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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS AND BOARDS OF EDUCATION.

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COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS
OF SCHOOLS AND BOARDS OF EDUCATION

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

by

CARL EUGENE BENNETT, B.S. Ed., M. Ed.

The Ohio State University
1964

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Department of Education
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Fran.

To Dr. T. J. Jenson.

To the men of the Center for Educational Administration and the College of Education, The Ohio State University.

To Fran, because she sacrificed more than I had a right to expect of a wife during the years of the Ph. D. program. To Fran, for her help, for her enthusiasm, and for accepting my worries as her own.

To Dr. T. J. Jenson, my adviser during the research, I take note of his patience, his insight, and understanding. But these qualities I would expect. My appreciation, my heartfelt gratitude, is for his having labored to increase my stride in the fields of research and writing, and for affording me vision.

To the men I have learned to respect, indeed, to desire to emulate: the staff of the Center and of the College. Their support enabled me to complete a graduate program. Their example has provided enduring guide-stars for mind and spirit.
I, Carl Eugene Bennett, was born in 1927 in Clermont County, Ohio, and attended the Withamsville Elementary School and the Amelia High School. In 1948 I earned the B. S. Ed. at Miami University, majoring in history and in mathematics. Attendance at Miami was interrupted with service in the U. S. Navy, 1945-46.

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In 1963, I worked as Administrative Assistant, Center for Educational Administration, and as a part-time instructor. Currently, I hold the post of Executive Secretary, Inter-University Council of Ohio.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Good communication is an imperative to the existence of satisfactory relationships between the superintendent of schools and his board of education. The importance of good communication needs to be stressed constantly in all human relationships, and few relationships demand more awareness of good communication than superintendent-board of education interactions.

The status of communication between superintendents and their boards of education has not been well defined. Little has been known about the perceptions of those involved in the school leadership setting concerning their communication. This study was designed to determine communication practices, the nature of communication content, and difficulties in the communication process. Data for the study was obtained through field interviews from board members and superintendents in Ohio school districts of various size.

Background of the Problem

A number of factors suggested or pointed toward the need for a study of communication between superintendents and their boards
of education. In the ensuing discussion these factors are described. The approach used in deriving these factors is reflective, based upon experience and respected opinion. It must not be concluded that any one of the factors discussed is always operative in a given board-superintendent communication relationship; however, some of these factors may be true and may be operative in school districts, and are surmised to be chargeable for a need to study communication. This need for an intensive investigation of board-superintendent communication is believed to be resident in a complex of suspected background factors. No attempt is made in the following presentation to evaluate the individual impact or quality of these factors.

Reports of investigations conducted by survey teams in problem school situations have underscored the importance of communication in administration. Almost without exception, poor communication, or even lack of communication has been held suspect as a causal factor in school conflict, strained relationships, and disagreements. Undoubtedly, communication often has been made a scapegoat in some situations, but the fact that it has been so universally tagged as causal factor was seen to be significant.

Superintendents and board members have reported that the problem of superintendent-board relationship has become intensified, if, indeed, it has not become the most intensified current problem
in local school management.\footnote{Personal interviews with Professors of Educational Administration, The Ohio State University, December, 1963.} Board members have complained of their not having been kept properly informed by the superintendent. Certain superintendents have operated with a conviction that it is well to "keep the board in the dark" on many issues, that the board was not capable of understanding, and that to keep the board informed would be asking for trouble and possible interference. Invariably, when the climate for good administrator-board relationship has been questioned, the focus gets around to some aspects of communication between the two.

The past few decades have been characterized by accelerated consolidation of school districts into larger units. The trend continues. In 1932 Ohio had more than 2000 districts; the count in 1964 is 777. Larger districts have tended to make more difficult or to make virtually impossible opportunities for face-to-face communication of board members with teachers and staff personnel other than the superintendent. Increasingly, the superintendent has been placed in the position of being the only direct communication link of those on the board with school personnel, their problems, and needs. The superintendent's role would seem to be, thus, conditioned by the size of the district operation. The larger the
district, the more the likelihood would seem to be for the superintendent to become the major source or clearinghouse for the communication, both upward and downward, of information and ideas.

Centralization and school district reorganization have decreased the probability that all board members would live in the superintendent's community. The result has been a need for use of more complex, impersonal methods or media in communicating. Further, as districts grow in size, board members may be removed culturally or socially from the superintendent, and from each other, thus presenting quite possibly a different array of interests, backgrounds, and viewpoints which must be considered by the superintendent as he proceeds to establish a working relationship. In the occurrence of such circumstances, diverse communication patterns would seem reasonable as the superintendent seeks to make his contacts meaningful.

Specialization and the addition of cabinet level staff members, in all probability, have had a part in changing superintendent-board communication. Some superintendents have practiced the philosophy that they must make a pretense of possessing all-encompassing expertness about the full spectrum of school concerns or they would be considered inept, to say the least, by their boards. This spectrum of concerns ranges from curriculum and personnel to finance, transportation, and property management. Perhaps because they realize the spuriousness as well as the impossibility of
pretending such a role for long, perceptive superintendents have been
drawing upon the professional experts on the staff to provide direct
information to their boards of education. This practice has added
another communicator to the board from the superintendent's side.
The manner in which this kind of communicating is done most
effectively is still a matter of conjecture and speculation; in any
event, it would appear to complicate superintendent-board communi-
cation.

Administrators have been pointing to concerns about board-
administrator relations, many of which particularly involve com-
munication or the lack of it. Administrators are heard frequently
to lament that board members often know little of the real problems
of administration, that they deal in trivia, and that they obscure
the genuine concerns of education, thereby inhibiting the exercise
of efficient educational administration. Usually, when such conditions
exist, a gulf can naturally be presumed to develop between
administrator and board through lack of desirable interaction and
interchange. Following any such cleavage, the communication
which does take place may be spurious and insincere. There would
be a good likelihood under these kinds of circumstances that rumor,
misinformation, and gossip would be often substituted for fact in
the communication process.
The present extensive national interest in education has served to spotlight the position of board member, drawing to educational service both those people who have genuine contributions and those with political, financial, and social aspirations. In most cases, such people would be presumed modestly competent, wanting to participate actively in constructive decision-making, and would be unwilling to accept a secondary role or to permit the status quo to remain unchallenged. The requirements of communication between superintendent and board members in such a setting would seem to be vastly different from those in a setting where little stimulation existed to bring about superintendent-board interchange.

Board organizations have been organized to increase the visibility of their membership. Representative of these organizations are the school boards' associations. Their publications, conventions, conferences, and representatives have as a stated goal the upgrading of the layman in his performance of board duties, the expanding of his view of boardmanship, and the broadening of the concept of his relationship with the superintendent. Implicit in this relationship are expectations of maximal communication that are qualitatively, as well as quantitatively, higher than those of the past.

A problem that has posed itself for superintendents is: "What do I tell my board?" Suggested by the question are the matters of extent, of timing, of purpose, and of practicability. Legally, boards,
not superintendents, are charged with the management of the school systems. Except for certain activities defined by statute, administrators must receive authority and ultimate support from their boards. This leaves questions concerning "the what," "the how," and "the when" of communicating to his board, not matters of speculation, but topics of major concern for the superintendent.

Youmans has proposed that there are several approaches to good communication, and a superintendent moving from one position to another may carry with him old characteristics and ideas that are not needed or demanded in the new situation. The dangers and complications inherent in this proposition for superintendents, who as a professional group are notoriously mobile, are self-evident. Also, self-evident, would seem to be the need for studies which delineate the characteristics of good communication for the guidance of career superintendents moving from superintendency to superintendency.

A superintendent can be both a source and a resource of information for his board of education. The popular news media bombard board members who are naturally receptive to educational

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2E. Grant Youmans, "Organizational Behavior," from Great Lecture Series. Taped lecture, University Council for Educational Administration, The Ohio State University, 1961.
information with articles which may or may not be sound. Often local misinformation is carried to board members by citizens with particular or pet concerns about education and the schools. Many board members from experience know their superintendent as a primary source of responsible information and turn to him for data and facts when the channels of communication between them are open and when the exchange is non-threatening. Often on local issues, a superintendent through anticipation may have supplied the board member with authenticated facts that debunk rumors and obviate false conclusions. And as an educational source, the superintendent through communication exercises leadership by supplying the board member with new concepts and ideas. Thus, the importance of alertness to the communication area is underscored, and studies designed to discover principles for improvement of board-superintendent communication would seem to be justified.

Some superintendents may unintentionally and under the guise of educating board members, practice a "managed news" approach which soon crystallizes as standard communicating procedure. By enthusiastically endeavoring to keep board members informed about selected issues, superintendents could conceivably establish a one-way communication system, cutting off free response. Some probable results in such instances would be dissatisfaction concerning the part that the board member believes he should play in administration, and
a realization by the board member that he is being told only what
the superintendent wishes him to know. Such results would seem to
be fraught with potential danger, and researches might profitably
be concerned with the problem.

The board member beginning or about to begin his service poses
a special communication challenge to the superintendent. Orientation
of newly elected members to the duties and responsibilities of the
position most often falls by default upon the shoulders of the super-
intendent. An encouraging trend of recent years has been that state
school board organizations and universities have emphasized the
importance of proper pre-service orientation by assisting adminis-
trators with the task. Communication lines must be established
quickly, since the new board, as a whole, must begin immediately
to make decisions. The new board member, obviously, must be
given a perspective of the role which he is to play if the organization
is to proceed with minimum disruption and if the new board member
is to contribute maximally. The development of knowledgeable
board members obviously is the goal of this phase of communicating.
The content, the practices, and the difficulties involved in com-
municating with new board members by administrators poses an area
for continuing research and reflection as demands and expectations
concerning the public schools and the schools' elected board of
education change.
Grieder and Rosenstengel have propounded the proposition of "reciprocal relationship" as a description of superintendent-board school system management:

In every phase of school district management, the superintendent is the officer to whom the board should look for leadership, guidance, and recommendation. The board makes policies, approves means of effecting the policies, and charges the superintendent with the responsibility of administering its decisions. Since legislation guides administration, those who legislate must know what administration requires for its support. From this it follows that legislation must be guided by what administration knows about the schools. There is stated here a principle of reciprocal relationship which means that the board and superintendent should work as a team. 3

Such a scene as presented by the above view shows superintendent and board in close relationship in order to administer the school enterprise. The management structure pictured functions through consensus. It must be implied that consensus can be obtained only through understandings based upon adequate and effective communication. The flow and counterflow of communication content from administrator to policy-maker obviously is facilitated or impeded by the quality of the existing intra-leadership communication process, and the efficiency with which democratic board leadership responds

to organizational needs reflects the efficiency of the communication process. Indeed, communication to facilitate the democratic decision-making process becomes an adhesive of the board-executive working partnership, and a channel through which impact is made on the enterprise being administered.

If the foregoing commentary on the "reciprocal relationship" in superintendent-board management is valid, no component of the administrative process would appear to be more deserving of intensive analysis than that of executive communication. Superintendents and board members to work in effective teams, as suggested, in the management of the educational enterprises for which they are responsible, must develop and maintain good human relationships between and among the individuals of the teams. The more knowledge shed upon communication in the setting of board-superintendent working relationships, the more the likelihood that the communication which serves to enhance these working relationships will be improved.

Throughout this section certain of the factors which portray the importance and present conditions of superintendent-board communication have been outlined. If these are admitted as reasonable evidence, it would appear that a study which focuses upon superintendent-board of education communication is warranted. The factors presented have been diverse, but from the preceding
discussion four major elements may be deduced as having meaning for study: content of communication, difficulties, practices, and the significance of communication to working relationships. These elements gave rise to the questions concerning board-superintendent communication which are posed in the Statement of the Problem.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study was to determine practices, perceptions of difficulties, and the nature of content in formal communication between board members and superintendents of schools, and to make an analysis of formal communication in certain superintendent-board settings. The universe of districts to be studied was limited to Ohio.

Specifically, the investigation sought to obtain data and information that could provide some answers to the following questions:

1. Can communication difficulties existing between superintendents and boards of education be perceived and listed?

2. Can the perceived difficulties be categorized?

3. What do superintendents and board members perceive to be enhancers and/or inhibitors to effective communication?

4. What practices are employed by superintendents in communicating with board members?

5. What practices are employed by board members in communicating with superintendents?
6. What is the content analysis of communication between superintendents and board members?

