Vol. 38, Aug. 1964, pp. 34-39.

\textsuperscript{18}See Appendix A for the complete interview schedule.

objectives in his mind. He commented on Superintendent C's list of objectives [which one of his board members brought to him after attending a recent area council meeting], "We do those things; we just don't state them as objectives." Superintendent C, on the other hand, operates under an extensive list of objectives formulated by the staff, school board, and community. These objectives worked as temporal markers--they became important to keep track of what was going on; they marked beginnings and endings of achievements, specified decision points, and formed a basis for interaction between the superintendent and subordinates.

Objectives gave reason for social occasions (unscheduled and scheduled meetings, phone calls, and tours) in which information, directions, support, or other values were exchanged. The process of setting objectives served, as well, to co-opt the opposition through joint goal setting and served as sensors of the environment and sources of feedback. An intense pace was maintained, nonetheless, as goals for the upcoming year were formulated as reports were being completed for the current objectives. At the June board of education meeting, forty-seven reports and a summary document of accomplishments were presented to the board and within five minutes the board was asked to adopt a final draft of goals and objectives for the 1978-79 school year. The written goals and objectives defined the superintendent's responsibilities, plus functioned as a basis from which the school board evaluated his performance (during the executive session of that particular board meeting). The objective setting process, although it reduced the open-ended nature of managerial tasks, did not appear to
alter the quantity and pace of activities. Mintzberg's claim is that the "unrelenting pace" is causally related to the open ended nature of the job. Perhaps it is necessary to pursue what it is Mintzberg means by "unrelenting pace," since it is dubious. Typically one thinks of a factory worker, especially a piece-rate employee who is required to put out so many pieces per hour, as having a job with an unrelenting pace. My observations suggest that while superintendents are busy, the superintendent does not maintain an unyielding pace of activities. He experiences periods of intensity and variety as well as depressed cycles of activity. It might be more enlightening to pursue the nature of work in terms of time rather than pace.

Time becomes an important resource to the manager—in this case, the superintendent. Unlike other organizational members, time need not be a constraining, but a potentially fluid, entity. Take for instance the teacher who is bound by rigid time and bell schedules and the academic year, to name a few boundaries established by time. The superintendent, in contrast, can stretch organizational time into the evening, the weekends, and through time normally construed as "vacations," that is, time away from teaching-learning activities. Time viewed in this light becomes something the superintendent can manipulate to pursue managerial activities.

The Characteristics of Superintendents' Work

Mintzberg notes that the activities of management are characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation. The scenario in the previous chapter illustrates the variety of activities encountered in a typical workday of the superintendent.
The brevity of many of the superintendent's activities is evident in the distribution of activities by duration. Telephone calls were brief, averaging 4 minutes; unscheduled meetings, desk work, and tours were longer, averaging 12 minutes; while scheduled meetings lasted, on the average, 70 minutes.

Since differences did exist in the workdays of the superintendents, accounting for them might be worthwhile. The difference in their tenure perhaps accounts for Superintendent C spending a greater amount of time establishing his network of contacts and concentrating efforts in developing communication channels. Many of his newsletters and other publications were things which Superintendent A did literally years ago. The community in which Superintendent B held his position can be described as an outer-ring suburb still experiencing growth while the other two were in various stages of decline. Superintendent A was concerned with maintaining a competitive edge over a nearby private school; Superintendent C wanted to attract child-bearing age residents into the community; and Superintendent B was faced with rapid expansion during a time in which the mind-set of decline has been adopted. In addition to the contingencies of environment and the tenure of the man in the position, the location of the office influenced activities and appeared to be significant in identifying the superintendent's role.
The offices of Superintendents B and C were in locations which permitted high visibility; they clearly were centers of activity. The positioning of Superintendent B's desk permitted easy eye contact with anyone who entered the front door of the building. His door remained open most of the time except when meeting with subordinates or people outside the organization. (The acoustics were so inefficient that on one occasion the radio was turned on so his staff could discuss secretarial grievances without the fear of being overheard. No one seemed to consider that "turning on the radio" might have been a clue to the secretaries that something they should not hear was being discussed.) The principals' mailboxes were also placed outside his office which "encouraged" principals to visit the annex and enabled the superintendent to maintain close contact with all principals on a daily, informal basis without leaving his office. This arrangement had its drawbacks, for it made it impossible for him to concentrate on one activity for an extended period of time due to frequent interruptions. It took an entire day to write a one page memo to board members because he was interrupted with a constant stream of phone calls and unscheduled meetings.

The very cramped quarters can be contrasted with the very neat, spacious and more expensively furnished office of Superintendent A. It was impossible to be "just passing through" on the way to somewhere else and bump into the superintendent. Even unscheduled meetings appeared to be "by invitation only." The office itself appeared to be at least five times larger than the others. The desk was located in the rear of the
room facing the door behind which was a photographic mural of an outdoor scene. The effect of the location and decor of the office was a slower, calmer rhythm which was conducive to thinking, reading, and working out problems of those who came to him for advice. This image was reinforced by the approximately seventy-five volumes in his bookcase among which were *Crisis in the Classroom, School is Dead, The Politics of Protest,* several works on the non-graded school concept, *Early Greek Philosophers,* *Who Governs?*, *Suburban Power Structure and Public Education,* six years worth of *NSSE Yearbooks,* stacks of back issues of several professional journals, and two reproductions of abstract paintings.

The books in his office not only were more numerous but were tangible evidence of his advanced graduate work. Of the three superintendents, Superintendent A embraced theory and his graduate training and seemed to miss the intellectual stimulation of the university. The others were less enthusiastic about graduate training.

Characteristics of the job, as well as the superintendents, are seen as factors which contribute to the content and structure of the superintendents' workday. Superintendents seemed to use all the time available to them. On some occasions a great amount of time was spent on items seemingly superficial; however, important decisions were made swiftly and with incomplete knowledge when time did not permit the concentration of efforts. These observations seem to contradict Mintzberg's claim that managerial activities belie concentration of efforts.
Mintzberg argues that, with minor exceptions, there are no patterns to managerial activities.\textsuperscript{20} He waives slightly: "Certain monthly and seasonal patterns exist in some managerial jobs, but there is little evidence of shorter term patterns in this study or in others."\textsuperscript{21} Those around the superintendent the most, for example the secretaries and administrative assistants, noted certain shifts in the content and intensity of activity as monthly board of education meetings approached. Secretaries reported attempting to get ahead of their work before board preparation began, and one administrative assistant reported not scheduling activities for the day before board meetings which freed him to handle last minute superintendent requests. The scope of this study does not justify making the claim that there is no pattern to managerial activities, nor is there sufficient evidence to suggest that there is. Further study is needed.

Preference for the Latest Information

The desire to keep abreast of the latest events explains the superintendent's attraction to the verbal media of communication. An examination of the use of each form of communication from the study of three suburban superintendents is presented in Figure 2. The five basic media used are: written (documented communication), the telephone (verbal), the unscheduled meeting (informal face-to-face), the scheduled meeting (formal face-to-face) and the tour (visual). It is interesting to note that the distribution of hours among the five media

\textsuperscript{20}Mintzberg, The Nature of Managerial Work, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., pp. 31-33.
FIGURE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF TIME AND ACTIVITIES BY MEDIA*

*Based on three weeks of observation of superintendent's work.
("written communications" counted as "desk work") is identical to the study of five executives by Mintzberg (see Table 12). Why is it that managers prefer verbal media? The conjecture is superintendents can control these more readily, and they receive more information through their use (e.g., non-verbal cues).

Most mail received was unsolicited and it received minimal attention. In all cases, secretaries sorted the mail; consequently, much of the "junk" was sifted out before the 269 pieces of mail reached the superintendents' desks. Each piece of incoming mail was categorized into one of the twelve purpose categories developed by Mintzberg. Inconsequential requests--acknowledgments, status requests, solicitations, and reference data--made because of the superintendent's status accounted for 63 percent of the mail, another 31 percent came out of the following categories--reports, periodicals, events, internal operations, and ideas. Only 6 percent of the mail fits a third grouping which Mintzberg sees as of specific and immediate use to the managers. This included requests for authorization, advice on current situations, and pressure and problems brought to his attention through the mail. (The discrepancy between the results of this aspect of the study and Mintzberg's may be a result of the confusion surrounding the "purpose" categories as delineated in Chapter III.) Superintendents sent out 105 pieces of mail, which was an amount equal to 40 percent of the input received. Approximately 35 percent of the output was self-initiated, the remaining output was in reaction to letters received, primarily status requests (for example, the superintendent's written response to a request for a one year maternity leave of absence). Primarily,
# Table 12

**Distribution of Time and Activities by Media**

*The Studies Compared*

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<th>Three Superintendents</th>
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<td><strong>Distribution of Number</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>telephone calls</td>
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superintendents dictated their memos and letters; one notable exception
was Superintendent B who composed memos to the board in long-hand.
Superintendent A, also, wrote a response to a report prepared by a
graduate student. He explained that this was atypical; he preferred to
handle this kind of thing more personally. However, she was not
scheduled to be in the office within the next few days; and he wanted to
make suggestions before the report was presented to the board (see Table
13).

Telephone calls and unscheduled meetings were of short duration.
Together they accounted for one-half of the superintendents' activities.
They were used when information had to be transmitted quickly. Superin-
tendent C frequently used the conference call feature on his telephone
to work out parent complaints with a principal or to schedule meetings
with two people simultaneously. His telephone was also equipped with a
button which rang the phones in all school offices simultaneously; he
was not observed using the feature during the week of observation.

Scheduled meetings consumed 59 percent of the superintendent's
time. Mintzberg suggests that the superintendent in his study was
engaged in work characterized by greater formality than the other
managers. He interpreted this from a higher incidence of scheduled and
clocked meetings. This observation did not hold in this study. In
fact, these superintendents had fewer scheduled meetings than the
average for all managers in Mintzberg's study. Mintzberg observed that
all managers--and, in particular, the superintendent of his study--
maintain a complex network of relationships with people within their
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<th>SUPT. C</th>
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<td>31%</td>
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<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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*a* Periodicals received and read at the superintendents' homes were not included.

*b* Refers to executives of organizations having no direct relationship with those of the superintendent (e.g., superintendents from other school districts, former bosses, personal contacts).

*c* Includes parent or student associated with the school district (e.g., parent of student, PTA president, Band Boosters president).

*d* Refers to individuals with no relevant educational organization affiliation (e.g., job seekers, members of the general public, non-educational and non-govermental organizations or agencies).
organization and with a great variety of people outside the organization, as well.

Network of Contacts

Mintzberg found in his study of chief executives that:

an average of 48 percent of their contacts were with subordinates, 7 percent with directors (superiors), and 44 percent with outsiders. Figures for the mail show similar tendencies--39 percent from, and 55 percent to, subordinates; 1 percent from, and 2 percent to, directors; and 60 percent from, and 43 percent to, outsiders.22

Mintzberg found that a major work difference of the suburban superintendent from the other executives of his study was a higher incidence of meetings with directors and clients as well as other extra-organizational groups. The superintendent:

is continually dealing with the mayor and other municipal authorities, the state education department, the school committee, the parent-teachers association, individual parents, and individual residents.23

He further notes that his work was characterized by:

relatively frequent contact with the organization's directors. It would appear that the role of the director in over-seeing activity and relating it to the wishes of member groups is somewhat more significant in the public organization. ... The municipal politicians, the parents, state government officials, and a variety of others, all looked carefully over [the superintendent's] shoulder. The decisions that he took in his organization affected the quality of education of students who, for the most part, had no alternative source of formal education. The school committee attempted to reflect the diverse and pronounced concerns of these groups; therefore, the school committee interacted more frequently with the chief executive.24

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22 Ibid., p. 45.
23 Ibid., p. 263.
24 Ibid., pp. 263-4.
Mintzberg makes two points which deserve closer examination: (1) managers, and particularly superintendents, spend a substantial amount of time with individuals and groups external to their organization, and (2) the superintendent is in frequent contact with the directors (board of education), and that this contact represents an attempt (on the part of the board) to reflect the "diverse and pronounced concerns of various groups." The data gathered in this study shall be examined to determine if similar conclusions are warranted.

An analysis of the verbal contacts (telephone calls, meetings, and tours) revealed that the superintendents spent a substantial number of these contacts and their time, 73 percent and 54 percent respectively, with subordinates. Contacts with directors—the board of education—accounted for 8 percent of their contacts and 19 percent of their total time in contact; followed by client contacts (6 percent of their contacts and 12 percent of their time); peer and trade organization contacts (5 percent of their contacts and 12 percent of their time); government and independent contacts (6 percent of their contact and 5 percent of their time); and supplier-associate contacts (3 percent of their contacts, and 2 percent of their time). Stated more concisely, the superintendents spent 73 percent of their time in verbal contact with insiders (subordinates and directors) and 27 percent of their time with extra-organizational groups and individuals.

Since the data are significantly different from Mintzberg's, an exploration into reasons, explanations and justifications for these differences is in order. Differences in the characteristics of the superintendents which might account for some variation have already been
discussed. One could predict that the effect of the observer on the research situation and self-selection of the subjects might also come into play. Among the items which shall be discussed are: (1) differences and similarities in the contacts among the three superintendents; (2) problems with Mintzberg's categorization that may have affected the results of this study; and (3) a breakdown of the contacts with subordinates by the position of the subordinate in the organization—that is, central office administrator, principal, teacher, secretary, custodian, and so on—to learn of the articulation between the superintendent and specific subunits. In addition, a closer examination of the nature of the contacts with the board of education is needed because of Mintzberg's assertion that their frequent contact is explained by the board's desire to reflect the diverse concerns of different community groups.

Although the three superintendents spent a total of 93 hours in verbal contact during the three weeks of observation—or a mean of 31 hours per week—the range was 23 to 42 hours and represented 64 to 80 percent, respectively, of the superintendent's working day. Superintendent C worked more hours, spent more time in travel to meetings outside the district, spent more hours in evening meetings and in verbal contact, in general. In further comparisons of the verbal contacts, Superintendents A and B spent 63 and 61 percent of their time with subordinates while Superintendent C spent 37 percent of his time with this group, and Superintendents A and B spent more time with their boards of education. This distribution is somewhat distorted since the observation of Superintendent A included two board of education meetings (the
observation was interrupted by a personal trip of the superintendent), and Superintendent C was observed during a week in which a board meeting was not scheduled (a board meeting was observed but was not counted as part of the week's observation). Spending only 42 percent of his time with organizational members (subordinates and the board) freed 58 percent of Superintendent C's time for interaction with extra-organizational groups which included 34 percent with clients and 10 percent with his peers and trade organizations. Superintendent A spent only 1 percent of his time with clients and 1 percent with peers and trade organizations. Superintendent B, on the other hand, spent 1 percent of his time with clients and 10 percent of his time with peers.

While the people and their organizational affiliation varied (see Table 14), certain patterns emerged with respect to the number of participants in a given social occasion. A majority (70 percent) of all contacts were dyadic; that is, they included only the superintendent and one other individual, such as, a principal or a teacher. Another 16 percent included more than four people. Typically, unscheduled meetings (and telephone calls) were dyadic; and clocked and scheduled meetings included the larger number of participants.

This seems to make sense since many unscheduled meetings dealt with matters of concern primarily to the individual and the superintendent and would be inappropriate for large group discussion. Likewise, scheduled meetings dealt with organizational concerns and information which must be known or decisions which must be made by a greater number of organizational members. To deal with these matters on a one-to-one basis would be highly inefficient. (Probably more interesting than the
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<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<th>SUPT. C</th>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forwarded Letter, Memo, report, periodical</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARGET OF OUTPUT MAIL %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier/Associate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov't.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge Input</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reply to Written Request</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reply to Information Received</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward Information to subordinate</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward Request to Subordinate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write to Third Party</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge or Reply to Verbal contact</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orig. Letter/Memo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
amount of time spent in meetings and with whom, however, is the way in which superintendents used these social occasions to exchange values—information, support, and directions. This is discussed in a subsequent chapter.

The conclusion which Mintzberg draws—a superintendent spends a substantial amount of time with individuals and groups external to the educational organization—is not supported by these observations, except in the case of Superintendent C, a first-year superintendent. (Some support for this claim, nonetheless, is found in the professional literature, especially in relation to the "beleaguered superintendent" image fostered by some superintendents. Two contradictory contentions are: (1) that community forces—parents, power elites, school board—are substantial and debilitating factors for the superintendent, and the contrary view (2) that superintendents dominate their boards, but are constrained by a variety of other, extra-community forces.)

The observation that superintendents spend a substantial portion of their time with subordinates led to a re-examination of Mintzberg's data to determine if any discrepancies could be detected. That Mintzberg did not record any of the managers' interactions with their secretaries accounted for some of this gap. Interactions with secretaries seemed important enough to count; managers depend on secretaries for information about the organization which they could not otherwise obtain. It seemed arbitrary to discount them.

Although the data from Mintzberg's study are somewhat different from those obtained from this sample, the differences are modest enough when contacts with secretaries are excluded. This reduces the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CONTACTS</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACTS WITH SUBORDINATES (#)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office staff</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other classified personnel (custodians, cooks, etc.)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher(s) &amp; principal</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All administrators</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (in general)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 16
AN ANALYSIS OF SUPERINTENDENTS' NETWORK OF CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>THREE SUPERINTENDENTS</th>
<th>MINTZBERG'S STUDY OF FIVE EXECUTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANALYSIS OF MAIL: INPUT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subordinate</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trade organization</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>client</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplier/associate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publisher</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANALYSIS OF MAIL: OUTPUT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subordinate</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>director</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trade</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>client</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplier/associate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publisher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANALYSIS OF CONTACT: VERBAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Contacts/% Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subordinate</td>
<td>73%/54%</td>
<td>64%/48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>director</td>
<td>8/19</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peer/trade organization</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>3/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>client</td>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplier/associate</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>9/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent and other</td>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>9/8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
composite contact with subordinates from 72 percent to 60 percent, which is more in line with the 64 percent contact with subordinates reported by Mintzberg. A substantial amount of variability among the contacts of superintendents stems from variations in who is attending to what. Decisions about the allocation of attention are primary because they serve as clues about what superintendents (and perhaps school boards) value. They suggest the product of the negotiation of the superintendent's role between the superintendent and board of education. Differences in the amount of attention superintendents devoted to the incumbents of various organizational positions are significant in light of the various individuals and groups demanding and competing for their attention. The greatest variability was evident in time spent with administrators as opposed to teachers. Contact with administrators (central office staff and principals) accounted for 57 percent of Superintendent A's contact with subordinates, but took up only 34 percent of his time; 74 percent of Superintendent B's contacts were with administrators which accounted for 44 percent of his time; and Superintendent C spent 87 percent of subordinate contacts with administrators which accounted for 71 percent of his time. On the other hand, Superintendent A spent 39 percent of his time, Superintendent B 34 percent of his time, and Superintendent C 4 percent of his time with teachers (see Table 17). Another significant difference was in their contacts with administrators as a group: Superintendent B spent 16 percent of his time and Superintendent C 21 percent of his time in contact with all administrators (at one time) in their districts. They referred to these meetings as "Principals' Meetings" and "Administrative
### TABLE 17
ANALYSIS OF SUPERINTENDENTS' CONTACTS WITH SUBORDINATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total time in verbal contacts</td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>1660</td>
<td>2509</td>
<td>5596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of verbal contacts</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time with subordinates</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>2692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number with subordinates</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUBORDINATES: % Contact/% Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SUPT. A</th>
<th>SUPT. B</th>
<th>SUPT. C</th>
<th>COMPOSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central office staff</td>
<td>33%/25%</td>
<td>27%/15%</td>
<td>44%/30%</td>
<td>35%/23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>24/9</td>
<td>47/29</td>
<td>43/41</td>
<td>38/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>35/39</td>
<td>19/34</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>20/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher(s) &amp; principal</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>2/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All administrators</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>1/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (in general)</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>-/-</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council Meetings," respectively. (Although a more accurate description might have been "Superintendent's Meeting.") These meetings were scheduled and of longer duration, averaging 90 minutes, but differed in their purpose. Superintendent B solicited information from administrators on a proposed change before submitting a report to the board of education, and Superintendent C disseminated information vis-a-vis other administrators in the district in charge of specific objectives. Superintendent A cancelled the scheduled Administrative Council Meeting during the observation.

It appeared that superintendents differed with respect to their interaction with teachers and administrators. While Superintendent C treated principals as conduits for teacher opinions, Superintendent A dealt directly with teachers. Superintendent B met with a small group of dissident teachers after receiving a phone call from their principal arranging the meeting. Superintendent A met with teachers requesting leaves of absence, complaining about colleagues, planning a retirement reception, and requesting permission to organize a field trip to Mexico.

The following incident reflects the extent to which the meeting with teachers occurred "through channels." A teacher brought a travel-study abroad brochure to the superintendent and requested permission to organize a trip for the gymnastic team; the superintendent endorsed it. This superintendent, also, met frequently with teachers having some rank in the teachers' association. Superintendent C, however, was more inclined to invite the incumbents of the leadership positions in the teachers' organization to participate in ad hoc
decision making groups as "teachers," not as "spokespersons for the teachers' association." Superintendent C made a clear distinction between "labor and management" and "policy and administration."

It was clear in this study that the superintendents interacted with a wide variety of subordinates and placed different emphasis on formal lines of authority. Superintendent A permitted information to flow directly to him while Superintendents B and C demonstrated a preference for the chain of command to be followed "upwards." None were too concerned about bypassing formal lines of authority (downward) which is consistent with the findings of Mintzberg. (See Figure 3.)

Summary

An analysis of the data collected in the observation of three suburban superintendents revealed specific characteristics of their work. The superintendent's day was characterized by numerous brief episodes in which important and unimportant matters were interspersed. The giving and receiving of information was the superintendent's primary activity; his work was verbal in nature. Superintendents spent a majority of their time within the confines of the school buildings in their district, predominantly in their offices and with subordinates. Superintendents left their districts for political activities and meetings with their peers which were more likely to occur at the end of the week. While superintendents were faced with numerous constraints, they did exercise some control over their own work; they initiated the majority of their contacts, created opportunities, and defined long term commitments. Superintendents on different occasions were seen to act as fire preventers, fire fighters, and fire starters.
Superintendents 69% → Subordinates

Superintendents 38% ←

Superintendents 10% → Board of Education

Superintendents 0% ←

Superintendents 6% → Clients

Superintendents 0% ←

Superintendents 16% → Individuals/Groups External to School Organization

Superintendents 60% ←

Breakdown of Written Communication with Individuals/Groups External to School Organization

Peers 5% → Superintendent 5% → Peers

Trade Organizations 12% → Superintendent 0% → Trade Organizations

Suppliers/Associates 7% → Superintendent 3% → Suppliers/Associates

Independent 17% → Superintendent 7% → Independent

Publishers 7% → Superintendent 0% → Publishers

Government 12% → Superintendent 1% → Government

FIGURE 3
INITIATION OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
CHAPTER V

A MANAGER OF INFORMATION

What does a superintendent do? How is his time organized? Where does he spend his time? Whom does he see? These were the questions to which the previous chapters were directed in an effort to understand the superintendency role. What was revealed was not an exotic story; the pattern of superintendent activities is rather ordinary executive behavior and directly corresponds to the behavior of executives in the observational study by Mintzberg. This pattern was regulated both by the social expectations within the organization, as well as those of the superintendent. In examining a weekly cycle, the management of a superintendent's time was revealed.