7. What degree of importance is attached to effective communication by both superintendents and board members in superintendent-board relationships?

8. What do superintendents and board members believe could and should be done to make communication between them more effective and satisfactory?

9. How do the perceptions of communication difficulties as seen by superintendents relate to the perceptions of communication as seen by board members?

10. To what degree do communication practices, difficulties, inhibitors, enhancers, content, and perceptions of effective superintendent-board communication relate to the size of the school district?

11. Are there models of communication practices that can be identified as bases for experimentation and future intensive study?

**Review of Related Literature and Research**

Before any problem may be investigated appropriately, a review of the literature on the topic should be undertaken. In such a review, current research as well as past related studies must be analyzed, thereby providing a starting point or orientation. The following sections, in addition to offering insight into communication as a field for investigation, note some of the more common investigational approaches in the field. An overview of researches into organizational communication is offered, and present studies
in communication which demonstrate a direct relationship or bias toward educational administration are outlined.

**Contribution of the literature**

The review of the literature presented should by no means be considered exhaustive. Studies and publications reviewed in this section are among those most closely related to the subject of communication in settings similar to that of the school. No exact parallel was discovered in the review of the literature which duplicates the phenomenon of an executive communicating with his directors, or, specifically, of a school superintendent communicating with the board of education. However, aspects of communication taken from the analyses of the communication process advanced by students of the field had direct application to the proposed study.

A major contribution of the related literature was to propose concepts for construction of the Paradigm of Communication, Figure 1, postulated as a logical, representative model of the communication process to be investigated. The paradigm was synthesized from nearly all of the sources cited in the following review of literature, and is in conformity with the thinking of the great majority of writers surveyed. This model served as a visual theoretical framework in development of the study.

Communication cannot be easily separated into components for analysis, and any model of communication postulated may reflect
the purposes and overriding orientation of the analyst. The viewpoint of the writer in constructing a communication process model was based upon the acceptance of administrative communication as the binding agent and instrument for action in the corporate leadership situation. A mechanistic view of the communication process was taken when defining and placing communication components in the process model.

While there have been many approaches to the analysis and study of communication, no one approach appears to have emerged as dominant. This dictated that the purposes of the research should be a determinant of the investigational procedure used. A measure of authority was, thus, given for the investigational technique proposed for use in this study. Since little research was noted from a survey of the literature as having taken place in administrative communication at the board-superintendent level, a normative-survey technique seemed to be the logical first step in providing orientation in this specialized setting. Further, this paucity of research argued for the importance, need and significance of the present study, in addition to suggesting the research method.

The literature answered a question underlying each of the statements defining the problem: "Can communication be analyzed?" The evidence showed that there are many ways in which communication
has already been analyzed in industry, business and academic fields. Probing into these fields have yielded fruitful returns, and beneficial results from analysis of board-superintendent communication might also be similarly anticipated.

The review of the literature contributed in the formulation of the questionnaires used both with the pilot study and the major sample. Items were suggested for the questionnaires from the researches and literature reviewed. Raw data obtained during the study was often clarified by the background information obtained from previous studies. Material and data gathered in the pilot study was given face validity when supported by references in the related literature.

Always, one of the primary reasons for undertaking a review of related literature is to establish the relationship of the proposed study to previous research efforts. This relationship for this study, or its lack, is described under the headings which concern organizational communication, and communication from the field of educational administration.

Approaches to communication research

Literature on the topic of communication is, at once, impressive yet frustrating to the researcher. The literature is impressive because of the kinds and quantities of research accomplishment and activity taking place and that which has taken place in the field by
academic and business interests. It is frustrating because so few attempts have been made to apply to educational administration what has been learned about communication during a generation of com-
munication research. Berelson, a recognized scholar in communica-
tion research, succinctly discusses certain approaches in communica-
tion research in the following paragraphs:

In the past twenty-five years or so, there have been four major approaches to communication research, and, perhaps, six minor ones. The four major approaches are so well characterized by their leading proponents that it is convenient and revealing here to identify them by name. In my view, the major lines of inquiry have been the political approach, represented by Lasswell; the sample survey approach, represented by Lazarsfeld; the small-groups approach, represented by Lewin; and the experimental approach, represented by Hovland. (Whether Lewin really should be counted as a student of "communication research" is a matter of definition with which I am not particularly concerned here.) Lasswell, with his interest in broad socio-political considerations, represents a macrocosmic line; Lazarsfeld and Hovland, with their interest in individual responses, represent a microcosmic line; and Lewin, with his interest in the social group represents something in between.4

After discussing major methods used in communication research, the same author listed six less influential approaches and their chief exponents:

1. The reformist approach: Represented by the Commission on the Freedom of the Press. Concerned with organization, structure, and control of the mass media, and particularly with considerations of public policy. Characterized by commercial hostility on the one hand and academic disinterest on the other (except for schools of journalism, the academic departments apparently found this too value-ridden, and hence not "science").

2. The broad historical approach: Represented by David Riesman and Harold Innis. Again, the field's question has been: Is it science?

3. The journalistic approach: Represented by the professional schools and such people as Casey, Nixon, Schramm, and others. Concern with control aspects of the media, characteristics of communicators, and "practical" interests. Close to the reformist approach, as, for example, in Schramm's valuable analysis of ethical responsibility in mass communications.

4. The mathematical approach: Represented by Shannon and Weaver.

5. The psycho-linguistic approach: Represented by Osgood and Miller.

6. The psychiatric approach: Represented by Ruesch and Bateson.

Berelson's summary was included here in an attempt to show that communication research is a scientific field of established depth which may offer much knowledge for a consumer.

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5 Ibid., p. 4.
In the general field of communication analysis Culbertson was able to define the following eleven approaches to the study of communication:

1. Group dynamics and small group research
2. Communication in administrative organization
3. Focus on individuals as used in psychiatry
4. Content analysis
5. Rumor analysis
6. Semantics
7. Public opinion polls
8. Advertising
9. Mass media and public relations research
10. Sociometry
11. Cybernetics approach

Culbertson concludes the listing with the statement:

Since they (the methods) employ different techniques in different contexts, and since they are often dealing with different phases of the communication process, it is impossible to draw conclusions from one context and apply them to another.

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7 Ibid., p. 23.
The Berelson and Culbertson surveys of research methods in communication cited above offer a ready reference for those desiring to study the major techniques of communication research. The techniques, however, are highly involved and require the researcher to possess an extensive background in certain specialized fields before they can be productively applied.

Organizational communication

The bulk of the literature on organizational communication appeared to deal with the phenomenon of upward or downward flow of information and directives through various command or hierarchal layers. The objective of such communication, for the most part, was that of immediate goal accomplishment.

A sampling of the recognized treatises on organizational communication with their conclusions is presented here to demonstrate the usual treatment of the subject in this category of literature on management and organizational communication. A study of such research, also, served to introduce the writer to certain nomenclature, points of departure, and techniques used in organizational communication studies. The findings of these efforts were suspected as having implications for any study in the field of organizational communication, and served as valuable background material for the study.

Murphy stressed the fact that communication is the basis of all
organization; and that communication itself, if organized democratically, can have a value which nourishes the individual as it benefits the organization. The "safety valve factor of communication" was recognized as a product of the right kind of communication where alert administrators have employed the more democratic ways of managing. The wrong kind or lack of communication was cited as the chief cause of man's disagreements.

Several writers and authorities, in recognizing communication as a complex phenomenon, noted that its analysis is correspondingly complex. Schramm discussed communication as ideas that are coded, transmitted, decoded, and interpreted by a receiver. Channels and media are used in the process. The sender never can be certain whether the receiver has decoded correctly or whether his past experiences have influenced him to arrive at a distortion of the original meaning and interpretation of the message. The message transmitted usually finds itself in competition with other stimuli and irrelevant thoughts or impressions. The executive has to recognize that his communication is influenced by such factors. Because communication is concerned with the interactions of people individually and in groups,

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the study of it involves segments of several disciplines including semantics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, and administration. An executive must become somewhat sensitive in all these fields if he is to comprehend adequately the full and involved impact of an act of communication.

Zelko and O'Brien in their management-employee communication studies found that communication which permits exchange of information, ideas, plans, procedures, and policies fosters a sense of belonging and participating that was fundamental to morale and productivity. They further noted that the major barriers to effective communication are organizational structure, status of the communicator, timing, resistance to change, and language too involved or stilted. Oral, face-to-face communication was best, they found, with employees expressing great desire to see and to hear company executives in person. These findings appeared to have some direct relationship to the contentions in this research.

Redfield in his discussion of organization communication moved beyond the traditional upward-downward discussion of signal flow into horizontal communication within a given layer of management.

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According to this author, the basic workings and structure of a formal organization can only be supported if there is flow of essential information up, down, and across. Teamwork in an organization can be achieved only as the team employs reciprocal processes of communication. Communication was regarded as the unifying element for the activity. Redfield presented certain criteria for the evaluation of effective organizational communication: clarity; adequacy; timing and timeliness; applicability; correct transmission; adaptability; uniformity; interest; and acceptance.\(^{12}\)

Angrist's study of executive communication in industry and business found that age and the experience of executives he studied made a significant difference in their use of various communications activities.\(^{13}\) Angrist attempted to determine the frequency with which executives in business and industry used various communication activities, the value or importance of their communication activities to the success of their jobs, and the ease or difficulty with which the executives used these acts. He found significant differences (1) in the frequency of use of various communication acts, as reported by

\(^{12}\)Ibid., pp. 26-41.

executives representing different age groups, and by those representing
different years of management experience, (2) in the value assigned
various communication acts, as reported by executives representing
different age groups, (3) in the value assigned various communication
acts as reported by executives representing groups with different
years of management experience, and (4) in the value assigned various
communication acts as reported by executives representing groups
from companies of different size.

Angrist found no significant difference in the frequency of use
of various communication acts as reported by executives representing
different levels of management and in the frequency of use of various
communications acts as reported by executives representing groups
from companies of different size.

Attitudes toward communication in industry were studied by
Freshley through an attitude questionnaire. The specific conclusions
from this study were derived from the results of an attitude test of
200 management personnel drawn from fourteen different companies.
He found significant difference in the attitude test scores made by
management personnel in different levels of management; he found

significant difference, also, with respect to the size of the companies. However, there was no significant difference in the attitudes of management personnel representing different age levels, different years of management experience, or different numbers of people supervised.

A questionnaire and interview study conducted by Cronheim discussed the communication practices of congressmen, communication methods used, and their purposes in communicating. The research disclosed significant differences between the quantity of communication methods used regularly by members from urban and rural states and districts: the urban legislators were found to use many communication practices regularly; the rural legislators, few. The differences between the communication practices of secure and insecure members approached significance in two cases. In the first, the secure senators who were classified as leaders used fewer methods regularly than the less secure, the followers. Those senators with high seniority used significantly less communication than those with low seniority. The study showed that communication patterns stem from something more than completely random behavior.

One can conclude from the literature surveyed that the approaches taken in organizational communication research in industry and government could generate considerable data of value for the field of education. The studies discussed above could be easily replicated in most instances in the educational field; however, the findings which would accrue are suspected as not being too different from the findings originally obtained from the non-educational fields. The testing of such a hypothesis should prove to be a worthwhile undertaking.

The review of literature from the field of industry failed to uncover any studies which encompasses both the board of directors of an enterprise and the top management hierarchy as these are related through the communication phenomenon. There are occasional oblique informal references to "good" communication between policy boards and management. These references have apparently not resulted in any organized study to determine the characteristics of effective executive-board of directors communication. The inferred need for such study has seemingly not been as great in the corporate management setting as in education.

The primary values of this review of organizational literature was to introduce the writer to various research design and to suggest content items for "communication questions" in the research instruments which were later to be constructed. Dissertations and theses were found to afford more suggestions and guidelines for future
communication research than did texts or journal articles on organizational management.

**Communication literature from education**

A survey of recognized texts in school administration failed to show extended attention given to the communication of chief school executives with boards of education. If mention was made, it was simply to indicate that effective communication is important, and this importance is seemingly concerned with organizational communication. Reeder was among the first authorities in school administration to note a concern about board-superintendent communication, commenting that "in keeping the board informed... the superintendent will find one of his most important functions, because the information which the board members receive determines the bases for policies of the school system."\(^{16}\) Although he did not delve into the topic at length, he demonstrated insight in recognizing communication as a problem of administration.

Brause touched upon the area of communication between superintendents and their boards in a doctoral dissertation concerning

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causes of administrator dismissal.\textsuperscript{17} A conclusion reached in this research was that

\begin{quote}
an implied basic task of a superintendent is to keep in contact with his board of education--to let the members know what he is doing, as well as why he is doing it, and to find out what they want him to be doing. This research supports the importance of effective communication with the board as basic to compatibility and good personal relations.
\end{quote}

One of the more exhaustive studies in the field of school organization communication was conducted by Culbertson, who, after compiling extensive bibliographies on communication, found little research in school communication.\textsuperscript{18} Culbertson made no mention of superintendent-board communication studies.

Of the research methods, those which have dealt with small groups would seem at first blush to have most meaning for a study of communication between boards and superintendents. Bavelas found in a small group research project that the pattern of communication has influence upon the satisfactions, orientation, achievement of the group,

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\textsuperscript{17}Dorsey Brause, "Identification of Major Factors Affecting the Dismissal of School Superintendents" (unpublished PhD. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1962).
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\textsuperscript{18}Culbertson, op. cit.
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and effect upon leader emergence. However, it must be observed here that methods applicable to the study of informal small groups might be difficult or impossible to employ when studying the interaction of legally structured groups. A legally structured group such as a board of education would quite possibly contrast sharply with natural small social groups. No research findings were found in the writer's survey of the literature which dealt with small groups structured like boards of education.

A study of organizational communication which applied to educational administration was conducted by Seeman. Utilizing a communications scale in which the extent of communication upward and downward was measured, the study revealed that there was substantial disagreement on what should be communicated, how the communication should take place, and with whom it should take place. He found that a significant relationship existed between attitudes toward communication and the social and economic status of school administrators.

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20 Melvin Seeman, Leadership in American Society: The Case of the School Executive (Columbus: Bureau of Educational Research and Service, The Ohio State University, 1960).
An analysis of the process of communication was proposed by a widely known authority in the field of education, Dale. Communication was viewed as the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality and can be only effective when we exchange the roles of communicator and communicatee. The initial step must be to create or to select a message for one of the following three purposes: to exchange information; to change attitudes or feelings; or to achieve action. Once selected, the vehicle (media) of transmission must be selected which will be written, spoken, or visual in form. The next imperative was that the message be read, viewed or listened to, and, further, believed. Only then will action, or lack of action, be possible. Communication may not always be overt or explicit, but may be covert and implicit. In all instances, however, communication must, if consistently effective, be truthful, be directed to many publics in terms of viewpoints, be concise because of competing stimuli, be clear, and be evaluated from the consumer's (the communicatee's) point of view.

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A recent study by Luketich sought answers to the following questions:

1. In the context of superintendent-board relationships, how does the congruence of perceptions of the superintendent's behavior relate to communication between the superintendent and his board?

2. How do personal characteristics of board members relate to their perceptions of the superintendent and to communication between them and the administrator?

3. How does frequency of interaction between superintendent and individual board members relate to perception and communication?

A direct relationship was reported between perceptual congruence and effective communication; board members who interacted most frequently with the superintendent did not necessarily share perceptions with him, nor did they have more effective communication with him; and some demographic variables related to perceptual congruence, some related to effective communication, and some related to neither.

The study reported above paralleled most closely the topic of the present investigation. It dealt, however, with only a limited number of school systems and did not address itself to certain basic communication concerns of practitioners in the field: difficulties; content; and practices.

The researches reported in literature concerning educational communication were not wholly unlike those reported which dealt with communication in other institutional and organizational contexts. The studies and articles discussed in this section are representative samples from the literature. In every report there is agreement that "good" communication is vital to an effective organization. Few specific elements, however, are outlined as a result of the reports to offer guidance for the building of effective communication patterns. The absence of other than a discussion of generalities in organizational research efforts underscored the desirability of initiating a study which would treat with the basic elements of superintendent-board communication. These basic elements have been raised as questions to be answered in the "Statement of the Problem" in this chapter.

Research efforts or the concerns of writers when directed toward communication in the educational setting appear to have been directed only toward communication between the chief executive officer and those in the lower levels of the school managerial hierarchy. Never was a research encountered which extended upward in its scope to span the school's public governing board, the chief executive, and the chief executive's subordinate administrators. Indeed, as has been reported previously, no research was found which spanned, in terms of its concern about the communication process, the two management levels of board and chief administrator.
Postulates and Constructs Basic to This Study

1. Effective communication between the superintendent and the board of education is an essential ingredient to their satisfactory relationship.

2. The effectiveness of communication between the superintendent and the board has a direct bearing on administration in the local school system.

3. The complexity of modern school organization makes increasing demands on communication, especially within the superintendent-board team.

4. Some kinds of models of communication between superintendent and board do exist and are definitive enough to be discovered and studied.

5. The content of communication between the superintendent and the board is subject to classification, review, study, and analysis.

6. Media and channels of communication between board and superintendent are discernible and subject to study and analysis.

7. Board members and superintendents apply some kind of value system (judgment) to the effectiveness of communication which takes place between them.

8. Factors which inhibit or enhance good communication exist, can be defined and studied.

9. Certain principles of effective communication exist and can be applied to the superintendent-board setting.

10. Breakdown in communication between superintendents and boards is the result of one or several discernible factors.
11. Communication between the superintendent and the board has significance to--

a. the operation of the school system;

b. the pre-service and in-service training of administrators and board members;

c. the rapport between the superintendent and his board; and

d. the general morale among citizens, staff, and community.

Paradigm of communication

To organize the thinking of the study, a Paradigm of Communication is postulated.

Communication process may be visualized in circular fashion, beginning at the point of idea inception with the communicator and terminating with some form of impact upon the communicatee. Steps in the process path are these: idea inception; encoding the message into oral, written, or visual signals; channeling the medium used; reception by the communicatee; decoding; message interpretation; and, finally, impact in terms of changed knowledge, altered feelings, or action (perhaps, lack of action) on the part of the communicatee.

The graphic illustration in Figure 1 shows the elements of the communication process operating between communicator and communicatee. The paradigm pictures process, interaction and feedback. The process permits content flow in a setting of basic communication principles. Blocks and aids to this flow in the form of inhibitors and
Figure 1

PARADIGM

A Graphic Illustration of the Communication Process

in the School Board-Superintendent Setting
enhancers are interposed between and within the steps of the process to affect directness and effectiveness of the flow. Perceptions are shown influenced by the orientation(s) of the perceivers.

Basic Assumptions in This Study

1. Board members and administrators are knowledgeable concerning the WHAT, WHY, and HOW of board-superintendent communication as applied to media, channels, content, and difficulties.

2. Board members and superintendents will react to direct inquiry on problems of communication through interview check list, inventory, and other conventional normative survey investigatory techniques.

3. Communications materials are available for study—letters, bulletins, publications, conference and meeting agenda.

4. Communication practices can be identified and analyzed.

5. Wide variations exist in the quality, practices, circumstances, and problems of communication between superintendents and boards.

6. If models of superintendent-board communication exist, they are discernible.

7. As a result of this investigation, clues will be identified for generating additional hypotheses for study, experimentation, and investigation.

8. Perceptions of relevant respondents can provide germane data in communication research.

9. Perceptions of respondents are important clues and bases for acquisition of evidence and data upon which to make inferential interpretations and conclusions.
10. Perception studies are subject to limitations, controls, and the rigor of experimental investigations, but may serve the purpose of generating further hypotheses for future study.

11. It is assumed that adequate instrumentation can be developed to determine perceptions among respondents.

12. Interview, content analysis, check list, and inventory techniques employed in a structured design will provide the evidence and data required in this study.

Definition of Terms and Concepts

1. Communication. --The term communication as used in this study is the exchange of attitudes, ideas, and information between a communicator and communicatee. Communication may be written, oral, or in the form of various signals from the communicator to the communicatee, as in the case of communication of an attitude by the visage of the communicator.

In this study, analysis will be made of formal communication. Formal communication is distinguished from informal communication in that it uses and follows prescribed media and channels.

2. Communicator. --The originator of a message may be either the superintendent of schools or a board of education member and will be designated as the communicator.

3. Communicatee. --The intended recipient of a message, superintendent or board member, from their opposite number acting as a communicator will be designated as communicatee.

4. Communication Process. --The complete act of communication will be considered as the process of communicating. Process consists of the following elements: idea inception, purpose for transmission, conversion of thought into signals, media use, channel use, reception (decoding of signals), interpretation, impact, and feedback.
5. **Enhancer of Communication.** An enhancer of communication is any activity factor or quality which elevates the communication process to a higher level of effectiveness.

6. **Inhibitor of Communication.** A block in the process of exchanging attitudes, ideas, and information which does not permit an optimum exchange between communicator or communicatee is designated as an inhibitor.

7. **Model.** The term model will be used in this study to designate a description of communication style and/or pattern used in board-superintendent communication. A model illustrates the elements of communication process and the content of communication.

8. **Media.** The methods by which signals are transmitted from communicator to communicatee constitute communication media.

9. **Channel.** A communication channel is to be considered as the path taken by media to reach the communicatee.

10. **Superintendent of Schools.** The chief executive officer of a school district directly responsible to a board of education for the administration of the district will be considered as a superintendent of schools.

11. **Board of Education.** A board of education is the legally elected or appointed group of citizens directly responsible for the provision of education in a local school district.

12. **Board member.** In Ohio a board member is one of either five or seven citizens who, sitting in legal session, constitute the Board of Education.

13. **Perception.** A perception is a consciousness, awareness, or insight registered by a person about a situation, action, fact, or other phenomenon.
Hypotheses and/or Questions

1. A listing of communication difficulties between the superintendent and his board can be established and verified.

2. Difficulties will be subject to classification by categories and elements of the communication process.

3. Several major factors can be identified that are perceived to inhibit superintendent-board communication.

4. Practices employed by different school districts in superintendent-board communication will not take on any pattern of consistency.

5. The content of formal superintendent-board communication as perceived by superintendents and board members will exhibit a hierarchy of frequency and importance.

6. Board members and superintendents will agree that effective communication has a direct relationship to satisfactory superintendent-board relations.

7. Superintendents and board members will differ upon ways in which board-superintendent communication can be made more effective and satisfying.

8. The perceptions of superintendents and board members on various aspects of the problems under investigation will vary significantly.

9. Respondents' perceptions will vary significantly with the size of the school system.

10. A model or models of board-superintendent communication practices will appear from an analysis of superintendent-board communication.

Design of the Study

This study was designed as a normative-survey investigation to obtain data through interview, check list, questionnaire, and analysis
techniques. The study was designed in two phases which required, one, a pilot study for the development of instrumentation and techniques and, two, a phase involving data gathering from the major sample. The pilot study involved seven school systems, exclusive of the major sample, selected by a jury of experts to include systems where communication between superintendent and the board was adjudged exceptionally effective, average, and below average. The superintendent and two board members were interviewed in each of the pilot-study districts.

After conclusion of the pilot study, instruments were developed with which to obtain data from the major sample in the study's major, second phase. Twenty-four districts were selected through random sampling procedures, and in each of these the superintendent and board president were interviewed. The twenty-four districts were classified into four size categories in order to determine whether the size of a school district influenced communication practices and perceptions.

Data obtained through the study

As a result of the study, the following information was obtained: (1) perceptions by superintendents and by board members of difficulties in communicating with each other; (2) factors which are perceived by respondents to enhance or to inhibit the process of communication and
either cause or eliminate communication difficulties; (3) formal practices, including methods and media, used by superintendents and board members in their communication; (4) perceptions of the importance of superintendent-board communication content; (5) data concerning the frequency with which communication concerning content topics takes place; (6) respondents' perceptions of the relationship of communication to satisfactory superintendent-board relations; (7) ways perceived by the respondents in which communication between them can be made more effective and satisfying; and (8) certain personal and situational data concerning the respondents.