It could be inferred that the superintendents' selection of the media for an encounter with others (meeting, phone call, or tour) was not arbitrary. Despite this understanding, ways in which social occasions resembled one another were also of interest. The receiving, giving and exchanging of information emerged as the common denominator of these events. The flow of information could be attributed to almost any conceivable interaction (which is a perspective equally applicable to written communication). Although these social occasions became opportunities for other things--places to express friendship and engage in politicking, for example--information played some part in the activity.
Motives for social occasions are mixed as the following illustrations suggest. A phone call from the superintendent to a staff member informed her of the board's decision to reassign some of her responsibilities, of an upcoming meeting which he wanted her to attend, and of the superintendent's power and prerogative in such matters. In a reception honoring a retiring principal, a superintendent met and shook hands with twenty-five residents of the community; each resident relayed some bit of information about his present experience with the school organization. In a meeting with his administrative assistant, in which the layout of the superintendent's annual report was planned, the superintendent learned that the junior high principal had not met the deadline for submitting his portion of the report.

To sum up the discussion at this point, the following claim is made: the superintendent is someone who acts as an information manager within the social system of which his school district is a part. By information manager it is suggested that the superintendent controls the acquisition, retention, and dissemination of information. Information is taken to include facts, laws, rules, and concepts. The observations on which this research is based suggest that several devices are employed by the superintendent as a manager of information. More than one of the concepts can be applied to the same situation. In addition, it is not implied that these categories exhaust the possibilities for devices either in use, or available for potential use, in the management of information. The superintendent, then, is someone who in the performance of his role interprets organizational history, interprets contemporary events, manages the meaning of crucial terms or concepts,
and manages organizational myths. These notions will be discussed in
detail later in the chapter, and some of them used in case studies to
explain what is taking place in the interaction.

The Superintendents' Contacts Re-examined

Each school district examined was a web of influence patterns
whereby individuals or groups sought to influence others to think or act
in particular ways. Possible sources of individual power which give one
the ability to influence others are physical power, resource power,
position power, expert power and personal power.¹ Some of the power the
superintendent has comes as a result of his position in the educational
organization. Principally these are: information, the right of access,
and the right to organize. Michel Crozier, in discussing the influence
of power relationships on organization structure, notes: "The whole
system of roles is so arranged that people are given information, the
possibility of prediction, and therefore control, precisely because of
their position within the hierarchical pattern."² The superintendent's
position grants him access to a variety of networks (reported in Table
15), which lead to more information about what is happening within, as
well as external to the school district. The superintendent puts
available pieces of information together to adjust conflicting claims,

¹See J. French and B. Raven, "The Basis of Social Power," in
Group Dynamics, D. Cartwright and A. Zonder (eds.) (Evanston: Row

²Michel Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (Chicago: Univer-
to persuade others to accept his decisions, and to impose decisions when necessary.

The record given in the previous chapter substantiates the claim that the superintendents' role is primarily informational in nature. A re-examination of the data presented in the Contact Record (Table 6) focused on the extent to which the superintendent influenced the other participant, or vice versa, during a given social occasion. More precisely for any given event, the query was posed: did the superintendent influence the course of events, or was the superintendent influenced? It was evident in the observation of superintendents in social occasions that superintendents had ready access to information which persuaded the other(s) to accept their perspective or suggestion; or that the other(s) brought information into the meeting which drew the superintendent to his (their) side. The crucial function that information plays in these interactions is illustrated in a case study below (see page 136).

Each meeting, phone call, and tour was classified into one of six categories: the superintendent was seen as influencing the other(s)--i; the superintendent attempted to influence the other(s)--ai; the other(s) influenced the superintendent--d; the other(s) attempted to influence the superintendent--ad; the superintendent and other(s) exchanged information --e; or the interaction was unclassifiable--na.

A re-examination of the data with respect to these parameters revealed that the superintendent spent half of his contacts influencing

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3 Thanks to Professor Thomas Milburn, Nershon Center at the Ohio State University, for suggesting this re-analysis to me.
or attempting to influence the other participant(s) while one-fifth of the contacts were seen as the participant(s) influencing or attempting to influence the superintendent. Telephone calls and scheduled meetings were his primary vehicles for influencing the behavior or actions of others while the participants found unscheduled meetings more beneficial than other means. The superintendent had substantial influence over the course of events which is reported in Figure 4 and Table 18. If one ignores the unclassifiable events, the proportion of contacts in which the superintendent influenced the action of others greatly surpassed the number of times he was influenced. On those occasions, the participant(s) was privy to information which was needed to make a decision during a meeting or phone call. This is not surprising. The term 'leader'—often used to refer to the superintendent—is applied to the member of a group who is observed to exercise the most influence on his fellow members and is most frequently their chief catalyst to action.

It is perhaps belaboring the obvious to state that the resolution of differences, or potential differences, took up the largest single portion of managerial time and energy. This resolution of differences necessitated the availability of information. In that having information gives one power, the management of information becomes a very appealing tactic for increasing influence or protecting territory or objectives.

The Management of Information

Several devices or tactics were employed by the superintendents in their management of information role. These devices were identified in the beginning of the chapter. These devices will now be explained.
FIGURE 4
INFLUENCE IN SOCIAL OCCASIONS
### TABLE 18

**BREAKDOWN OF CONTACTS -- SOCIAL OCCASIONS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFLUENCING (all districts)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ai</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>ad</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>na²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone³</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled meeting</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled meeting</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour or encounter</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Based on the number of contacts.

2 Unclassifiable contacts included some contacts with secretaries such as scheduling that were not regarded as influencing, subordinate requests for structuring information denied by the superintendent, and superintendent requests for information.

3 Included contacts via the intercom, the majority of which preceded unscheduled meetings.
The superintendent as interpreter of organizational history suggests that the superintendent selects relevant facts from the organization's history to legitimize or shed light on the current state of affairs. This tactic is suggested by Cohen and March for those who seek to influence the course of decisions in universities or colleges: "the belief in the relevance of history, or the legitimacy of history as a basis for current action, is fairly strong."4 They suggest that the leader can select information to be retained in the system's records:

Minutes should be written long enough after the events as to legitimize the reality of forgetfulness. They should be written in such a way as to lay the basis for subsequent independent action— in the name of collective action. In general, participants in the organization should be assisted in their desire to have unambiguous actions taken today derived from ambiguous decisions of yesterday with a minimum of pain to their images of organizational rationality and a minimum of claims on their time. The model of consistency is maintained by a creative resolution of uncertainty about the past.5

In other words, the manager, in this case the superintendent, selects the information to be remembered. The superintendent takes past facts or data—including decisions and rules—and interprets those to shed light on present problems. Out of all the facts which are available, he selects those which explain, justify, or legitimize things that are going on in the present, thereby reducing uncertainty for others. The superintendent reconciles the present with the past. The manager not only uses the existing history, he creates an historical record for the organization. The necessary requirement that bureaucratic organizations


5Ibid.
maintain a written record of rules and procedures makes this tactic a viable one. Karl Weick suggests that leaders invent images regarding what they have been doing and make these images available to their followers: "The better leader may be a person who both serves up heroic images and frequently reinterprets past actions. The leader who re-writes history, who rewrites it in a bold and interesting manner, and who rewrites it frequently may create considerable compliance among his followers."\textsuperscript{6}

The superintendent as contemporary interpreter describes another tactic of selection. The focus, however, remains with the selecting out of contemporary information, that which supports his perspective. This notion is akin to the filtering of information reported by Minar and the agenda building function of the superintendent reported by Zeigler.\textsuperscript{7}

The superintendent, as educational expert, makes decisions about the validity and usefulness of certain pieces of information for his organization.

The superintendent as an active perceiver of the contemporary world may selectively notice different aspects of the environment, he appraises what he sees in terms of his own past experience, and evaluates what he experiences in terms of the organization's needs and values. Since the environment provides members with many more stimuli than any


\textsuperscript{7}See David Minar, "Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities," and Harmon Zeigler and M. Ken Jennings, Governing American Schools.
individual is cognitively able to handle, the superintendent can choose not to deal with many aspects he does notice, as well as not notice many aspects. For example, the superintendent may purvey requests from the community; he may also mediate them. With justification, he may choose which messages to transmit and which to support. He selectively reports on activities of (as well as select information about) the social system of which the school district is a part to both insiders and outsiders. The superintendent makes sense out of the organization and its environment for individuals and groups internal to and external to the school system.

The superintendent as a manager of meaning is the tactic of defining terms pertinent to the organization in its operation when the definition is unclear or debatable. The superintendent provides a definition, sometimes quite by fiat, so that conceptual difficulties or issues are avoided or resolved.

This tactic is exemplified by the instance when a superintendent determined the meaning of 'gifted' in a Gifted and Talented Committee meeting. The superintendent stated that the program would serve 'gifted' and 'academically talented,' thus eliminating from consideration those who were athletically or artistically talented. The term 'gifted' was further delimited to those students with at least an IQ score of 130 and academic achievement in math and reading one to two years beyond grade placement.

This definition served to collapse the two categories into one (which redefined the categories as established by the state department of education) and reduced the concerns of the committee to certain
considerations. Prior to this the teachers and administrators were having difficulty selecting students for the program and were basing selection on other criteria (personality, classroom behavior, family background). The management of meaning reduced their uncertainty and permitted the committee to go about other tasks, such as program planning.

The superintendent as a manager of myths is another tactic of effecting the management of information. It is best to begin the explanation of this idea by stating clearly what is excluded from it. The term 'myth' is not given a pejorative use although many people think of it that way. Myths, on this view, are erroneous beliefs clung to against all evidence to the contrary, such as old wives' tales or fallacies. Such usage is emphatically ruled out; any claim that the superintendent is a myth maker should not be taken to imply that he is devious, manipulative, or self-serving. Neither is 'myth' taken to be a kind of explanation; a hypothesis that purports to describe the state of affairs. Typically, questions of truth or falsity are not asked of myths; we do not wonder if they are true or false. Their falsity, if any, does not matter. Therefore, they are not hypotheses.\footnote{Encyclopedia of Philosophy, S. V. "Myth," by Alasdair MacIntyre.}

The notion of myth making as used herein is based on a conceptualization of myth derived from the works of G. S. Kirk, Percy Cohen,
and Anthony Cohen. Kirk suggests a typology of mythical functions: (1) narrative, (2) operative, iterative, and validitory; and (3) speculative and explanatory. Some overlap of functions is evident in Percy Cohen's delineation of seven main types of myth, at least two of which have importance for the notion of the superintendent as myth maker. The function of a myth can be in (1) creating and maintaining social solidarity and cohesion, and (2) legitimating social institutions and practices.

Another researcher has applied the notion of "myth-management" to contemporary political interaction in a Newfoundland community; Anthony Cohen relies upon the distinction made by Kirk. Instead of identifying myths as coherent narratives, he suggests that myths are, . . . idealized conceptions of forms of social organization and behavior which are symbolically expressed in the leaders' strategic presentation of themselves.

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He further extends the notion of myth from referring to some prior point in a society's history\textsuperscript{13} to include a social order which is in the cultural future.

The superintendent's utterances, writings, public beliefs, and ideas will be taken to be mythological in character when they function to: (1) create or maintain social solidarity, (2) reduce uncertainty for organizational members, or (3) legitimize social institutions and policies.

This tactic of myth making can easily overlap with other tactics. An example of this comes in Malinowski's own writings, where he states that,

The main cultural function of mythology is the establishment of precedent . . . by a reference to events which happened in a dim past. . . .\textsuperscript{14}

Two routes to connecting the present with the past are suggested by the passage: (1) the clearly mythological way wherein the narrative connects the present with the past within the story, and very closely related; (2) an historical account where some past events are claimed to have pertinence to a present situation. This historic interpretation is very much like a myth: selected portions of the past are used to

\textsuperscript{13}B. Malinowski, "Myth as a Dramatic Development of Dogma," in \textit{Sex, Culture and Myth} (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963). Malinowski stated that myth serves as a charter for social action, investing an action of the present with the sacredness of historical precedent.