Analysis of data obtained

Communication practices and the perceptions of respondent groups are reported through the use of frequency tables and lists. Obtained data was analyzed through the use of statistics in which relationships, correlations, and significant differences between and within the respondent groups were determined. Analysis of the tables and the results of statistical applications given certain data generated the basis for interpretations and conclusions and for testing the basic hypotheses of the study.

Outline of the dissertation

The present chapter has introduced the problem with its background and significance. A brief statement has, also, been included in this
section to indicate the overall design of the study. A review is presented of related literature which focuses upon communication research methods and upon research findings in settings similar to that of educational administration.

The second chapter details the methodology used in the pilot study and for the survey of the primary sample. Findings from the pilot study are reported in this chapter, themselves a contribution to knowledge concerning the range of administrator-board communication practices and problems. Instrumentation is discussed in the chapter as a logical follow-up of the pilot-study findings.

Chapter III, the chapter dealing with analysis of data and statistical techniques, offers in tabular form all findings generated from field interviews with the primary sample and a discussion of the statistical treatments to which the data was subjected. Results from the statistical treatments given the data appear in this section.

Relevant conclusions, interpretations, and summary constitute the concluding, fourth chapter of the report. It is in this chapter that the study's hypotheses are tested and that problems needing additional study are developed. Limitations of the study and its significance appear in the chapter.
CHAPTER II
DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a normative survey study designed to produce normal data on communication between superintendents and board members in selected settings. The study was cast arbitrarily into two phases, the first of which was a pilot study to generate conditions and items from the field concerning communication practices, content, and difficulties. Pilot study data accomplished the task outlined in the Statement of the Problem of discovering the range of practices, difficulties and content, both actual and perceived, extant. The first phase was the necessary precursor in the establishment of a basis for the field study, the major consideration of the research. Items discovered through the pilot study were used for the preparation of instruments for use in the major, second phase of the study—analysis of communication in selected school districts.

The present chapter develops in detail the methodology used to conduct both the pilot study and the primary survey and presents the characteristics of the districts and respondents included in the two phases of the study. Results from the initial study are shown before the major study methodology is discussed.
The Pilot Study

The dearth of material evidenced in the review of the literature had shown that information on communication practices and perceived difficulties in the communication process must come directly from field interviews with practicing superintendents and board members. For this reason, a series of interviews was planned in three selected districts in which the perceptions of the superintendent, the board president, and a second board member in each district would be obtained by direct interview. This plan was modified when the writer found, during the final interviews in the last of the three districts, that new information was being obtained. Accordingly, the decision was made to double the number of districts in correspondence with criteria used in the selection of the original pilot-study districts. Later, because the districts in which interviews had been held were regarded as large (above the 4000 student population level), a fourth additional district was added from among the small districts in the state of Ohio. During the final interviews in the second set of districts, no new information was obtained, and it was decided that the interviews reasonably could be concluded.

The pilot study was conducted on case study basis to (1) obtain basic data for the development of a check list of communication difficulties as perceived by the administrators and board members; (2) analyze and categorize practices employed in communication;
(3) solicit items for a check list and evaluation form of information
board members and superintendents want communicated; and
(4) discover enhancers and inhibitors of communication as perceived
by respondents.

Pilot study sample

To secure the best sample of school districts where superintendent-
board communication could be studied most productively in generating
the broad spectrum of data required, it was recognized that not only
"good" situations should be studied, but that "average" and "poor"
board-superintendent communication relationships should also be
observed. To obtain the names of districts which characterized
the foregoing board-superintendent communication qualities, the
conclusion was reached that it would be necessary to focus upon the
school district superintendents throughout the state and to describe
them as exceptionally effective, average, or below average communica-
tors. Since such a description is necessarily judgmental, the jury
method for selection of the superintendents was used. Five jurors
were chosen to make the selections. These jurors were recognized
as persons professionally competent in the field of educational admini-
stration, and as individuals who knew personally, or by reputation, the
work of most of the state's practicing administrators. One of the
jurors, a former superintendent of schools, was associated with the
Ohio School Boards Association as a director of in-service training.
A second juror was a chief placement officer for a major university, specializing in administrator placements. The other three jurors were professors of educational administration in a nationally recognized department of educational administration.

Three categories of superintendents were sought in instructions developed for the jury, as follows:

1. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they have established and have practiced highly effective board-superintendent communication.

2. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they have established and have practiced board-superintendent communication which can be described as average.

3. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they are below average in their provision for and performance in the area of board-superintendent communication.

When the jury met to make the selections, the following instructions were issued to the members:

1. Please make all judgments and agreements as a jury.

2. One set of names is to be compiled for each category.

3. Three names of superintendents are desired for each category.
4. Size of school district served is not a consideration in the selection of superintendents.

5. Superintendents selected are to be presently serving in Ohio superintendencies.

6. Communication is to be defined as the formal exchange of attitudes, ideas, information, proposals, and questions concerning the local school system, or about education in general which takes place between the superintendent and the board. Communication from the superintendent may be to the board members sitting in committee, as a legal board entity, or to individual board members. Communication to the superintendent from the board may be from individual board members, board committees, or the board as a whole.

Table 1 shows characteristics of the districts selected for the pilot-study. Two of the districts were adjudged by the jury as having superintendents "highly effective" in board-superintendent communication; two of the districts as having superintendents adjudged "average"; and three districts were rated by the jury as having superintendents who were "below average" in their board-superintendent communication.
Letters (Appendix A) seeking cooperation of the superintendents with the proposed study were written. In all instances the superintendents agreed to be interviewed, and they, in turn, proceeded to set up interviews for the researcher with their respective board presidents and second board members.

Pilot study questionnaire

An open-ended interview guide was used with each of the 21 persons interviewed—seven superintendents and fourteen board members.

Pilot study interview questions were developed from a study of the

Table 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING PILOT STUDY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Pupil Population</th>
<th>Per Pupil Taxable Wealth</th>
<th>Kind of District</th>
<th>Ohio Geographic Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>88,320</td>
<td>$14,437</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11,087</td>
<td>15,335</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Northeastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>7,076</td>
<td>14,403</td>
<td>Urban &amp; Rural</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5,312</td>
<td>10,788</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4,759</td>
<td>27,829</td>
<td>Suburb. &amp; Rural</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4,403</td>
<td>12,055</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>8,321</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
literature in the field and from the experience of the writer. These questions were designed with minimum structure in order to obtain the broadest possible range of response.

Before each interview, the nature and purpose of the study was thoroughly discussed; written definitions of "communication" were given the subject and also read aloud to him to assure that no misunderstandings might occur and that definitions would be consistent within the districts (Appendix A). Each subject was asked to discuss all of the following questions at length:

1. What are the ways or practices used by the board or its members in formal communication with the superintendent?

2. What are the ways or practices the superintendent generally uses in communicating with the board members?

3. What are the difficulties you have encountered in formal communication?

4. What do you believe to be the basic cause of each of the difficulties that you have just mentioned?

5. Are there some things which can be done by both the superintendent and board members to make communication between them better (more effective and satisfying)?

6. Is formal communication a major factor in satisfactory relationships between board and superintendent? In what way(s)?
7. What is the content of formal communication from 
   a. Superintendent to board?
   b. Board to superintendent?

8. What should be communicated more than is presently communicated from 
   a. Superintendent to board?
   b. Board to superintendent?

In response to the open-ended questions, interviewees presented nearly 1800 discrete comments which were recorded in rough note form. The comments represented current conditions in the seven districts and offered three viewpoints in each—the chief administrator's, the president's, and a board member's.

Acting upon the assumption that a range of communication situations had been observed, and upon the fact that new additional items were not being elicited in the final interview situations, the writer concluded that the obtained data represented extant communication difficulties and practices. To test this belief, the body of literature on communication in educational administration and business organization was analyzed. One report which proved extremely helpful was a comprehensive intra-school communication study containing numerous items paralleling those secured in the present survey.
This study was conducted in 1959 for the Center for Educational Administration by Knower and Wagner. The report of the Knower-Wagner study did not offer new items; however, the study contributed by giving a fresher and often clearer statement of certain items and ideas which had been obtained through the pilot study interviews. Other literature surveyed suggested nothing additional, and the gross data from the interviews was accepted as approaching comprehensiveness—a goal of the pilot study.

The open-ended questions used in interviewing were developed so that responses would contribute to a listing of items centering about questions raised by the hypotheses. The first two questions were clearly understood, as they asked the respondents to describe their practices in communicating. However, questions three, four, and five usually fused as similar in respondents' minds, and subjects were unable to make clear cut distinctions in answering. The third and fourth questions sought out, respectively, "communication difficulties," and "causes of communication difficulties." In behavioral terms, these were not easily differentiated; therefore, responses to the two questions were grouped together. The fifth question "Are there things which can be done to make communication better?" was found

1 Franklin H. Knower and Paul H. Wagner, Communication in Educational Administration (Center for Educational Administration, Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1959), pp. 198.
to be simply the positive restatement of the questions asking for difficulties and their causes. Responses to the fifth question, hence, could be added easily to the data from the two preceding queries.

Question eight: "What should be communicated more than is presently communicated--from superintendent, from board members?" resulted in the identification of a topic list that was substantially identical to the list of school management topics seen by respondents as constituting the content of current board-superintendent communication, question seven. Since the frequency of responses did not need to be considered for these two questions, the items perceived as "what is" and "what should be" communicated as content topics are reported in a combined list.

Many of the responses to question eight permitted the study to develop a tack that had not been originally anticipated. Invariably, respondents volunteered as part of their answer to the question an attitude toward superintendent-board communication which suggested criteria or principles for possible analysis of communication content. This material is discussed in a later section.

Pilot study data

Responses to the open-ended interview questions resulted in the collection of approximately 1800 discrete items of information and opinion from the twenty-one interviewees. In no instance was an interview conducted in less than an hour, and, often, interviews
consumed a half-day of time. Most of those interviewed appeared eager to discuss the topic of communication and usually commented with conviction that the subject was one which required research.

Sheer volume of data collected dictated that analysis and sorting of the reactions and information was to become a sizeable undertaking. The task devolved into classification of data by categories and the translation of these categories into statements, which sought to preserve the vitality of originally implied meanings. Always, there exists the possibility for certain loss in meaning as summary or comprehensive statements are developed, with quantitative considerations prone to take ascendance over qualitative evaluations.

Responses describing communication practices and communication content, both current practices and perceptions of communication content held desirable, were relatively easy to list. A difficult procedural question was whether or not to discard items with but single frequency of mention. Without question, all items mentioned by two respondents, each from different districts, were included. The judgment of the interviewer, with respect to the many personal and situational conditions under which a single item was given, was used to decide the item's disposition—whether the item was patently unique to a given situation or likely to recur elsewhere, and, hence, should be retained. This approach was used in handling all of the open-ended question replies.
Greatest difficulty in data analysis was encountered in the reduction of the many behaviors given as communication difficulties into a list that was at once brief, comprehensive, and meaningful. A majority of the original items were given as specific instances or examples, and it was from these that generalized statements were developed. Following this process, each new statement was shown to a jury of judges who evaluated whether the new statement adequately incorporated the several parent raw-data responses it represented. Some 900 statements of board-superintendent communication difficulty were digested and condensed into ninety-four items in this manner.

Information developed from the pilot-study interviews through the analysis procedure described above is presented in the succeeding paragraphs.

Practices used in communication. --The range of practices used in formal communication between superintendents and board members is shown in the following list:

1. A written agenda citing the order of business is sent to the board before formal meetings.

2. Written recommendations of the superintendent are sent to the board before formal meetings.

3. Supporting evidence for the superintendent's recommendations is sent to the board before meetings.
4. Board members receive routine non-financial, descriptive reports from the major school departments or divisions, e.g., each school, transportation, cafeteria(s), maintenance and/or custodial division, central office departments, concerning their problems, plans and activities.

5. Board members receive special reports periodically in depth and in scope from or about a particular school division.

6. Superintendent presents at regular board meetings a personally prepared written comprehensive overview of the entire school system, its problems and progress.

7. Superintendent devotes a portion of the board meeting to a personal oral report on the status and problems of the system.

8. "Work Meetings" or study sessions (not exceeding several hours) are held to discuss and to inform.

9. Superintendent phones the board president between meetings, as a routine practice, about school business.

10. Superintendent meets formally, as a routine practice, with the president between board meetings.

11. Superintendent phones each board member, as a routine practice, (excluding member-clerk), between meetings about school business.

12. Superintendent meets individually, as a routine practice, with each board member (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.

13. A reply to one board member's inquiry if of general concern is sent to all members.

14. Board members as individuals visit or tour schools with the superintendent.
15. Board members as a group visit or tour schools with the superintendent.

16. Impromptu sessions without the presence of all members are held with the superintendent (other than Board committee meetings).

17. Minutes of all regular meetings are sent to each member in written form.

18. Summaries of informal board-superintendent discussions are developed and sent to board members.

19. A periodic formal review and evaluation of board policies is held by the superintendent and board.

20. A periodic review and evaluation is held by the board with the superintendent concerning the superintendent's work.

21. A comprehensive periodic report of past progress and/or present status of the system is prepared by the superintendent for the general public, including the board.

22. Superintendent sends a specially prepared summary or briefing about the meetings to absent board members.

23. Planned use is made of children, slides and films of school activities...and/or school exhibits...to communicate to the board ideas or progress at formal or informal meetings.

24. All day or "week-end" retreats or conferences are held for board-superintendent planning and discussion.

25. Superintendent sends letters or memos to each member between meetings to inform or to answer questions.

26. Superintendent sends the board a schedule of school events.
27. Superintendent sends the board administrative announcements and directives given to the school staff.

28. Superintendent sends the board minutes of staff meetings, including athletic board and departmental meeting minutes.

29. Superintendent sends the board copies of staff studies and reports.

30. Superintendent sends the board the staff newsletter or "house" news organ.

31. Formal conversations with board member(s) on topics of consequence between formal meetings are verified by a written follow-up summary.

32. Superintendent has administrative, supervisory, or central office staff report or be available for reporting at all regular meetings with the board.

33. Superintendent has members of the instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).

34. Superintendent has members of the non-instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).

35. Periodic "State of the Union" messages outline the plans of the superintendent for the future.

36. Superintendent "plants" ideas in the community with the intention of influencing board members.

37. Social visitation of the superintendent with each individual board member, including spouses, occurs.

38. Social visitation of the superintendent with all board members present, including spouses, occurs.

39. Board members initiate phone calls to the superintendent between meetings.
40. Communications from members are, as a regular practice, sent through the president to the superintendent between meetings.

41. Communications from board members, as a regular practice, are sent through the Clerk-Treasurer to the superintendent.

42. Personal letters or memos are sent by board members to the superintendent.

43. Formal communications are sent by a board member directly to school staff members who are subordinate to the superintendent.

44. Superintendent sends publications or pertinent newspaper and professional journal clippings to each board member.

45. Superintendent forwards between meetings copies of important State Department Directives, petitions, legal notices, letters from the prosecutor, solicitor, mayor, architects, etc. to board members.

46. Superintendent invites board members to attend major meetings where he is to speak, to tune in his TV or radio appearances, or to read any articles he has published.

47. Superintendent uses experts or witnesses from outside the school organization in presenting a point, case, or recommendation to the board.

Topics of communication. -- The following list describes the range of subjects discussed in formal communication between superintendent and school board members:

1. Teaching Personnel--their background and personal information.
2. Teaching Personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance.

3. Non-teaching Personnel--their background and personal information.


5. Administrative Personnel--their background and personal information.

6. Administrative Personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance.

7. Grievances and complaints of employees.

8. Pupils--their classification, testing and progress reporting.

9. Pupil behavior and discipline.

10. Pupil health services.

11. Classroom work and classroom progress of students.

12. Curriculum development and improvement.

13. Textbooks and library books.


15. Athletics, bands, and other extra-curricular activities.


17. Maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment.

18. Management and use of facilities and equipment--rentals, etc.

20. Accounting, both district-wide and individual school.

21. Personnel welfare, "including salary schedule development and administration.

22. Purchasing, other than routine bills.

23. Supply management, including storage and supply control.

24. Transportation of pupils.

25. Food service.

26. Inservice training of personnel.

27. Relations of the school with the community; public relations and publicity.

28. Public complaints and grievances.

Communication difficulties. -- The difficulties found to exist in superintendent-school board communication as obtained in the pilot study interviews of superintendents and board members were as follows:

1. Impromptu sessions are held without all members of the board-superintendent team present.

2. Administrative staff reports are not directed toward information desired by the board.

3. Periodic reports to the board omit or miss certain phases of operation; not comprehensive.

4. Few, or no, "work" or executive sessions are held in which uninhibited, free, informal, reaction and discussion can take place.

5. Differences in race, religion, ability, educational, and cultural levels of the communicator and the receiver result in inadequate communication.
6. Communication is used "to pressure" people for the achievement of certain goals or results.

7. The superintendent and other school personnel tend to be cliquish and possessive toward the schools and do not communicate freely and helpfully.

8. Communication is often on a person-to-person, individual basis resulting in somewhat different phrasings, emphases, impacts, impressions, and facts given to each person.

9. Dogmatic, authoritarian statements and assertions by the communicator prevent or limit discussions.

10. Communication is hindered in meetings because of lack of orderly discussion and procedure; ideas are buried or lost.

11. Communications for which there has been no background or warning--"surprise" communications--result in a negative reaction (to the communications).

12. The receiver does not want "to be bothered" with the communication(s) sent.

13. The communicator is "too far beyond" the receiver because of the depth of his training or familiarity with the situation.

14. The communication of information and problems does not take place through involvement in tours, fact-finding, data gathering, and decision making.

15. The communicator fails to develop the background of the content of the communication.

16. Reports are too lengthy to be easily read and the pertinent information absorbed.

17. There is a failure to "share" problems with others as the problems become noticeable.
18. Only certain members of the board-superintendent team habitually receive communications.

19. Little use of visual aids is made to supplement verbal communication, e.g. slides, charts, chalkboards, diagrams.

20. Frequent absence of members from formal and informal meetings.

21. Not a good "listener" to others' views.

22. The communicator permits emotion to control or to color his communications.

23. Unable to add items to the agenda.

24. Failure in written communication to anticipate and answer questions which will be raised in the mind(s) of the receiver(s) of the communication.

25. Failure to use the proper, appropriate forms for reports, letters, memos, and other written communication.

26. Communications reach the person for whom intended before they are presented formally.

27. The communicator's methods and behavior in presenting his communications are unbecoming to a person in his position.

28. No follow-up is made to see that communications are received and understood.

29. Too many meetings cause boredom, thereby resulting in the diminished effectiveness of the communication taking place.

30. Too many minor details in the communication obscure the central theme.

31. Too often communication exchanges which call for action are inconclusive.
32. Communication is not personalized and humanized--too formal.

33. Messages from the communicator are not repeated through a variety of means which causes the information to be lost to many people.

34. Communications are not repeated often enough to "let the idea sink in."

35. Written notes or minutes are not kept following an oral communication, which results in inaccuracies or misunderstandings.

36. Spur-of-the-moment questions or points are raised in meetings which result in unimportant, time-wasting discussions.

37. Communications sent are not as important to the receiver as to the sender.

38. Recommendations and reports reflect only one person's or a limited group's views.

39. Failure to have communications well organized.

40. Staff reports fail to go into sufficient detail.

41. Lack of confidence in the person originating the communication.

42. Basic personality flaws in the receiver--suspiciousness, stubbornness, etc.--prevent reception of whatever communication is given.

43. When instructional staff members report, the belief exists that only the "best" people are reporting, thus giving a brighter picture than is actually true.

44. Information concerning problems under study is released prior to conclusion of the study.

45. Unwillingness to consider new facts which challenge a pre-existing attitude or idea.
46. Lack of a clear policy concerning board-superintendent communication outlining the "when, where, what, and how" of board-superintendent communication.

47. Board members discuss administrative details when time should be spent on policies and evaluation.

48. The communicator is dishonest.

49. Objectionable mannerisms of the communicator detract from the communication.

50. Failure to share opinions and ideas.

51. Unable to communicate satisfactorily because of disruptions due to an "individualist" member of the team who diverts attention and time from central or important tasks.

52. Board members solicit and consider communications from staff members without having the counsel of the superintendent to place it in its proper perspective.

53. Communications sent are not organized, indexed, or coded for quick filing and easy reference.

54. No provision is provided to obtain a reaction to proposals before formal action is asked.

55. Lack of specificity in communication--dealing in generalizations.

56. Irresponsible statements and facts are frequently issued.

57. Adequate attention is not given to environmental factors--acoustics, lighting, temperature, ventilation--which influence the reception of communication.

58. Communications are sent so late that prior study is difficult or impossible.

59. The essential content of communication is not understood because the receiver is new to his position.
60. Busy schedules of members and superintendent prevent adequate communication.

61. Lack of time in meetings prevents staff reports from being given in depth.

62. The specialized language and jargon of education and administration are not understood.

63. Ideas are "planted" among community members in order to influence the real, intended receiver.

64. Board does not accept superintendent as its professional adviser.

65. Only "good" news is communicated; problems and failures are played down or not brought up.

66. Communications reach the person for whom intended through indirect means or channels.

67. Information concerning the many and complex aspects of the school system is obtained from sources "outside" the school system.

68. The expert knowledge or extended experience which may be possessed by one member of the superintendent-board team is not called into use when appropriate.

69. The communicator never indicates that he does not have all the answers.

70. A premature stand is taken; commitment is made before all the facts are known.

71. The large quantities of necessary business and the pressure of immediate demands prevent communication about other topics.

72. No effort is made to know what board members want in regard to communication.

73. Failure to have adequate supporting facts for statements and recommendations.
74. Failure to use tact when communicating.

75. Poor personal relationships exist between superintendent and the board.

76. Lack of understanding of the need to communicate about the progress, problems, or needs of the system.

77. Communications are released at psychologically improper times.

78. Communication is sent to the receiver through his subordinates.

79. Communications calling for answers are not answered promptly.

80. Too many meetings are held, or too much discussion takes place, which results in confusion about the subject.

81. New board members have improper expectations of communication content and procedures.

82. The superintendent is the only source through which and by which information concerning the schools flows.

83. Boards and superintendents do not evaluate the communication which exists between them.

84. An atmosphere does not exist in which there is freedom to phone or to visit.

85. The time and place for release of communications is not carefully selected.

86. No precise summation is made after group discussions; this results in the possibility that each person leaves with a different impression.

87. Records, minutes, notes, and data are not conveniently available to board members as discussion takes place.

88. There is no agreement on "who speaks for the board"; "the schools."
89. There exists a clash of personalities which causes a communication breakdown.

*90. A "Standard Operating Procedure" for communicating is not provided, resulting in people's not knowing when and where to receive or to give communications.

*91. Use is not made of the method of communicating that is best suited to the different kinds of communications.

*92. No or little acknowledgement or response to communications is received.

*93. Communication is used to "engineer" or to "manipulate" others' decisions.

*94. Communication is used "to justify" action which has already been taken.

Items 90 through 94, starred above*, were accepted from the pilot study and pre-test; however, the items were dropped in the course of their administration to the major sample. The items were not used because many respondents did not readily grasp or admit as appropriate the items' meanings as difficulties in communication.

**The Primary Study**

The pilot study was needed to provide a body of data concerning board-superintendent communication practices, difficulties, and content concerns. The data obtained in this phase of the study delimited the range--a spectrum--of board-superintendent communication which required, to be meaningful, further analysis. To be able to test the problem's hypotheses, 1)practices, 2)content, and 3)difficulties
had to be studied in carefully controlled field situations, and the perceptions of various classes of respondents obtained and compared. Data for comparison of respondents' perceptions of and responses concerning desirable and actual communication practices, content, and difficulties was secured in the research's major phase--the primary study.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire-interview schedule approach was selected originally as the best procedure for obtaining data for the purposes at hand. Young supports this position by stating:

The questionnaire may be of advantage not at the beginning of a study but when the whole range of occurrences have (sic) already been ascertained, and that what is needed is merely an enumeration of their location, either in space or in time, a precisely formulated questionnaire, confined to an enquiry as to where, when, and to what extent these facts will prevail, and circulated broadcast among all concerned, may be the only practical way of completing the investigation.²

With reference to this position, since a body of data had been deliberately gathered around the concerns of the hypotheses, the data was developed into a set of questionnaires designed to reveal to what

extent this range of factual information and perceptions concerning board-superintendent communication prevailed among certain respondents.