\textsuperscript{14}B. Malinowski, "Myth as a Dramatic Development of Dogma."
exonerate, legitimize, and prescribe courses of action by politicians, historians, and superintendents.¹⁵

Before presenting case studies illustrating some of these tactics, it would be interesting to look at a related account which shows the importance of information, and, thus, the superintendent's role in the management of information for his organization. Gustav Jahoda, in *The Psychology of Superstition* argues that people have, as he puts it, an anxiety to know, even when that knowledge is adverse.¹⁶ That is, it is better to know that something bad may be about to happen to you than to be uncertain about the future, even if that future were to turn out to be beneficial. He uses this hypothesis to account for some elements of the presence of superstition: people engage in superstition practices because their use reduces anxiety and uncertainty, even if the knowledge gained by these practices is actually pseudoknowledge. It is held by the present author that much the same can be said about the function of myth and the function of managerial decisions: good or bad, prudent or foolish, well founded or hastily arrived at, the decision and "information" provided by the manager reduces uncertainty and anxiety arising from lack of information. Some information promulgated by managers,

¹⁵A fundamental difference lies in the hypothetical nature of historical interpretation: accounts are presented as hypotheses capable of verification or falsification to the extent they are not verifiable or falsifiable to that extent they become more mythological in character.

including superintendents, may serve the same function as myths and superstition.\textsuperscript{17}

**Case 1--Interpreting Events for Organizational Members**

In a meeting of the members of the district's management team, the superintendent employs the tactic of interpreting contemporary events for these organizational members to justify the rewriting of a policy concerning early entrance into kindergarten.

The room was somewhat uncomfortable; it was small, and the table around which they sat was comprised of three matched and one unmatched rectangular tables shoved together. The superintendent arrived ten minutes late because of an impromptu conference with the high school principal. The superintendent was greeted with light cajoling; he had instituted a twenty-five cent a minute penalty for tardiness to meetings, and his lateness was atypical.\textsuperscript{18}

The superintendent began the meeting by adding five items to the agenda which he had prepared and distributed last week. The meeting began with "incidentals," that is, a time set aside for the principals to exchange information and make announcements. When he determined it was appropriate to end the discussion, he posed a rhetorical question: "Anything else you can think of?" He then read the next item on the

\textsuperscript{17} Meyer and Rowan suggested that institutional rules function as myths which organizations incorporate, gaining legitimacy, resources, stability, and enhanced survival prospects. They note that educational organizations reflect the myths of their institutional environment, instead of demands of their work activities.

\textsuperscript{18} The proceeds were to be used for a "beer-blast" at the end of the year.
agenda. (This was the typical pattern which emerged in conducting the meetings with this group.)

Supt.: Don, Policy 5512.1?

Don: The policy is in regards to early entrance to school. I distributed a memo which suggested a policy revision. There was a memo attached which describes the reasons for considering it. Do you have your memos with you? (The administrators proceed to page through their notebooks, but no one located the memo.) Looks like this. (Holds up copy.) Well, while you're looking for your copy, I'll read it to you. . . .

Don proceeds to read the memo which concerns the present policy for permitting early entrance into Kindergarten. A child with an IQ score of at least 112 could be admitted into Kindergarten at age four upon parental request. When Don finished reading the memo, the superintendent clarified:

Supt.: Okay (pause) the substantive problem appears to be students getting into school too early and then having problems later and being retained?

Don: We have no data.

Jim: We've never had one.

Don: We're talking about high achieving kids.

Sam: We're increasing standards to be more discriminating . . . so we won't have problems.

Don: (Reviewing standards again.) A child should be in the upper 50 percent on social, emotional, and physical growth and development.

Supt.: In terms of procedure . . . ask the Board to eliminate our present policy and substitute it with an administrative directive.

Ed: Would this be a problem in the community? Did we ever turn anyone down who requested early entrance?

Sam: Here, an IQ of 112 is just slightly above average and is probably not that advanced . . . but, with an IQ of 125 . . . .
Joe: I thought our limit was 125.

Supt.: How does that compare to other districts?

After Don indicated that the district's standard was lower, the superintendent sought information from the elementary principals.

Supt.: How many first grade retentions do we have?

The superintendent selected facts to legitimize the need for this policy change: the present policy creates educational and administrative problems, and the district's standards are lower than other prestigious suburban districts. He was laying the basis for the subsequent action he was able to make in the form of a recommendation to the Board of Education. While the argument that early entrance correlated with first grade retentions was not accepted by the two elementary principals, this line of reasoning was effective in suggesting that there would be future problems for the school district, and thus a need for removing the policy and substituting in its place an administrative directive.

While the facts from the organization's history did not actually justify the concern (few requests were made for early entrance and first graders retained had not been early entrants), a connection between early entrance and future learning difficulties emerged and was believed to be the case. The concern shifted to formulating guidelines to prevent the problem from happening in the near future (especially with the possibility of introducing a program for gifted students in the elementary and junior high schools) which in effect reduced uncertainty for the elementary principals and the director of student services. Details for organizing screening committees were worked out, a date set for the presentation of new administrative directive to the board, and
corrections were noted on a photocopy of the present policy. The superintendent proceeded to the next agenda item.

Supt.: Child Abuse, Don?

Don: I have considered this for some time . . . do you want a board policy or directive on child abuse? There's no critical need right now . . . I have some information from Aaron Keirnes (passing out copies) on possible policy and directives that could be used.

Jim: Is it not our legal responsibility to report child abuse cases?

Don: Yes.

Supt.: It's a felony.

Sam: That's sticky.

Supt.: (As an aside) That's a question I frequently ask people interviewing for teaching positions. Do you know some say they wouldn't tell the principal, and others say they'd ignore it?

Don: The person I'm working with is Aaron Keirnes [administrator of a child welfare agency] . . . they are suggesting that school districts adopt a policy . . .

While the superintendent is suggesting that the item be tabled, the principals begin to raise points.

Sam: Look at page 3 . . . on the concern you just raised . . . the way it's stated you (teacher) should not inform the principal but go straight to child welfare agencies.

Supt.: Yes, this gets us into a quagmire . . . I sure want them (teachers) to contact principals. We had an incident this year . . . I thought at Whitman . . . a teacher did not inform the principal but contacted an agency.

Joe: (Refuting the superintendent's claim.) We had one last year.

John: We had one this year.
Supt.: Okay... Inservice Center needs assessment...
(Passes out a questionnaire.)

The purpose for juxtaposing the issues of early entrance and child abuse was to show how information of the same type was used differently. Although cases of child abuse were known to have occurred, they did not serve to justify writing a policy at this time. The superintendent did not select that information as a basis for future action, but instead used it to inform a principal (Joe) that he had better keep his teachers in line (make sure the "chain of command" or hierarchy is followed in reporting cases). In addition, the minutes of the meeting reflected a correlation between early entrance and future learning difficulties.

Case 2—Interpreting Events/Information to the Community

The activities of one superintendent prior to a crucial board of education meeting suggest the contemporary interpretation tactic in the management of information. The superintendent, faced with a recent failure of a bond issue (for a new school building and improvements to existing structures), selected an alternative course of action to alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the school district. The district, an outer-ring suburb, was experiencing growth while suburban school districts in closer proximity to the city were faced with declining enrollments approaching the national average of three percent per annum.

Of concern here is not the administrative alternative of split (or double) sessions, but the exploitation of the situation to produce active support and supporters in various sectors of the social system
for (1) a body of principles from which the values governing the school
district had been drawn and (2) the superintendent's legitimacy as an
educational expert. Inextricably related to (1) and (2) is the ultimate
goal—passage of the school bond issue.

The four days prior to the board of education meeting (during
which the superintendent was to present his rationale for double ses-
sions) were spent with numerous individuals and groups. The main thrust
of this activity (meetings and phone calls) was directed toward
administrators, school board members, and newspaper reporters.

The superintendent announced his commitment to recommend double
sessions at the upcoming board meeting in a "Principals' Meeting" and to
a reporter of a city newspaper. Prior to making these announcements, he
met several times with the assistant superintendent to determine costs
connected with the proposed reorganization including additional staff
needed due to program expansion, split sessions, and expanded enroll-
ments. During this initial meeting the superintendent stated, "I want
to make it difficult for the board to back down." The assistant superin-
tendent suggested program changes and a concern for meeting minimum
state standards; both debated the advantages and disadvantages of six
and seven period day schedules.

The meeting with the assistant superintendent was followed by a
two-hour "Principals' Meeting" attended by six principals, the assistant
superintendent, and superintendent. The meeting was held in the
superintendent's office; five extra chairs were brought into the small
office, and the superintendent remained seated behind his desk. The
superintendent began the meeting with a series of brief announcements
regarding the testing program and plans to sell advertisement space in the district newsletter. The discussion quickly turned to the proposed district reorganization (double sessions), and the superintendent requested principals to enumerate concerns and issues which needed to be taken into account. Acknowledging that every sector would be upset, he stressed that the decision should be based on, "What's best for the district." They reviewed the benefits of split sessions: smaller class size in elementary and middle school grades, art and music in specially equipped facilities, accommodating special education and secondary reading programs according to state and federal guidelines, and reduced overcrowding in kindergarten through fourth and ninth through twelfth grades. One principal indicated that this should help "force the bond issue." The superintendent responded to a question about the board's reaction: "This is the board's decision, a policy decision. We are making a recommendation on our best judgment... If the board followed my recommendation every time, we wouldn't need a board."

After the meeting, the superintendent outlined the details of the recommendation to a newspaper reporter: reorganization was needed to alleviate overcrowding in the elementary and junior high; sixth and eighth grades would attend the middle school from 7:30-12:30 with fifth and seventh grades attending from 12:30-5:30; kindergarten through fourth would have a regular school day; ninth graders would remain at the junior high with shifts of tenth graders coming into the junior high building; 1,600 students would be affected; one additional bus would be needed; thirty teachers would be reassigned; and four additional teachers recruited due to increased enrollments. The story appeared in the paper exactly as he had given it to the reporter.
The news release prior to the board meeting had some anticipated consequences: parents and teachers called the superintendent and the board members, and four hundred anxious people attended the board of education meeting. The phone calls prompted by the newspaper article gave the superintendent an opportunity to clarify the objections to split sessions and to practice his argument against their views. The dialogue which emerged followed a recurring pattern: his interest was in keeping the class size around twenty-five; the decision was a most difficult one; and the alternative was not a good one, but "to stay as we are is wrong for the whole system and especially down the road. As a father of a fifth grader," the superintendent reiterated during each conversation, "I view this as a trade off between two years split to relieve overcrowding later on versus one year extremely overcrowded and then two years split. We need to pass the bond issue." The superintendent used a new state law which penalized school districts with an average district class size exceeding twenty-five students and a neighboring district's desegregation litigation to assuage objections.

Although the meetings with administrators appeared to suggest an openness to challenging information, he actually conveyed his intentions to them and expected them to help develop his argument. As just noted, he displayed a vigilant interest in information about the sorts of objections to double sessions so as to effectively deal with teachers and parents in the upcoming board meeting. A meeting with six dissident middle school teachers (all female) allayed all his fears for what their affect might be on the audience at the board meeting. The teachers were concerned about possible language program reductions; however, because
of public disfavor to the experimental language program, their argument was negligible and might actually serve to enhance the superintendent's apparent plan of split sessions.

When the superintendent's commitment to the alternative was certain, he searched only for information and alternatives in the form of minor modification of his chosen plan of action. At this point, he never hoped to find a solution better than this alternative which he judged to be least objectionable. In a conversation with a school board member the day before the board meeting, the superintendent stated, "The board can do what it wants . . . I won't suggest a bond issue in November unless we split. In a year they would get used to it . . . in November, they'll still be upset."

A total of 30 phone calls, scheduled meetings and unscheduled meetings were devoted to planning for the board of education meeting which attracted an unusual number of parents, students, and teachers.\(^{19}\) After conducting the customary business, the meeting was turned over to the superintendent who laid out the plan for double sessions and the process of arriving at his recommendation. This period was followed by a series of questions from the board members during which time the superintendent called upon his staff to supply the exact information. A sampling of the ensuing dialogue follows:

Board member: You talked about six to ten new routes?

Superintendent: We have the vehicles and drivers; we pay them by the routes they cover.

\(^{19}\)About twenty parents and students were there to request a soccer program but left immediately after they presented their request.
Board member: What is your expectation for the number of new drivers?

Superintendent: One or two more.

Board member: Realizing our growth, what would you estimate as the longevity of the split?

Superintendent: Three years.

Board member: To fully implement the plan, are six to eight additional teachers needed?