The first questionnaire consisted of the items concerning communication practices secured in the pilot study (Appendix B) and a discrete ordinal scale, shown below, attached for each item to permit description by participants of the perceived desirability of the practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Undesirable</th>
<th>Slightly Undesirable</th>
<th>Slightly Desirable</th>
<th>Highly Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a set of blanks accompanied each of the communication practices, educing from the superintendents (only) the frequency with which the practice was actually used, as follows:

```
Please state the frequency with which this practice is actually used in your board-superintendent communication times per
(Numerical Frequency) (Year-Month-Week)
```

The second questionnaire, a listing secured from the pilot study, entitled "Topics of Communication," (Appendix B), was assigned two ordinal scales. The first scale, shown following, sought to obtain
the frequency with which respondents perceived the individual topics to be discussed in formal writing or conversations between board and superintendent:

**Frequency of Discussion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second ordinal scale, below, was applied to each item in the second questionnaire in order to obtain its perceived importance as a topic for board-superintendent communication:

**Importance of Topic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Considerably Important</th>
<th>Highest Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 'Difficulties of Communication' check-list (Appendix B) was developed from the inhibitors to good communication in the superintendent-board communication process found in the pilot study.

Respondents indicated whether or not the difficulties were perceived to exist in their board-superintendent communication relationships; they were asked to check the item if the difficulty existed to such an extent that board-superintendent communication was seen to be significantly impaired.
In the final questionnaire, "Communication," developed for the study, (Appendix B), respondents dealt with the quality of the board-superintendent working relationship in their districts and with the perceived influence of the quality of existing communication upon this relationship. Respondents were asked to check one of the four categories which described their board-superintendent relationship, as follows:

1. Definitely Unsatisfactory
2. Somewhat Unsatisfactory
3. Generally Satisfactory
4. Very Satisfactory

The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents to check one of the following statements which described the relationship of their working relationship to existing communication:

1. No or little connection between communication and the level of the working relationship.
2. Communication is only one factor among many in determining the level of the working relationship.
3. Communication is the most important among many factors in determining the level of the working relationship.
4. Communication is the major or sole basis for determining the level of the working relationship.

*Questionnaire pre-test*

The questionnaire was planned originally as a mailed instrument
to be administered to a large sample of superintendents and board members. Therefore, the instructions and directions which were prepared to guide usage of the questionnaire had to be free from semantic difficulties, as, also, must be the questionnaire items.

Pretesting "provides not only a test of the clarity of the questions and of the correctness of interpretation put upon them by the respondent, but it also affords the possibility of discovery of new aspects of the problem studied but not anticipated in the planning stage." The wider use of pretesting, according to Sletto, resulting in avoidance of errors, adds greatly to questionnaire validity, thus appeasing critics of the questionnaire method. Correspondingly, the several questionnaires were submitted at the same time to a group of twenty-four people for a trial run in order to obtain their criticisms and responses. Spot check and interview techniques were employed. This trial group consisted of three practicing superintendents, three board members, three professors of educational administration, and fifteen graduate students, most of whom had recently served as school administrators. One-half of the pre-test

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group was asked to review the total instrument from the perspective of a board of education member; the second randomly selected half was requested to assume the superintendent's role as they appraised the instrument's items, format, and directions.

Many helpful criticisms and suggestions accrued from the pre-test. Only minor semantic difficulties were discovered in the items, and the refinements required to correct these difficulties are reflected in the items as listed in pp. 54-67. The generation of required data from the items was acceptable--the instrument evoking responses as expected and thus accrediting face validity to the instrument. Format and directions received but few criticisms, all easily corrected or amended. However, a major criticism recurred without exception from each pre-test subject: "The questionnaire is much too long!" Several respondents commented that two hours or more had been spent in completing the items.

Authorities agree that a mailed questionnaire requiring more than a half-hour for completion will result in returns so low as to invalidate a study.5, 6

Curtis notes that another difficulty with long questionnaires is that they are likely to be poorly completed. Keenly conscious of these injunctions, the writer attempted to shorten the instrument.

Careful analysis of the questionnaire items in relation to the purposes assigned the study, however, argued against the discarding, combining, or condensing of items—especially since this had been done previously in meticulous fashion during development of the items. The purpose of a descriptive-survey investigation is to secure evidence concerning an existing situation. An encompassing description of present communication was afforded by the findings of the pilot study, the descriptive-survey upon which the questionnaire was based. To alter these findings offered the possibility that items of genuine significance could be destroyed.

At this juncture the decision was made to administer the questionnaire directly to a sample through the interview method, using the items as content for an interview schedule and check-list rather than for a mailed instrument. The direct administration of the instrument, moreover, had certain inherent advantages over a mailed instrument, and are noted as follows:

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1. A complete return from the sample would be obtained.

2. All data for each item would be usable; there would be no incompletes or voids, a factor particularly important with checklist type surveys.  

3. Directions could be explained until understandable to the respondents.

4. The respondents' answers would be of a better quality if a face-to-face rapport were established.

5. All of the original items could be retained with their full meanings, and the carefully conducted descriptive-survey data obtained through the pilot study would be preserved.

Instrument validity

One of the responsibilities of the researcher is to determine whether the methods or instruments used to collect data are valid. Since no similar previously validated instruments were available for comparison, reliance had to be put upon certain logical criteria.

The criteria used to evaluate the validity of the questionnaires used in this study were offered by Scates and Yeomans as follows:

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1. Is the questionnaire on the subject?

2. Are the questions clear and unambiguous?

3. Does the questionnaire get at something stable, which is typical of the individual or the situation?

4. Do the questions have extractive power?

5. Will the questionnaire be answered by a large enough proportion of respondents to have validity?

6. Is the information consistent, in agreement with what is known, and in agreement with expectancy?

7. Do the responses show a reasonable range of variation?

8. Are there any external criteria useful in evaluating the instrument?

The foregoing criteria were applied to the questionnaire used in the study. The first criterion, above, relates to subject content. Since the content of the questionnaire consists of items determined through a pilot study which administrators and board members offered as representing the existing situation in superintendent-board communication, it may be concluded that the questionnaire is concerned with its proper subject matter. The second criterion is met because a goal of the pre-test was to determine whether the items were clear and free from ambiguity, and, if so, to eliminate difficulties—a goal which was accomplished. Criterion three was answered by the same logic used to meet the first criterion.
The problem of whether the questions have extractive power, criterion four, was satisfactorily determined through the pretest of the instrument and in later administration to the sample. Obligation to meet criterion five was discharged when a high (100%) response was assured by administration of the instrument through personal interviews.

Criterion six permitted no disagreement or inconsistencies of information with "common sense," with intelligent "guessing," and with already known facts, a criterion which was met to the researcher's satisfaction.

The next criterion listed, criterion seven, concerning the obtaining of an acceptable range of responses from respondents, was satisfied from the responses obtained through the pilot study and through the major collection of data. Finally, the eighth criterion was met when non-discriminating items were used in the oral interviews and instruments, thus providing a check on consistency of response.

Lundberg states that "we assume high validity when we have guarded against known possibility of error, when there is no known reason why informants should intentionally mislead, and when the results are not inconsistent with other known facts about the
respondents or with other measures, the validity is accepted. \(^{10}\)

This assumption may be said to apply to this study.

**Instrument reliability**

Reliabilities of the questionnaires used in obtaining data for the study were tested through the application of the "chance-half" method. The importance of this procedure is to determine whether the questionnaires can be relied upon to give the same results if the study should be replicated, and whether the test data permit extrapolation. Since it was impractical to construct and to administer two parallel forms of the questionnaires or to repeat the tests used in the study and to secure correlation coefficients in the test of consistency, the alternative reliability method was chosen.

Each questionnaire was divided into even-odd halves, and two scores were computed for each half. This was done for the total sample, and the coefficient of correlation was computed between the two series of scores. The reliability of the whole test was then estimated by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, giving

1. Questionnaire on Actual Practices:  
   Coefficient of reliability = 0.58

2. Questionnaire on Desirability of Practices;  
   Coefficient of reliability = 0.67

3. Questionnaire on Frequency of Topics:
   Coefficient of reliability = 0.64

4. Questionnaire on Importance of Topics:
   Coefficient of reliability = 0.73

Instrument objectivity

Objectivity of a test means the degree to which equally competent users get the same results and is closely associated with the reliability of the instrument. When securing items for the questionnaire, mature practitioners provided the information. This data, then, was from the field of administrative experience common to the users, defined in standardized professional terminology, tending, thus, to eliminate spurious or poorly defined problems and permitting objective responses. Pre-testing of the questionnaires served, also, to enhance objectivity. By securing responses in discrete categories through use of numerical symbols, a further possibility of bias and misinterpretation was removed.

Sample selection

The number of subjects to be included in any study is determined by two factors: the resources of time and money available to the researcher and the demands of the study. The first of these factors weighed heavily in arriving at the decision to limit the population to four strata within the broader universe—a universe composed of the city, local, and exempted village school districts in Ohio. These
districts range in student population size from fewer than 100 to over 133,000, with widely varying frequencies for each size group; thus, the advisability for selecting defined population strata for intensive study rather than the attempt to secure an adequate sample for purposes of conducting interviews which would be representative of all 800 disparate districts.

**Strata limits.**—The four strata of school districts selected for study appear in Table 2 which presents the frequencies of all Ohio school districts in enrollment groupings. At the time of the field research (March, 1964), the total number of districts in the state of Ohio was 800. This number has now decreased to 777 (November, 1964).

As can be observed in Table 2, Stratum I's student population boundaries were established at 500-999 students. The boundaries for Stratum II were established at 1000-1499 pupils. The boundary limits for Stratum III fell at 4000-4999 students. The stratum of largest pupil size, Stratum IV, consisted of all districts in the 9000-13,900 population group.

Assignment of the strata population boundaries was empirical.
Table 2

ENROLLMENT GROUPINGS AND FREQUENCIES OF OHIO SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHOWING STUDY STRATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Group</th>
<th>Stratum&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Districts in Group N=800</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Ohio Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-499</td>
<td></td>
<td>137</td>
<td>17.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>23.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1499</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>17.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2499</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>8.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2500-2999</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>3000-3499</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3500-3999</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000-4499</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4500-4999</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000-5999</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6000-6999</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7000-7999</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8000-8999</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9000-13999</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14000-18999</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19000-23999</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24000-28999</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29000-133000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Six randomly selected districts in each stratum.
Districts were tallied in a frequency table in size groups representing 500 students each. Table 2 is a modified version of the frequency table. The first group selected, Stratum I, represented the mode of the frequency distribution. Nearly equal in frequencies, Stratum II, was used because it represented the next largest population group.

As the population groups increase in size, the frequencies drop sharply, leveling off at the 4000 pupil population point. In mathematical terminology, a smoothed graph of the frequencies presents a change in the slope of the curve at this point. This point argues for study as a lower limit of a stratum—Stratum III. Because of small frequencies above this limit—4000 population—two frequency groups were included in the stratum, placing the upper limit of Stratum III at 4,999 students.

The 9,000 through 13,999 student population districts established Stratum IV. The population span for this stratum was greater than those previously selected in order to include a large enough population for provision of an adequate random sample.

The two smaller population strata constitute the "small" school districts of the study, and the two grouped larger population strata define the "large" school districts in this study. This classification may be justified empirically from the thinking of practitioners who regard a district of 4000 pupils as "large," a belief supported by the fact that fewer than ten per cent of Ohio districts are indeed, larger. Seventeen per cent of all school districts in Ohio have a smaller pupil
enrollment than districts designated in this study as "small." A further differentiating criterion is proposed according to central office organization—all of the school districts above 4000 pupils in size maintain at least one professional full-time administrative assistant, while none of the districts in Strata III and IV have such central office help.