Superintendent: Yes, this presents a budget problem . . . I asked principals for their staffing needs . . . We have to find revenue for two to four more teachers. In the contingency fund we would also be talking about additional materials. The projected costs would be $43,000 to $51,000 for 1978-79 and $88,000 to $112,000 for 1979-80.

Board member: Are you suggesting committing monies from the levy permanently?

Superintendent: No, only temporarily . . . due to the split and inefficiency resulting from overcrowding.

Board member: This tremendous change, can it be accomplished over the summer?

Superintendent: We know we can do it . . . the administrators already work in the summer . . .

This session was followed by audience participation, predominantly middle class housewives and mothers. Only one woman prepared a speech; she detailed some studies (and experience) on the effects of the time of day on learning, noted the extreme differences in socio-emotional and physical development of fifth and seventh graders, and displayed her own fourth grade class photograph. (She noted that among her forty classmates were now teachers, doctors, and lawyers.) The superintendent was noticeably annoyed but grinned when she asked the audience, “How many of
you have fifth graders at home? . . ." He was able to raise his hand for all to see and use his argument he had repeated diligently to each caller.

Aside from this presentation, the meeting turned into a reaffirmation of the parents' support for what they judged to be a fine educational program. They, further, implored the superintendent to place the bond issue on the next election's ballot. "Why didn't you tell us this would happen?" and "I am certain we can get it passed now," were the typical reactions. Since the meeting had been set aside for discussion only, the vote on the superintendent's recommendation to implement double sessions for the following school year was tabled until the next meeting. The suggestion to place the bond issue on the ballot again was ignored.

The theses present are these: the superintendent is, among other things, engaging in the management of myth as well as the contemporary interpretation of available information. The interpretation of the events and information seems to suggest myth management because it serves to facilitate the generation of support for the bond issue in ways, it will be argued, are mythological.\(^{20}\) The thesis about the mythological character of this crisis will be developed below. In

\(^{20}\)The crisis also served to alleviate the superintendent's concern produced by the apparent inconsistency between what he took to be the facts about the school district (the community valued education in general and their school programs in particular and regarded the superintendent as an educational expert) and the reality (the community failed to pass the bond issue). He needed information (feedback) about his legitimacy as their superintendent. For an account of how myths work to resolve anxieties and contradictions, see Ian Mithoff, et al., "On Management-Myth Information Systems," Management Science, 21:4, December, 1974.
addition, the thesis that the superintendent selected information while ignoring other pertinent information to make a case for the crisis—that is, he engaged in contemporary interpretation—will be explored.

As Carlson has shown, pursuits of legitimacy and of valued identity are strategic activities of superintendents. Each superintendent works to construct a milieu for the school system and seeks to legitimize himself through the association with a valued set of principles. A salient definition of legitimate leadership in this district centered around the notion of a superintendent as educational expert. In effect, to maintain and enhance the program he had developed, additional facilities were needed. The failure of the bond issue impeded his goal of designing a school district which reflected specific values. He enhanced the community's concern by selecting data and constructing an argument which supported the "grand design" for the school system. His tactic is taken to be mythological in character, and not an ordinary administrative strategy, because of the way the crisis functioned in the system.

Following Cohen and Kirk, the crisis worked in a mythological way because it served to bind people together in support of the educational program and the bond issue; that is, it created social solidarity and legitimized the school and its practices. The information he selected to support his argument was used in a noteworthy fashion; it was recalled and invoked on numerous occasions and was highly repetitive.

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21 Carlson, School Superintendents.

22 The author hypothesizes that these principles are negotiated in the employment interviews by the school board and the superintendent.
The information presented was effective in eliciting the belief in the validity of the crisis. It also portrayed the disastrous effects of their (the voters') action (failure to pass the levy). The crisis served to encourage the community to support a future bond issue and to bring about wholehearted cooperative participation. Because the crisis takes on these characteristics, it functions as a myth for the school district.

In addition to myth-making, the superintendent selected, out of the contemporary information available to him, that which supported his position. What he presented as facts to the school board members and community—the expected increase in enrollment, the educational desirability of smaller classes, the penalty (withholding of state monies) imposed by the state department of education for large classes, and that the resulting confusion and inconvenience of double sessions was outweighed by the educational gains of the smaller classes—were arguable. He dismissed articles reviewing class size studies in one of his professional journals and in the local paper which did not support his view. In reality, the funds that would be lost, if the average district class size exceeded twenty-five, would be minimal and have limited impact on the existing program. The superintendent did not discuss recent birth

23 See F. E. Emery and E. L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments," in Complex Organizations and Their Environments (eds.) Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Phillip P. Kunz (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown and Co., 1972), for a discussion of how organizational stability can be achieved in organizations existing in turbulent environments. They suggest values act as coping mechanisms that make it possible to deal with persisting areas of relevant uncertainty, specifically, the emergence of values that have overriding significance for all members of the field who perceive environmental uncertainty. Weick's notion of enacted environment also suggests an explanation.
rate, family size and life style trends in calculating the enrollment projection for the district. The strong opposition within the community (and faculty) to the plan's components--changing neighborhood schools, separating siblings, and changing school hours--did not prompt the superintendent to search for other options. The superintendent and his cadre continued to work out the details despite opposition. They continued to believe that their plan was the most satisfactory one, and that people who were opposed were not thinking about what was best "down the road." For example, little attention was paid to the argument of the parent who brought her fourth grade class photograph to the board meeting. The superintendent took a position based on his understanding of organizational reality. Someone else, with different values, could very well make a different interpretation.

Case 3--Ordinary Information Processing

In confronting the problem of how superintendents manage the flow of information in their organizations, four tactics were suggested. The role of the superintendent as an information processing agent in the school district is suggested by the previous cases. Not all instances of processing available information, however, can be accounted for by the aforementioned tactics. Many of the concerns with which the superintendent must deal are ordinary and are treated routinely as the following case illustrates.

The superintendent walked out of his office, empty coffee mug in hand and headed down the hall for the coffee room. After he filled his mug, he sauntered across into the administrative assistant's office. He
interrupted the administrative assistant who is working "on paperwork"
at his desk.

Superintendent: How'd we do on the bus bids? (The district was selling their used school buses because of a recent purchase of two new ones.)

Administrative Assistant: Not as good as we thought ... $2,355 on second bus ... hoping to get $4,000 for both of them. Got several $1,000 bids on one.

Superintendent: is that better than trading it?

Administrative Assistant: Trade in was $1,400 ... Our recommendation would be to take first $1,000 bid. Mr. Hope bid.

Superintendent: I didn't think people like him would be here.

Administrative Assistant: He bid more. (The administrative assistant takes advantage of this meeting to talk about summer school.) On summer school looks like we'll want to go with reading ... have to go with eight students per teacher ... don't know what to do with this ... (Showing superintendent the flyer and working schedule for summer school.)

Superintendent: Did we get fifteen of these? (Pointing to line in flyer.)

Administrative Assistant: We'll end up with twelve math and fifteen English. Landon indicated he wants to teach math ... Checked his certificate, perhaps he can do both.

Superintendent: Let's just list it.

Administrative Assistant: Teachers who teach summer school are opposed to those who have failed to take reading ... List these essentially the same at high school, talked with Tom ... got a lot of response for DA 1 and DA 2 ... when word got around not offering ... social studies department doesn't want to teach it.
Superintendent: Do we have a teacher?

Administrative Assistant: We can go outside since we have problems with review courses ... perhaps we shouldn't list ... Smith is interested in teaching the course ... let's offer ... try to find instructor ... couldn't get math 1 or 2 elsewhere because using our own text ... reviewing failure list ... most wouldn't take ... only had 6 failing geometry.

Superintendent: That wouldn't make a class.

Administrative Assistant: Reviewed math course ... if we get fifteen, look for an instructor ... Tom said maybe we should increase to twenty.

Superintendent: Have we changed summer school?

Administrative Assistant: It's been the same for three years.

Superintendent: Let's just run it as you suggest.

Administrative Assistant: We might get Mr. Roy to teach.

Superintendent: He works at their level.

Administrative Assistant: This poses a problem ... how to get Mr. Roy to come in to teach.

Superintendent: Wait till after tonight. We plan to discuss the summer school program, the increase in the hourly rate for summer school teachers, and the need to employ teachers from outside the district for the summer term.

Administrative Assistant: Going to have two candidates [outside the district] in for the positions.

Superintendent: (Changing the subject.) Press conference tomorrow on measured service, are you going? (Returning to the subject of the summer school program.) Let's do it the way you suggested. I don't know if it changes the board meeting.
Administrative Assistant: Should we keep our same rates (for summer school)?

Superintendent: If we go to nine hours for staff, maybe we should increase the tuition to $32, would we still need to keep minimum for class?

Administrative Assistant: Yes. This year we won't have the assistance of the people from Downtown University.

Superintendent: I don't mind raising it a few dollars. If students won't pay for it, they can go elsewhere. I think that's reasonable. . . . Okay, very good. . . . All set. (Returning to the original subject.) When are buyers picking up buses?

Administrative Assistant: Wednesday.

Superintendent: How do we transfer the titles . . . is it like selling a car?

The administrative assistant explains the procedure; the superintendent leaves the office and walks into the coffee room where he refills his mug to take the opportunity to chat with the screening committee for an administrative vacancy.

In focusing on this rather ordinary executive behavior, one finds that several pieces of information and ideas are exchanged within the framework of an eight minute unscheduled meeting. Through this informal exchange the superintendent receives information about:

1. the progress in the bus bidding; and
2. the program needs (personnel and tuition) for summer school.

At the same time, he informs the administrative assistant that:

1. he would like the administrative assistant to attend a meeting on measured phone service;
2. he approves of increasing tuition for summer school; and
3. Important matters will be discussed in the board meeting which should resolve some uncertainty around personnel selection for summer school courses.

As a result of the meeting the superintendent requests his secretary to add an item (sale of the buses) on the agenda for the upcoming board of education meeting. The reason for presenting this case is to clarify the distinction between ordinary management of information and the tactics of interpretation, mythmaking, and the management of meaning.

To reiterate, the underlying assumption in this chapter is that the activities of the superintendent are not random but are part of some witting or unwitting scheme the superintendent uses to organize, structure, or make sense out of his professional life. An integral part of this is the image building activities of the superintendent which defines his role and establishes his legitimacy. He accomplishes this through an association with a set of valued principles apparently shared by him and relevant role senders (school board members, staff, the community, and so on).

Following Anthony Cohen, two strategies in the management of myth are "cultural extension" and "cultural substitution." The first strategy demonstrates "the consistency of new or existing structures with traditional cultural values" which serves as a prototype for subsequent action. Cultural substitution, on the other hand, rejecting
traditional values in favor of culturally new and, hence alien ones, asserts (through persuasion, not coercion) the desirability and existence of another order. 24

Myth Management

The two examples which follow allude to strategies of myth-managing akin to extension and substitution by superintendents. While one superintendent emulated the traditional high expectations for academic achievement of his exclusive suburban district, another promoted an idealized school district of rationalism built on sound corporate business methodology. 25 Each superintendent created expectations which he then sought to satisfy and to be seen to satisfy. How the superintendents work to establish their legitimacy through association with these principles will be the focus of the discussion. 26 The myth in this case, refers to the tradition that schools should be controlled by taxpayers, and that the superintendent reflects the values of the community.

Case 4--Myth Management--Cultural Extension

Set apart, both by status and intellect, the superintendent's demeanor was that of intimacy, tempered by deference. Although his


25 Where in one case a superintendent made a point of this to legitimize his position and innovations with the community, the other superintendent utilized these practices but never bothered to mention them.

26 The instability of educational leadership--as purported through statistics of short tenure--coupled with educational crises have rendered problematic the superintendent's legitimacy.
office was isolated and not "en route" to anywhere else, it appeared to be easy to get through to him. During the week of observation, few meetings were scheduled in advance, most were arranged the same day they were to occur. This image of accessibility, to be within almost universal reach, perhaps accounts for the preponderance of his contacts with teachers, school board members, and the community. One elementary teacher, for example, came to him quite distraught because of her perception that declining enrollments would lead to a reduction in force, terminating her position with the school district. The superintendent stressed his appreciation for her fine work and the district's intention to retain high caliber teachers. Referring to a list of the teaching staff, the superintendent identified by name six other elementary teachers who had less experience, and thus less seniority, than she. This information alleviated her concerns and was reflected in her facial gestures. The point made is: the superintendent employed a very individualistic approach; his main concern remained with maintaining a school district with an outstanding reputation. The superintendent earned the deference, respect, and affection of his 'subjects' because he approached them as individuals. With this approach he reduced uncertainty for them.

The peculiar activity of negotiating for the board of education with the teacher group for a new contract placed the superintendent in a unique position.\(^{27}\) The superintendent, it will be illustrated, 

\(^{27}\) The issue of settling teacher contracts was faced by the three superintendents that school year. One superintendent had already settled prior to the observation period while the other two were actively engaged in the process. This district was the only one that did not go to an outside negotiator.
specified meanings for the interaction between individuals (representing groups) creating a role for himself in the situation.

A meeting with the chief negotiator for the local teachers' association was the only appointment scheduled on the superintendent's calendar (on this day). Although three people comprised each negotiating team, this meeting was only attended by the superintendent, his administrative assistant, and the chief negotiator.  

The meeting took place in a conference room and the three sat at one end of the rectangular table.

Superintendent: (Seated directly across from the teacher.) I would like to view the purpose of this session as educating and seeking information. At this meeting we are going to discuss the financial situation of the district and will be reviewing Form 59.  

We'd prefer a two-year contract because we expect to run an operating levy November 1979 and would not want the contract to be interrupted by that... for fear of a negative public reaction. ... The budget is eighty to eighty-five percent for teacher salaries, as it should be. ... we'd like this contract to go to January, 1980 in terms of selling the levy. The settlement should cost the board about $125,000, plus or minus $10,000— that's what they are willing to go.

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28 The chief negotiator (a junior high school teacher), the president of the association (a high school foreign language teacher with a doctoral degree), and the vice president of the association (a high school social studies teacher) represented the teaching staff; and the superintendent and two "silent" board members represented the board of education. The superintendent saw conflict for him in this role when it came time to be instructional leader. He indicated that it was the board's preference to not have an outside negotiator. This preference reflects the board's attitude that the school district was elite— above the typical school board-teacher animosity, and united toward a professional approach to education.

29 A state form on which expenditures (a line budget) were reported.
The meeting followed a pattern: the superintendent leads into each topic, asks the administrative assistant (a business manager) for technical information, then the superintendent clarifies what the administrative assistant has said by paraphrasing into simpler language or supplying relevant examples. For example, the superintendent talked about the costs of teacher inservice, paid student towel service (the teacher is also a coach), reallocation of libraries and AV funds figured on a per pupil basis, the unpredictability of legal services fees and self-supported summer school. Several issues are reviewed including pending state legislation.

Superintendent: The state aid question is in a state of flux which complicates future planning.

The superintendent talks about the board's timetable followed by the administrative assistant who outlines the state's time schedule.

Administrative Assistant: On July 20 we file the budget, in January we file appropriation measures outlining our spending pattern.

Superintendent: Maybe we should just go through it, line by line.

Administrative Assistant: Don't know what we'll get in taxes. We have to keep our appropriations within the certification of established resources ... .

Superintendent: (Interrupting.) The county treasurer withheld five percent of the tax receipts ... this is a paper matter. Whether certified or not, we can spend it if he collects it. I didn't get as excited as the other
districts because the county treasurer has done a better job of collecting... ninety-nine percent of our expected tax revenue will work for our estimates.

(Directed to the administrative assistant.) Would you review the four columns on Form 59?

After the administrative assistant reviewed the form line by line, the teacher negotiator asked a question about the effects of declining enrollment on the budget. (During the entire meeting, the teacher negotiator does little talking; this is not a question-answer exchange between the two groups represented here.) The administrative assistant finished up the discussion about the budget.

Superintendent: Let's talk about 1978... This is a worksheet to figure how much to spend... it tends to be conservative about our income because of the state legislature. If you could get your data analyzed by the state teachers' association... the board members haven't seen this budget sheet (the superintendent acts like he is sharing a secret with the teacher negotiator because the board members haven't even seen the data).

Teacher Negotiator: Um hum. (Looking at his watch) I have nine minutes left before my next class.

Superintendent: Well, this has been for background... hope you will meet with the administrative assistant later. (Summarizing) It costs $28,000 to give a $100 raise in the base pay to 150 teachers. (The superintendent shuffles his papers.)

Teacher Negotiator: I found this informative... the teachers do not know this.

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30 This decision of the county treasurer prompted the city district superintendents in the county to work as a political unit against the action of the treasurer. This activity drew some media attention and represented a new assertiveness and direction for this group.
Superintendent: No need to really. Would be ideal if we could go through this with the whole staff.

Teacher Negotiator: (To administrative assistant) Can we meet again this week?

Superintendent: If you want to ask [the teachers' association] about the cost of a dental program, we can get a lot done without having actual negotiations sessions.

Teacher Negotiator: Thank you for writing the letter (the teacher negotiator is applying to a doctoral program in administration).

The three men get up from the table after sixty minutes of discussion.

The superintendent summarized what he hoped to transmit in this meeting: (1) a good faith exchange, and the impression that (2) he might be telling more than he should, and (3) projecting system resources and expenditures is "crystal balling." The purpose of the meeting was stated as educational; the superintendent did not want this to be considered as a negotiation session. The superintendent, then, is seen as defining what the meeting was going to be or is involved in the management of meaning. He laid down the parameters for the meeting. Several comments—sharing knowledge the board does not have as yet and the comment about the percent of expenditures committed to teacher salaries—built an image of something different from the labor-management hostility dominant in the collective bargaining literature. Maybe there really are not sides to be on; the school board will do the best they can is the image projected in this meeting.

The superintendent was seen as an interpreter as he tied expenditures to the teachers' needs and translated the business manager's technical language into a common language shared by the superintendent.
and teacher. By doing these things, he created a role for himself in collective negotiations which enhanced his individualistic and paternalistic aura. The things the superintendent did both reflected and enhanced the cultural values of the community and served to guide subsequent action following Cohen's notion of the strategy of cultural extension in the management of myth.

**Case 5--Myth Management--Cultural Substitution**

The aforementioned case showed that in periods of stability, the superintendent pursues legitimacy by demonstrating his association with those traditional values which define legitimate school leadership. A contrasting example is found in one of the other districts experiencing declining enrollments, a lack of available land for development, and an aging community. In this district, the superintendent sought to promote a definition of what those values should be—which involved a strategy suggested by cultural substitution—to build an exceptional educational program which would attract child-bearing age residents into the community. To accomplish this, the superintendent adopted a business methodology—management by objectives (MBO)—to promote a new image for the district. Management by objectives provided structure for a democratic and responsive administration. Everyone (community citizens, parents, staff, students, and school board members) was invited into the objective setting process which had three phases (rough drafting objectives, soliciting reactions—especially support, and rewriting).

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31 Politics is as much concerned with the creation of legitimacy as with actions performed under its prior bestowal.
While this program had the typical MBO weaknesses, the objectives were effective in focusing the attention of staff on clearly stated outcomes, the attainment of which (or progress toward) was easily and regularly reported to the community. The objectives also served to give reasons for social occasions (meetings, phone calls, and tours) so acted to structure interactions. Numerous committees were born out of the objectives through which the superintendent effectuated innovations. Management by objectives functioned in a mythological manner for it served as a basis of collective or shared organization experience. The MBO process in this district also served to promote the value of local control by inviting individuals to participate in the decision making process (and asserting the validity of) by demonstrating the preparedness to carry out policies while using both to gain support for the policies supported by the school board and community elite.

In this school district a distinction between 'policy'\(^{32}\) and 'administration' was enhanced by the superintendent; this distinction also functioned as a myth. This myth was expressed in intra-group, as well as inter-group, interaction and was especially noticeable in the superintendent's articulation of his qualifications for leadership status. In a meeting with the district's administrators, the

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\(^{32}\) An ordinary language use of policy is implied here. Several other formulations are offered as useful concepts of policy: (1) the authoritative allocation of values (David Easton); (2) a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern (James E. Anderson); and (3) an authorizing agent obligates for the purpose of effecting some specific state of affairs, to direct some implementing agent to act in accord with a specified conditional imperative, which must be of the form: do something that counts as some specified x-ing whenever specified conditions occur (Donna Kerr).
superintendent discussed a previous practice of the former superintendent to review personnel evaluations (and supply copies) with the school board. Declaring personnel evaluation "an administrative matter," the superintendent regained control over this process for the administrators (which included the superintendent). He approached matters of policy with the school board in a similar manner.

The query is posed: what is the payoff for the superintendent to declare this distinction? First of all, the distinction clarifies areas of influence--school boards make policy and administrators implement policy. The distinction between policy and administration is not illegitimate, by any means. The activity of administration is logically distinct from policy making. Nonetheless, the superintendent is involved in policy making; he not only implements the decisions made by the school board, he helps to create the decisions.33

The superintendent is able, however, to manipulate this distinction in order to increase his influence. Between policy makers and policy implementers, the superintendent functions in a linking role. The superintendent must maintain legitimacy in these two subsystems he links together. Using the policy-administration distinction, the superintendent mediates the interests of the school board (representing the community) and the administration (representing the school).

The superintendent is like Janus (looking forward and simultaneously looking backward); he assumes two faces. It is not that one

33 The case--Early Entrance and Future Learning Problems--developed in this chapter suggests the superintendent's involvement in the policy making process.
face is the correct face. It is rather that they are both correct faces. One face he presents to one group, the other to another. Through this he is able to produce active supporters at various levels of the social system. Perhaps the quintessential superintendent career is one built upon the inventing and exploitation of such situations.

Summary

Each school district examined was a web of influence patterns whereby individuals or groups sought to influence others to think or act in particular ways. A re-analysis of the superintendents' contacts based on three weeks of observation revealed that superintendents spend 48 percent of their contacts influencing or attempting to influence the other participant(s). If one ignores the unclassifiable events, the proportion of contacts in which the superintendent influenced the action of others greatly surpasses the number of times he was influenced. Superintendents devote a considerable portion of their time to the acquisition of information to legitimize, to influence policy and administrative decisions, and to resolve differences.

The access to pertinent information (technical or normative) appeared to influence the course of events. The ability to acquire relevant information and to gain access to the superintendent are important variables in the probability of influencing the incumbent of this position.

It was mentioned that works by Minar and Zeigler suggest that superintendents manage information and rely on their expertise and superior knowledge of the situation to influence boards of education. This chapter suggested that the management of information becomes a very
appealing tactic for increasing influence or protecting territory or objectives.

Four devices were suggested through the observation of superintendents and literature review regarding their management of information. The superintendent, on occasions, acts as:

1. interpreter of organizational history--the selection of relevant facts from the organization's history to legitimize or shed light on the current state of affairs;

2. interpreter of contemporary events and information--the selection out of available current information that which is valued and useful for his organization;

3. manager of meaning of terms and concepts--the definition of terms pertinent to the organization when the term or concept is unclear and debatable; and

4. the manager of myths--the utterances, public beliefs, and writings (of the superintendent) which function to create and maintain solidarity, to legitimize social institutions and policies, or to reduce uncertainty for organizational members (they take on a mythological quality). The myth may refer to some prior point in the school district's history, the present, or refer to a social order which is in the cultural future.

Case studies were presented which illustrate some of these tactics. In conclusion, what is suggested is: superintendents as inhabitants of "loosely coupled worlds" make sense out of the everyday life of the organization for themselves, their constituents, and organizational members through the management of information.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the invariant aspects of the everyday activities of school superintendents. To guide the inquiry into the actual job of the superintendent, four questions were posed. These questions served as a basis for observing three superintendents as they worked, for developing an interview schedule, for conducting the interviews, and for analyzing both the observation and interview data. They shall also serve as a framework for discussing the findings and conclusions of this study.

Summary

A study based on the direct observation of the superintendency in three suburbs contiguous to a large midwestern city provides a description of the everyday life of a school superintendent. The conclusions are based on the questions delineated in Chapter III.