Sampling procedure.—Within each of the four strata, a random sampling technique was applied to the stratum population in order to obtain a sample. Random sampling is the method which assures that each member of a given population universe will have an equal chance to be included in the study sample. Parten notes that, "Within strata... the choice of cases to constitute the sample for each subgroup of the population should be a chance selection. If it is not, the elements of bias are likely to enter, and the sample will be unrepresentative." Randomness is a property, not of an individual sample, but of the process of sampling. A sample of a given size must be obtained by a process which gives each possible combination of items constituting the sample size in a population (Stratum) the same chance of being the sample drawn. Such random sampling is important, for it permits objective generalizations from the sample to the whole population.

To assure absence of bias, the random number table process was employed for sample selection; a table of random numbers was used to select six school districts in each stratum. All school districts within each stratum were ranked according to size and were assigned a consecutive number. The random number table lists a series of all possible consecutive numbers in random sequence which have been mathematically determined to correspond with an error-free draw of numbers using the "goldfish bowl" method. The process then employed is automatic in selection of units for the sample; school districts included for the study from the defined population strata were selected by the researcher with numbers corresponding to table numbers, obtaining in this fashion twenty-four districts. Table 3 shows the characteristics of the selected districts.

The characteristics of the districts, as can be observed from Table 3, appeared to fall in all the common pupil taxable wealth classifications, and to be representative of the kinds of districts in Ohio. The districts appeared to be in the proper proportion of rural, city, and suburban classifications. No area of the state, geographically, was missed as a map of Ohio with the districts plotted would graphically illustrate.

Table 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RANDOMLY SELECTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District and Stratum</th>
<th>Pupil Population</th>
<th>Per Pupil Taxable Wealth</th>
<th>Kind of District</th>
<th>Ohio Geographic Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-I</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>$15,684</td>
<td>Suburban-rural</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-I</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>11,206</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Northwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-I</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>5,435</td>
<td>Village-rural</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-I</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>12,864</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>North Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-I</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>12,446</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-I</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>6,471</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-II</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>10,094</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-II</td>
<td>1,336</td>
<td>25,294</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-II</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>8,991</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Northeastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-II</td>
<td>1,409</td>
<td>8,551</td>
<td>Suburban-rural</td>
<td>Northeastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-II</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>6,087</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Southern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-II</td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>12,311</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-III</td>
<td>4,119</td>
<td>11,581</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-III</td>
<td>4,263</td>
<td>29,816</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-III</td>
<td>4,569</td>
<td>15,039</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>North Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-III</td>
<td>4,812</td>
<td>22,843</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-III</td>
<td>4,895</td>
<td>12,820</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>North Central</td>
</tr>
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<td>R-III</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>10,172</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-IV</td>
<td>9,847</td>
<td>14,360</td>
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<td>T-IV</td>
<td>11,691</td>
<td>12,427</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-IV</td>
<td>12,174</td>
<td>21,209</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-IV</td>
<td>12,220</td>
<td>19,910</td>
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<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-IV</td>
<td>12,796</td>
<td>17,001</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-IV</td>
<td>13,411</td>
<td>13,983</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection

The researcher took care to secure sets of Ohio school districts which represented true random samples from each of the four size classifications. To assure that the results of this random procedure not be disturbed, it was imperative that the cooperation of the superintendent and the board president in all of these districts be obtained. The superintendents and board presidents were not approached directly. The writer and the faculty adviser for the study conferred with the Executive Secretary of the Ohio School Boards Association with the view toward securing Ohio School Boards Association endorsement of the project. After three meetings which produced several constructive suggestions, the project received the approval of the Association. A letter (Appendix B) outlining the study and urging cooperation was sent to all superintendents and board presidents in the selected districts by the Association's Executive Secretary. A follow-up phone call from the researcher seeking an interview appointment resulted in the unanimous cooperation of the superintendents. In only several instances was it impossible to secure an interview with the current board presidents. The immediate past president of the board was substituted for the present board president in these instances. All of the substitutes were currently working with the present superintendents.
The interviews took place during a four week period in late April and early May, 1964. Because of the great distances between the school districts and because oftentimes the president could only be seen during evening hours, never were more than three interviews possible during any one day. Frequently, only one or two interviews were permitted due to the time factor.

Each of the forty-eight interviews, held in the respondent's home or office, extended approximately two hours in length, and, as was the case in the twenty-one pilot study interviews, the respondents expressed a gratifying measure of interest in and concern for the problem of superintendent-board communication. Tables 4 and 5 show the characteristics of the sample board presidents and superintendents.

In addition to offering a description of the study's subjects, Tables 4 and 5 were useful in giving reassurance that a typical cross section of each school district pupil population size stratum had been selected. A normal cross section of demographic data from respondents of the study appeared, and the implication may be assumed that an unbiased selection of school districts had been achieved as a result of the sampling procedure. The educational, professional, and other personal data concerning the respondents did not markedly vary from the statistics which were predicted.
# Table 4

**CHARACTERISTICS OF BOARD PRESIDENTS PARTICIPATING IN STUDY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>District Strata</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Educational Level Attained</strong></td>
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<td>0-3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>10-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 or more</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>
### Table 5

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SUPERINTENDENTS PARTICIPATING IN STUDY**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>District Strata</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Masters plus one year</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Doctorate</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Science, Math, Business</td>
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<td>Vocational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health-Physical Educa.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure as Superintendent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in present position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 plus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Experience as a Superintendent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 plus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The procedure used with the subjects to collect perceptions was held consistent by giving each respondent a copy of the questionnaire items and the accompanying directions, and retaining an identical copy from which directions and definitions were read aloud by the researcher.

The two questionnaire sections, "Practices" and "Topics of Communication," required two different kinds of responses and, consequently, two scales. The four ordinal scales which were developed for these sections, shown on pages 69 and 70, were placed on placards measuring six inches by twelve inches, and, to avoid confusion, each was shown the respondent only when he was responding for the particular purpose for which the card had been developed. The subjects gave oral responses which were recorded on data sheets by the interviewer. Data from the other questionnaires which did not require the use of scales was obtained through similar procedures.

Often, responses for all sections of the data gathering instrument included pertinent elaborations beyond the requested categorical answers, and these were recorded in notation form. Most of the superintendents were able to provide samples of written materials which they considered to be typical of their board-superintendent communication. These included board agendas, annual reports, memos, staff bulletins, district publications, news releases, addresses,
and curriculum or fiscal reports. All such materials were retained for analysis.

**Processing and analysis of the data**

The Statistics Laboratory at the Ohio State University assisted the researcher by coding the data, transferring it onto data processing cards, and tabulating the information by machine. Statistical procedures to analyze the data were worked out in detail in cooperation with the Statistics Laboratory. Personnel from the Laboratory developed the special statistical programs needed to process the data on computers since no programs previously had been written for the kinds of data, samples, and requirements presented by the study. The data was run on IBM 7094 computers.

Statistical procedures used in analysis are given in Chapter III prior to presentation of the study's data. A detailed explanation of the statistical procedures is given, along with the formulae used in making the computations. Following the discussion of statistical processes, the data is presented under the three concerns of the study—communication practices, communication content, and communication difficulties. Tables and narrative report the findings obtained through application of the questionnaires in field interviews with the 48 sample school superintendents and board presidents. Raw data secured in the field interviews was submitted to the various
statistical tests described, and the results of this treatment appear in the tables and narrative of Chapter III.

Analysis of the information in the next chapter is limited to objective presentation of any data differences, similarities, and descriptive quantities. Interpretations and implications are withheld until the final chapter.
CHAPTER III
DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

In the study of communication between school superintendents and board members, questionnaires were administered to 24 superintendents and 24 board members. These 48 people were chosen according to enrollments in their randomly selected school districts. Involved in the study were the superintendent and the board president from six districts in each of the following district size categories: 500-999; 1000-1499; 4000-4999; 9000-13999. These district ranges were denoted as Strata I, II, III, and IV, respectively.

"Small" districts are those constituting Strata I and II; "Large" districts are those composed of Strata III and IV. Referral will be made throughout to: $S_L$ (superintendents from large districts); $S_S$ (superintendents from small districts); $B_L$ (board presidents from large districts); and $B_S$ (board presidents from small districts).

The questionnaires came under four headings: (1) Practices, (2) Topics, (3) Difficulties, and (4) Communication.

Data was gathered for each of the questionnaires from respondents
in the randomly selected districts and was subjected to several statistical treatments. This chapter presents the collected data, discusses the statistical techniques used in analyzing the information obtained, and exhibits derived statistical results.

**Statistical Methods Used**

In order to test for differences among the respondents with respect to Communication Practices and Communication Topics, the Fisher Exact Probabilities Test was chosen. The Fisher Test was selected because it provided a nonparametric technique for analyzing discrete data (either nominal or ordinal) when the two independent samples are small in size. It is used when scores from two independent random samples fall into one or the other of two mutually exclusive groups. The test determines whether the two groups differ in the proportion with which they fall into two classifications.\(^1\)

The Ohio State University Statistics Laboratory developed a modification of the Fisher Test which would apply to the four categories within the random sample used in the study.

Procedure for utilizing the modified Fisher Test required that contingency tables first be developed for each question. This permitted

the variable of facts or respondents' opinions to be related to the variable of respondents' district size. The contingency tables contained both the actual observed frequencies for the event and the computed, expected responses.

Data from the interviews provided the actual observed frequencies. The expected responses were computed for each cell of the contingency table by multiplying contingency table column and row totals, then dividing the product by the total number of observations.

The pattern of observed and expected responses throughout each table was compared with the hypothesis of independence: that selections or opinions are not influenced by the respondents' group associations, both among the groups and in their proportion of responses. The null hypothesis of independence of "no difference" among the categories was tested for each pattern by the modified Fisher Test to provide probabilities for retention or rejection of the null hypothesis.

The .05 probability level was accepted as adequate for the purposes of the study. Establishment of the .05 level was an arbitrary choice made prior to data collection based upon an estimate of the possible significance of the data found. The null hypothesis was rejected in those cases in which the probability of the observed configuration in the contingency table would occur at most .05 of the time under the null hypothesis, and thus be a rarity.

When probabilities of occurrence of an observed pattern are rejected
at .05 or less, under the null hypothesis of independence, differences among the groups in this study were accepted, and practices or opinions were seen to be dependent upon respondents' classifications.

Probability computation under the modified Fisher Test was through use of a generalization of the Univariate Hypergeometric Distribution of the form

\[ p = \frac{(A + B)! (C + D)! (A + D)! (B + D)!}{N! A! B! C! D!} \]

The factorials in the above equation made computations by computers desirable. This work was performed by computers at The Ohio State University.

Demonstration of differences within a contingency table permitted the researcher to draw from the table conclusions about the direction of the difference--whether a group does or does not favor the question about which the opinion was asked. It was not possible, however, to analyze the degree to which an item was (was not) favored by a category over other categories through use of this technique.

Direction was determined by comparison of cell frequencies: when the observed frequency was greater than the computed expected frequency, the cell's category was regarded as favoring the opinion.

The assumption is made in data treatment and analysis that an infinite population is represented from which random samples have been taken, thus permitting generalizations to be made for the sample.
Each question under the Practices Questionnaire was divided into two parts: "Actual Practices," graded 1 if the subject felt that the given "Practice" was being used, 0 if not; and "Desirability of Practice," scored 3, 2, 1, 0 in decreasing order of desirability. "Actual Practice"—whether or not the given practice was used—was a judgmental decision made by the researcher upon the basis of the respondent's answer to the following query on frequency:

Please state the frequency with which this practice is actually used in your board-superintendent communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times per</th>
<th>Year - Month - Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Numerical Frequency)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each practice (47 in total) the hypothesis of independence among groups with respect to choosing a "Yes" or "No" answer to the question of actuality of practice was tested. To perform this test, a contingency table of the form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D I</th>
<th>D II</th>
<th>D III</th>
<th>D IV</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No = 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where the numbers in the table count the frequency of "Yes" and "No" answers was employed. Only answers given by superintendents were used.
for this part of the study, since the professional leader would be apt to know all the practices used in communication between his office and all the board members; a given board member might have only a partial view of the practices used in the district. In each case, the probability of the occurring configuration was computed under the null hypothesis of independence.