1. Where does the superintendent spend his time? What kinds of information does he process? With whom must he work and at whose request? What is the purpose and duration of each activity and contact?

The superintendent's world is largely verbal; subject superintendents spent 80 percent of their time in verbal contact with others.
within the boundaries of the school buildings, almost one-half of that within their own offices. Superintendents were away from their school districts one-tenth of the time (which accounted for 2 percent of their total contacts), primarily in meetings with their peers in professional organizations.

Superintendents meet with a diverse number of individuals and organizations—subordinates, school board members, peers and professional organizations, clients (parents and students), suppliers and associates (university professors, representatives of non-governmental agencies, and salesmen), regulatory agencies, and independents (community citizens and those who do not fall into the other categories). These contacts are initiated by the superintendents 56 percent of the time. It was interesting that each contact with school board members and clients took longer than those with subordinates and other groups. This is partially because the length of school board meetings greatly exceeded the average length of scheduled meetings. The superintendents' activities were generally brief and fragmented; 60 percent lasted less than 9 minutes, and 6 percent exceeded one hour.

The superintendents' activities require some kind of scheduling; they, primarily, do one thing at a time. A majority of their interactions were dyadic. Superintendents use time and space as organizing frames for activities which Edward Hall terms "monochronic" or M-time which emphasizes schedules, segmentation, and promptness.\(^1\) Superintendents, it was noted on some occasions, allow several things to happen

at once. One superintendent was observed to process his mail and talk on the phone while meeting with one of his staff. A few days were characterized by several things happening at once and changes in important plans at the very last minute. Superintendents left meetings to meet with other people or to complete transactions. This solution to organizing activities is termed "polychronic" or P-time systems. Hall notes that, "Americans overseas are psychologically stressed in many ways when confronted by P-time systems such as those in Latin America and in the Middle East." The contrast between P-time and M-time is exemplified by the market place: "one is surrounded by other customers vying for the attention of a clerk. There is no order as to who is served next. . . ."²

Administrators, including superintendents, frequently cite "time"--not having enough time or wasting it--as a major impediment to accomplishing their work. Time management is frequently suggested as a "logical" solution to organize administrators' time which segments activities much like the day of a student. This compartmentalization makes it possible to concentrate on one thing at a time; scheduling by its very nature selects what will and will not be perceived and attended to and permits only a limited number of events within a given period. In effect, what gets scheduled in or out constitutes a system for setting priorities. Hall points out that monochronic time is arbitrary and imposed; it is learned.

²Ibid.
The data in the observation study of superintendents suggested that certain aspects of the administrator's job resemble a polychronic organization of time and space, and that this organization may not be dysfunctional for accomplishing some tasks. What needs to be learned is how administrators can use these different time and space frameworks to their advantage.

Superintendents devoted a considerable portion of their activities to the acquisition of information. In addition, superintendents received a deluge of written materials, much of it unsolicited. Five types of information are processed by superintendents: (1) technical information; (2) legal rules and regulations; (3) the past activities of the district and its internal resources; (4) the preferences of different individuals and groups within and external to the school system; and (5) the probable reactions of different constituencies to decisions or the state of affairs. The management of this information was seen as important for increasing influence or protecting territory and objectives. Tactics were suggested that superintendents use to select from the information available that which supports their understanding of organizational reality.

How differently each subject superintendent treated a summary of research showing no causal relationship between class size on student learning outcomes illustrates the power of the interpretative tactics for the superintendent. Superintendent C sent a copy of the

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report to all board members and administrators; Superintendent B skimmed, then discarded the report; and Superintendent A filed it under "reference materials." Superintendents were observed to exercise their influence as expert. Their right to govern is often based upon their superior knowledge of the situation. Unfortunately, as the study by Cuban suggests, this position of the expert has difficulty withstanding serious scrutiny when normative aspects come into play.\footnote{See Cuban's two works: Urban School Chiefs Under Fire and Hobsen v. Hansen: An Organizational Response (previously cited) for case studies of the role outsiders play in disrupting this influence base. Also, there is evidence that school boards in rural areas are either less able to understand technical issues or less willing to accede to the wishes of professionals to put disputes in technical terms in Michael O. Boss, et al., "Experts and Representatives," The Western Political Quarterly 30 (June 1977), pp. 255-262.}

Much of the activity of superintendents is mundane (inaconsequential) never approaching the lofty ideals of leadership. They spend a considerable portion of their time talking with insiders about minor things, making trivial decisions, holding meetings on unimportant agendas, and responding to the little irritants in organizational life.

2. Do superintendents differentiate their role behavior when dealing with different interest groups?

Superintendents were observed to interpret events and information to different groups. One superintendent tied expenditures to teachers' needs when negotiating with a representative of the teachers' association. Another superintendent relied on a distinction between 'policy' and 'administration' to create expectations for his behavior (with different groups), then sought to satisfy these expectations. This simple division of labor--the school board establishes policy and
the superintendent administers policy—is contested by a growing body of research. That superintendents have substantial influence in making educational policy was supported in this observation study and illustrated through case studies.

Superintendents were likened to the Greek god Janus, for they maintained several "correct" faces. That superintendents do differentiate their behavior with different groups perhaps accounts for some reluctance to meet with groups containing individuals representing numerous interest groups simultaneously. Superintendents seemed to play figurehead (or a ceremonial part) in activities of this sort and delegated the responsibility "to run things" to another administrator. Superintendents learn that their job security is dependent on correctly interpreting and anticipating what the different groups in the community expect of schools.

3. Are superintendents nearly indistinguishable in their behaviors, performances, abilities, and values?

While the pattern of the superintendent activities proved to be rather ordinary executive behavior—their days were comprised of a mixture of desk work, phone calls, scheduled, and unscheduled meetings—their values and abilities varied. It was not possible nor intended to evaluate the performance of a superintendent based on this limited contact or to correlate their success with their abilities or values. The

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superintendents and the school board appeared to be constrained by interdependence.

Each has a near monopoly on a resource of potential value, but each is able to take only limited action except in concert with the other. The board has formal policy-making authority, but must depend almost entirely upon the superintendent for the information and technical expertise necessary to develop educational policy and to translate general policy into specific educational outputs. Reciprocally, the superintendent lays claim to the essential expertise required to formulate educational policy, but must rely upon the board to legitimate and achieve community support for policy decisions. Without at least tacit board approval, authoritative policy decisions are tenuous or impossible. No superintendent, no matter how dominant, can completely escape dependence upon the school board.6

4. What recurring and useful rules, strategies, or tactics of administrative action are used to cope with the uncertainty surrounding an educational organization?

Superintendents were observed to use several tactics which functioned to interpret environmental conditions and relay that information to organizational administrators and school board members while, also, interpreting organizational events to various constituencies. These tactics appeared to reduce uncertainty for organizational members and to assist in making sense out of an "organizational reality" that seems to be less than rational. These interpretations become recipes for behavior which make organizations possible. Superintendents defined their current circumstances based upon their projected plans and futures for the school districts they served. Several powerful means were suggested for reducing uncertainty for the educational organization which linked

internal divisions and organizational boundaries through common beliefs. The superintendent was seen to act as: (1) interpreter of organizational history, (2) interpreter of contemporary events, (3) manager of meaning, and (4) manager of organizational myths.\textsuperscript{7}

Recommendations for Future Research

More time should be spent in examining aspects of the everyday life of adults within educational organizations especially in light of the possibility that educational organizations are more usefully viewed as loosely coupled systems or organized anarchies.\textsuperscript{8} It is suggested that the following ideas might serve as impetus for future studies.

1. Accumulate more descriptive data on the daily experiences of administrators.

More descriptive data is needed relevant to the daily experiences of administrators, with particular emphasis on women and minority groups. Since the focus of this research was on invariant characteristics of superintendents' work, women superintendents were excluded from the study so as to avoid concentrating on differences; some research suggests the power bases of female and male administrators are not the same (for instance, women are still banned from service clubs which are important to building one's power base).

\textsuperscript{7}Organizational myths are similar to what Burton Clark identifies as "organizational sagas." See Burton R. Clark, "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education," Administrative Science Quarterly 17 (1972) pp. 178-184.

2. Investigate the processes by which administrators develop knowledge, techniques, and beliefs in order to discover how inhabitants make sense out of educational organizations.

Further study is needed to ascertain the extent that Kuhnian paradigms function in the social construction of school system reality; and the extent that paradigms are, and are not, like myth management. Study is also needed to learn which individuals and groups create and impose paradigms and myths--the superintendent is only one of several candidates.

3. Investigate the utilization of information by decision makers in educational organizations.

The acquisition and utilization of information emerged as an important aspect of superintendents' work. A study of the utilization of specific research studies and other kinds of information across a large number of cases would address problems raised by research based on unstructured interviews, participant observation, and a small sample.

4. Promote the collection of information pertaining to the exchange between board and superintendent.

Superintendents appeared to be "doing" that which was negotiated during their employment interviews. Superintendents are hired for their reputation for professional expertise in matters pertaining to education and administration; they are able to offer a solution to an ill-defined problem of the school district. To what extent the cycle--school board incumbent is defeated, the power structure in the board changes, the

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superintendent leaves the district—identified by Iannaccone and Lutz\textsuperscript{10} coincides with Carlson's notion of rule-making and identify-creation of superintendents should be explored.\textsuperscript{11}

5. Explore how administrators use time from a polychronic framework.

Time in this culture is organized monochronically. While the majority of superintendents' activities were scheduled and linear (in terms of time and space), organizing activities along a polychronic scheme seemed to emerge. The possibilities for using both schemes should be explored.

**Recommendations and Implications for Practitioners**

Administrators within the arena of public education are faced with numerous and difficult questions in their daily activities; they are engaged in face-to-face relationships wherein these issues arise. March and Cohen describe factors of public school organizations—goal ambiguity, unclear technology, and fluid participation—which contribute to the creation of intense and unrelenting demands upon the superintendent's daily activity.\textsuperscript{12} While others have been especially sympathetic, if not apologetic, to the difficulties confronting school superintendents,\textsuperscript{13} certain dimensions of the superintendent's work is very ordinary

\textsuperscript{10}See Laurence Iannaccone, et al., *Power, Politics and Policy*.

\textsuperscript{11}Richard Carlson, *School Superintendents*.


\textsuperscript{13}Larry Cuban, *Urban School Chiefs Under Fire*. 
executive behavior. The failure to recognize the political aspect of the role or to view schools as open systems, however, is debilitating. Cuban portrayed school superintendents as incapacitated by the norms of their professional organizations (including university training) which divorced education from politics. ¹⁴

One superintendent who participated in this study was asked how his job was different from his expectations; he indicated that he "didn't think the superintendency would be so political." When asked if his doctoral preparation did not include a course on the politics of education, he responded, "Yes, but I thought I could change the situation. . . ." Perhaps this suggests that the selection of individuals aspiring to be administrators should be based on their realistic expectations (and acceptance) of how much and what they can control.

The fragmentation and brevity of activities of superintendents coupled with the goal ambiguity of educational organizations and lack of technical information about the teaching-learning process suggest the need for changes in the training of educational practitioners. More realistic preservice and inservice training is needed for superintendents. ¹⁵ The metaphors in educational administration are misleading; they exaggerate the extent to which what happens in schools is the


¹⁵By 'realistic' it is not suggested that theory should not be emphasized, as numerous scholars have reiterated "there's nothing as practical as a good theory." A good program for practitioners would include a mixture of theory and apprenticeship.
intended consequences of actions by administrators and indicate an over-confidence for planning and rational action. March identifies five analytical skills that seem to reflect the nature of the work of educational managers. They include:

1. The analysis of expertise. The management of knowledge.
2. The analysis of coalitions. The management of conflict.
3. The analysis of ambiguity. The management of goals.
4. The analysis of time. The management of attention.
5. The analysis of information. The management of inference.16

This observation study of three suburban superintendents verifies that each of these skills is relevant to the everyday life of educational administrators. The nature of interactions (frequency, duration and type) suggests that: (1) how to handle ceremonial activities, (2) how to handle brief interactions, and (3) how to determine when a meeting is necessary, who should attend, and what to delegate, are also skills needed by superintendents.

Conclusion

A framework proposed by Henry Mintzberg guided the observation study of three suburban superintendents. Aspects of Mintzberg's work--his equivocation of 'role,' 'purpose,' and 'function'; his underlying assumption that everything a manager does is inherently managerial; and his practice of turning categories into roles by definitional fiat--

proved problematic. No attempt was made, therefore, to identify the role(s) a superintendent performs. His findings were supported, yet the present study goes beyond his analysis by raising criticisms of it, by examining the superintendents' activities in terms of 'influencing,' by examining the way information is managed, and by presenting case studies which illustrate school superintendents' management of information within the social system of which their school district is a part.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Could you describe your typical working hours, including evening meetings, weekends, and work-related activity at home?

2. How would you describe your managerial style?

3. If you were to describe and define the job of the superintendent to someone totally unfamiliar with the position, what would you say?

4. Has the job of the superintendent changed since you first took a job as a superintendent?

5. In what ways do people show respect for the superintendent?

6. How can a superintendent get staff (the school board) to do what you want them to do?

7. What are the means of appeasing groups if they are displeased?

8. What kind of person do you think can be a good superintendent?

9. Who is the best superintendent you know?

10. How does the job of a superintendent differ from the job of executives in other organizations?

11. What expectations do teachers (principals, school board members, community leaders) have for the position?

12. Is the position of superintendent as you expected it to be?

13. What are the values, concerns and goals of school board members (principals, teachers, community leaders, clients)?

14. To what extent do you and the school board agree on the expected behavior of the position (principals, teachers, clients, community leaders)?

Please rate the following items on a five point scale. Also, responses may be clarified by giving examples from your day to day experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have enough time to complete my work.

2. I have to do things that should be done differently.

3. I am able to act the same regardless of the group I am with.
4. I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.
5. I receive assignments without the manpower to complete them.
6. I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.
7. I have just the right amount of work to do.
8. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.
9. I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.
10. I receive assignments without adequate resources and materials to execute them.

1. I feel certain about how much authority I have.
2. I have clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.
3. I have a lack of guidelines to help me.
4. I know that I have divided my time properly.
5. I know what my responsibilities are.
6. I have to "feel my way" in performing my duties.
7. I know exactly what is expected of me.
8. I am told how well I am doing my job.
9. I receive a clear explanation of what is to be done.
10. I have to work under vague directives or orders.
11. I do not know if my work will be acceptable to the board of education.
APPENDIX B

ENUMERATION DATA
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark ✓.

1. Glossy photographs _______
2. Colored illustrations _______
3. Photographs with dark background _______
4. Illustrations are poor copy _______
5. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _______
6. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages / throughout _______
7. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _______
8. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _______
9. Page(s) _______ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author _______
10. Page(s) _______ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows _______
11. Poor carbon copy _______
12. Not original copy, several pages with blurred type _______
13. Appendix pages are poor copy _______
14. Original copy with light type _______
15. Curling and wrinkled pages _______
16. Other ____________________________________________________________________
### Table 19
Analysis of the Chronology Record - Superintendent A
Based on One Week of Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ONE</th>
<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours Worked</td>
<td>10 h.</td>
<td>10 h.30 m.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 h. 30 m.</td>
<td>4 h.</td>
<td>38 h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours in Travel to Outside Meetings (not included)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Evening Meetings (included)</td>
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<td>4 h. 30 m.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 h. 30 m.</td>
</tr>
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<td>12 pcs.</td>
<td>16 pcs.</td>
<td>12 pcs.</td>
<td>95 pcs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35</td>
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#### Desk Work

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<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Desk Work</td>
<td>2 h. 32 m.</td>
<td>2 h. 22 m.</td>
<td>1 h. 54 m.</td>
<td>1 h. 20 m.</td>
<td>35 m.</td>
<td>8 h. 43 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>295</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Telephone Calls

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<th>ONE</th>
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<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Calls</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>Time on Telephone</td>
<td>38 m.</td>
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<td>42 m.</td>
<td>32 m.</td>
<td>21 m.</td>
<td>2 h. 36 m.</td>
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<td></td>
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#### Scheduled Meetings

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<tr>
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<th>ONE</th>
<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Time in Meetings</td>
<td>6 h.</td>
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<td>16 h. 30 m.</td>
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<td>Average Duration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>485</td>
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#### Unscheduled Meetings

<table>
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<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in Meetings</td>
<td>30 m.</td>
<td>1 h. 44 m.</td>
<td>37 m.</td>
<td>43 m.</td>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>3 h. 39 m.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tours

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Tours</td>
<td>5 m.</td>
<td>27 m.</td>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>7 m.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41 m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Duration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Time</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Observation interrupted by a two week vacation.
- Two board of education meetings included.
# Table 20

**Analysis of the Chronology Record - Superintendent B**

**Based on one week of observation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ONE</th>
<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours Worked</strong></td>
<td>7 h.</td>
<td>8 h.</td>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>9 h.</td>
<td>11 h. 15 m.</td>
<td>5 h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours in Travel to Outside Meetings</td>
<td>5 m.</td>
<td>25 m.</td>
<td>15 m.</td>
<td>10 m.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Evening Meetings (included)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 h. 30 m.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 h. 30 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Amount of Mail</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Activities</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Desk Work**

| Number of Sessions | 9 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 13 | 52 |
| Time on Desk Work  | 60 m. | 1 h. 51 m. | 3 h. 6 m. | 1 h. 22 m. | 2 h. 37 m. | 9 h. 56 m. |
| Average Duration   | 7 m. | 8 m. | 37 m. | 8 m. | 12 m. | 1 h. 52 m. |
| Proportion of Time | | | | | | 241 |

**Telephone Calls**

| Number of Calls | 8 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 56 |
| Time on Telephone | 52 m. | 35 m. | 57 m. | 1 h. 17 m. | 1 h. 6 m. | 4 h. 47 m. |
| Average Duration | 8 m. | 6 m. | 15 m. | 1 h. 6 m. | 1 h. 42 m. | 5 m. |
| Proportion of Time | | | | | | 125 |

**Scheduled Meetings**

| Number of Meetings | 5 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 19 |
| Time in Meetings   | 5 h. 30 m. | 5 h. 32 m. | 4 h. 31 m. | 5 h. 32 m. | 0 | 2 h. 6 m. |
| Average Duration   | | | | | | 1 h. 57 m. |
| Proportion of Time | | | | | | 515 |

**Unscheduled Meetings**

| Number of Meetings | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 20 |
| Time in Meetings   | 31 m. | 29 m. | 1 m. | 3 h. 43 m. | 1 h. 12 m. | 3 h. 56 m. |
| Average Duration   | | | | | | 12 m. |
| Proportion of Time | | | | | | 105 |

**Tours**

| Number of Tours | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Time on Tours    | 0 | 6 m. | 15 m. | 6 m. | 0 | 27 m. |
| Average Duration | | | | | | 7 m. |
| Proportion of Time | | | | | | 18 |

**Proportion of Activities Lasting Less Than Nine Minutes**

- 63.5%

**Proportion Lasting Longer Than Sixty Minutes**

- 45%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ONE</th>
<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Hours Worked</td>
<td>12 h.</td>
<td>10 h. 30 m.</td>
<td>9 h.</td>
<td>11 h.</td>
<td>10 h.</td>
<td>52 h. 30 m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours in Travel to Outside Meetings</td>
<td>2 h.</td>
<td>2 h.</td>
<td>2 h.</td>
<td>2 h.</td>
<td>2 h. 30 m.</td>
<td>45 m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not included)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Amount of Mail</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Amount of Mail Processed Per Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Desk Work                            |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Number of Sessions                   | 8    | 8    | 6     | 5    | 11   | 38         |
| Time on Desk Work                    | 3 h. 10 m. | 1 h. 21 m. | 28 m. | 30 m. | 1 h. 24 m. | 7 h. 2 m. |
| Average Duration                     | 24 m. | 10 m. | 4 m.  | 6 m. | 8 m. | 11 m.      |
| Proportion of Time                   |      |      |       |      |      | 13%        |

| Telephone Calls                      |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Number of Calls                      | 9    | 13   | 10    | 5    | 13   | 50         |
| Time on Telephone                    | 45 m. | 1 h. 1 m. | 45 m. | 16 m. | 50 m. | 3 h. 37 m. |
| Average Duration                     | 5 m.  | 5 m.  | 4 m.  | 3 m. | 4 m. | 20 m.      |
| Proportion of Time                   |      |      |       |      |      | 7%         |

| Scheduled Meetings                   |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Number of Meetings                   | 5    | 3    | 7     | 3    | 6    | 24         |
| Time in Meetings                     | 6 h. 45 m. | 2 h. 30 m. | 5 h. 35 m. | 6 h. 27 m. | 6 h. 45 m. | 27 h. 57 m. |
| Average Duration                     | 1 h. 21 m. | 50 m. | 48 m. | 2 h. 4 m. | 1 h. 7 m. | 1 h. 10 m. |
| Proportion of Time                   |      |      |       |      |      | 53%        |

| Unscheduled Meetings                 |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Number of Meetings                   | 5    | 9    | 7     | 7    | 7    | 35         |
| Time in Meetings                     | 34 m. | 1 h. 42 m. | 9 h. | 1 h. 45 m. | 25 m. | 5 h. 39 m. |
| Average Duration                     | 7 m.  | 11 m. | 10 m. | 10 m. | 4 m. | 10 m.      |
| Proportion of Time                   |      |      |       |      |      | 11%        |

| Tours                                |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Number of Tours                      | 2    | 0    | 2     | 0    | 1    | 5          |
| Time on Tours                        | 29 m. | 0    | 1 h. 10 m. | 0    | 1 m. | 1 h. 50 m. |
| Average Duration                     | 20 m. | 0    | 35 m.  | 0    | 1 m. | 22 m.      |
| Proportion of Time                   |      |      |       |      |      | 2%         |

| Proportion of Activities Lasting Less Than Nine Minutes |      |      |       |      |      |            |
| Proportion of Activities Lasting Longer Than Sixty Minutes |      |      |       |      |      |            |

Proportion Lasting Longer Than Sixty Minutes 53%
TABLE 22
ANALYSIS OF MAIL: INPUT - SUPERINTENDENT A
BASED ON ONE WEEK OF OBSERVATION

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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>1%</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Sender %</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer\b</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Organization</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client\c</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplier/Associate</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>14%</td>
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\aPeriodicals received and read at the superintendent's homes were not included.

\bRefers to executives of organizations having no direct relationship with those of the superintendent (e.g., superintendents from other school districts, former bosses, personal contacts).

\cIncludes parent or student associated with the school district (e.g., parent of student, PTA president, Band Boosters president).

\dRefers to individuals with no relevant educational organization affiliation (e.g., job seekers, members of the general public, non-educational and non-governmental organizations or agencies).
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*Periodicals received and read at the superintendents' homes were not included.

*Refers to executives of organizations having no direct relationship with those of the superintendent (e.g., superintendents from other school districts, former bosses, personal contacts).

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*Refers to individuals with no relevant educational organization affiliation (e.g., job seekers, members of the general public, non-educational and non-governamental organizations or agencies).
### TABLE 24
**ANALYSIS OF MAIL: INPUT - SUPERINTENDENT C**  
**BASED ON ONE WEEK OF OBSERVATION**

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\(a\) Periodicals received and read at the superintendents' homes were not included.  
\(b\) Refers to executives of organizations having no direct relationship with those of the superintendent (e.g., superintendents from other school districts, former bosses, personal contacts).  
\(c\) Includes parent or student associated with the school district (e.g., parent of student, PTA president, Band Boosters president).  
\(d\) Refers to individuals with no relevant educational organization affiliation (e.g., job seekers, members of the general public, non-educational and non-governmental organizations or agencies).
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TABLE 26

ANALYSIS OF THE MAIL RECORD: OUTPUT - SUPERINTENDENT B

BASED ON ONE WEEK OF OBSERVATION

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<td>Write to Third Party</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge or Reply to Verbal Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orig. Letter/Memo</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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ABBIBIOGRAPHY


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