For "Desirability of Practices," the hypothesis, group $S_L$, superintendents from the large districts (Strata III and IV), $S_S$, superintendents from the small districts (Strata I and II), $B_L$, board members from the large districts (Strata III and IV), are $B_S$, board members from the small districts (Strata I and II) and independent with respect to choice of "desirable" practices was tested for each question (47 in all). A contingency table of the form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$S_L$</th>
<th>$S_S$</th>
<th>$B_L$</th>
<th>$B_S$</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desirable (2, 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesirable (0, 1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was employed. Probabilities were computed under the null hypothesis as explained above.

Each question (28 in all) under "Topics" was divided into two parts, one part dealing with the actual frequency with which topics were
discussed, the other dealing with perceived importance of the topic. Each question part was scored 0, 1, 2, 3 in increasing order of perceived actual frequency or importance. The hypothesis that the groups $S_L$, $S_S$, $B_L$, $B_S$ (as above), are independent with respect to judgment of importance of topics was again tested using a contingency table of the form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$S_L$</th>
<th>$S_S$</th>
<th>$B_L$</th>
<th>$B_S$</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important (2, 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important (0, 1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

with probabilities computed under the null hypothesis as before.

A measure of the relationship between two parts of the divided questions under "Topics" was computed through use of the Pearson product-moment method to determine a correlation coefficient,

$$ r = \frac{s_{xy}}{s_x s_y} $$

Where $s_{xy}$ is the sample covariance and $s_x$, $s_y$ are the sample standard deviations of part one and part two respectively. This statistical method was also used to find a more general relationship between "Actual Practices" and "Desirability of Practices," and between "Frequency of Topics" and "Importance of Topics." The scores over
all 48 people for a given question were totaled giving pairs of numbers, one for "Actuality of Practice" for a given question and one for "Desirability of Practice" for that same question. These pairs were then correlated.

In order to determine the relationship between the four districts with respect to "Frequency of Topics," the 28 items in the listing were ranked on sum of scores given by the 12 people of that district. The hypothesis that the rankings are independent was tested using a test by M. G. Kendall (m rankings of n—the coefficient of concordance $W$) with the level of significance determined for the coefficient of concordance. The coefficient was computed as follows:

$$W = \frac{S}{\frac{1}{12} K^2 (N^3 - N)}$$

$S$ = Sum of squares of observed deviations from the mean of the rank totals for each item

$K$ = Number of sets of rankings

$N$ = Number of objects ranked

The $X^2$ Table was used to estimate significance for $W$. And, in addition to the above treatment, the common ranking for "Frequency of Topics" was determined.

The question dealing with "Communication" was divided into two parts. Part one treated the level of board-superintendent relations
scored as 1 to 4 in increasing order of desirability of the relations; part two treated the extent to which the subject believed the working relationship of part one depended on quality and kinds of communication which exist. The answers were again scored 1 to 4 in concordance with part one. The correlation coefficients between parts one and two were computed for different groupings of the 48 subjects through use of Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation method previously discussed.

The rank-difference method of calculating relationships was utilized in obtaining a correlation coefficient for the "Difficulties" questionnaire. This correlation was the agreement between all superintendents and all board presidents in the study in their frequency of perception of difficulties in communication. Rho, the rank correlation, is obtained through the formula

\[ \text{Rho} = 1 - \frac{6 \ D^2}{N \ (N^2 - 1)} \]

Significance of the statistic provided above, was obtained in a standard correlation coefficient levels of significance table.  

---

Communication Practices

The 47 communication practices between boards and superintendents obtained in the pilot study and submitted to the major sample were divided into five areas, as follows:

1. Practices related to regular board meetings
2. Practices related to special meetings
3. Practices intended to build good will or influence opinion
4. Practices related to formal reporting
5. Practices related to internal school operation, and
6. Practices related to between-meeting contact of individual members and the superintendent.

Discussion of both actual use of these practices and desirability of their use takes place within these six groupings. Tables 6 through 18 illustrate the practices and sample responses in the order shown above.

Actual usage of practices

Practices related to regular meeting preparation and follow-up. -- All of the four practices reported in Table 6 are used by more than fifty per cent of the total sample, and one practice--use of a written agenda--is used by all sample school districts.

When the exact probability test was applied to the contingency tables for each of the items, the null hypothesis of independence was rejected for all but the first practice--item 1, the written agenda item. For the remaining items, usage of the practice was dependent to some degree
**Table 6**

DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A written agenda citing the order of business is sent to the board before formal meetings.</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Written recommendations of the superintendent are sent to the board before formal meetings.</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supporting evidence for the superintendent's recommendations is sent to the board before meetings.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minutes of all regular meetings are sent to each member in written form.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
upon the size category of the school district. Districts of Size III and size IV favored the use of all three of the practices where significance is indicated.

Use was made of written recommendations less than use of written agendas, especially in Strata I and II districts. Several times during the course of the interviews, small district board members would suggest that the sending of recommendations prior to the meeting by the superintendent connoted "brainwashing"--indicative that the board could not do its own thinking. The data showed that preparation for and follow-up of meetings is accepted generally as a formal activity well above the 50% threshold of sample usage, but practiced by the large districts to greater extent.

Practices related to special meetings. --Only two of the practices in Table 7 were above the 50% threshold for sample usage, and the remainder were used by less than one out of five of the sample school districts. Work meetings were used by approximately 80% of the sample. These sessions were found to range in widely varying patterns--some were held before meetings, some between meetings, some were open, some closed, some were on special topics while some were concerned with any school topic. To be counted, however, as actually using "work meetings" a district must have been using the practice at least four times a year. That usage of the practice was dependent upon size was demonstrated by the probability level, and large districts are shown to use the practice proportionally more than smaller districts.
Table 7
DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES:
• PRACTICES RELATED TO SPECIAL MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &quot;Work Meetings&quot; or study sessions (not exceeding several hours) are held to discuss and to inform.</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.032*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A periodic formal review and evaluation of board policies is held by the superintendent and board.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A periodic review and evaluation is held by the board with the superintendent concerning the superintendent's work.</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summaries of informal board-superintendent discussions are developed and sent to board members.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Impromptu sessions without the presence of all members are held with the superintendent (other than Board committee meetings).</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice N=24</th>
<th>Rank N=47</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences $^a$</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. All day or &quot;week-end&quot; retreats or conferences are held for board-superintendent planning and discussion.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>I  II  III  IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
A practice used by only one-half the schools--formal review of board policies--was favored by the smallest and the second largest size districts, posing an anomaly for interpretation.

Usage for all the remaining four practices in Table 7 is so little as to discount their serious discussion. Interestingly, no one of the remaining practices developed a response pattern significant at the .05 probability level, thus obviating the prospect that usage was dependent upon size of district. Only one district indicated usage of the "week-end" retreat, a practice frequently mentioned in the literature. To many board members the idea of a retreat was refreshingly, even amusingly, new. Most, however, dismissed it as "unnecessary" or as impossible to consummate.

Practices intended to build good will or to influence opinion.--Stratum II indicated that the sending of "publications or pertinent newspaper and professional journal clippings to each board member" was regularly practiced in proportion more than in other size districts. Of the practices in this section, Table 8, this was the only one above the threshold of 50% sample usage.

Administrators and board members in over 40% of the districts "socialize" at private events with all board members, superintendents, and spouses present. This practice was used more in small districts, Strata I and II.
**Table 8**

**DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES INTENDED TO BUILD GOOD WILL OR INFLUENCE OPINION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent sends publications or pertinent newspaper and professional journal clippings to each board member.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social visitation of the superintendent with all board members present, including spouses.</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.014*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent &quot;plants&quot; ideas in the community with the intention of influencing board members.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.020*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Superintendent invites board members to attend major meetings where he is to speak, to tune in his TV or radio appearances, or to read any articles he has published.</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Significant at the 0.05 level.
Table 8 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>N=47</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social visitation of the superintendent with each individual board member, including spouses.</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*Probabilities starred with an asterisk are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
One-fourth of the districts indicated that there was social visitation between individual board members and the superintendent. In these, the friendships had been longstanding. The null hypothesis of independence was accepted for the occurring configuration of responses among the Strata, and no stratum can be said to have preferred the practice.

Strata III and IV districts practiced the "planting" of ideas and the inviting of board members to attend or to listen to the superintendent's speeches. As explanation of the former, the "planting" of ideas is not considered necessarily Machiavellian, but may be interpreted by respondents as educational spadework. As an explanation of the latter practice, it may be noted that few formal TV or platform appearances were made by the superintendents of small districts. "We eventually know everything the superintendent says," was the reaction of several small district presidents.

Practices related to formal reporting. -- Of the ten practices listed under the heading concerned with formal reporting, Table 9, five were above the 50% threshold of usage by districts, but only two approached 75% or went beyond. Oral reports were given at the board meetings by the superintendent in nearly 80% of the districts, and as a practice were used more by superintendents in the small districts.

Periodic "State of the Union" messages were prevalent in 75% of the districts. The probability level of the response configuration is too high to permit rejection of the null hypothesis; hence, no district can be said to use the practice more than any other.
Table 9
DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF
BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES:
PRACTICES RELATED TO FORMAL REPORTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice N=24</th>
<th>Rank N=47</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differencesa</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent devotes a portion of the board meeting to a personal oral report on the status and problems of the system.</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Periodic &quot;State of the Union&quot; messages outline the plans of the superintendent for the future.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Board members receive special reports periodically in depth and in scope from or about a particular school division.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Superintendent has administrative, supervisory, or central office staff report or be available for reporting at all regular meetings of the board.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: Significant at the .05 level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences a</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. A comprehensive periodic report of past progress and/or present status of the system is prepared by the superintendent for the general public, including the board.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Superintendent uses experts or witnesses from outside the school organization in presenting a point, case, or recommendation to the board.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Board members receive non-financial descriptive reports from the major school departments or divisions, e.g., each school, transportation, cafeteria(s), maintenance and/or custodial division, central office departments, concerning their problems, plans and activities.</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Districts Using Practice</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Probability of Strata Differences</td>
<td>District Strata Using Practice More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Superintendent presents at regular board meetings a personally prepared written comprehensive overview of the entire school system, its problems and progress.</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent has members of the instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Superintendent has members of the non-instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
Strata III and IV used the remaining three practices above the 50% usage threshold significantly more than did the other Strata. Two of these practices, Numbers 3 and 4 in Table 9, were oriented toward the larger schools, perhaps because the small schools were not likely to have central office personnel or clear-cut administrative divisions. The need or ability to prepare a "comprehensive report" for the board and/or public may not be as great in the small Strata, as respondents observed, thus accounting for Strata III and IV use of this practice more.

The five practices below the 50% threshold of usage were generally preferred by the larger Strata. This pattern deviates only when Strata I districts joined Strata III districts in use of the practice: "Having the superintendent present a written comprehensive report at meetings."

Few (20.8%) of the districts had instructional staff members report at meetings, although the largest districts indicated that they favored the practice more than did any of the other Strata. Only one district showed non-instructional staff members personally reporting at board meetings.

In general, the larger districts were found, more than the small Strata schools, engaged in reporting activities of a more formal, written nature.

Practices related to internal operation.--Keeping the board informed of school events--plays, athletic events, etc.--was a responsibility of
over two-thirds of all superintendents interviewed, as shown in Table 10. The response for the largest districts, Stratum IV, indicated that this group did not engage in the activity to the same proportion as the other groups. During the interviews several respondents noted that in their Stratum IV districts there were "too many" schools, making it impossible to be aware or to give attention to all individual school activities.

Staff studies and reports were sent to board members in two-thirds of all districts. The practice is engaged in significantly more by larger districts. Small districts rely less on the formal study and report approach to solution of problems, since administration at this level was found to be generally more intimate, informal, less highly organized, and the administrators apparently are not prone to producing written reports.

That the board and administrator in small districts work together more closely between meetings was demonstrated by the fact that the superintendant in these districts was found to forward copies of important directives, letters, etc. to their board members. Over one-half of all districts in the sample indicated that this was regularly done. The large districts did this to a lesser extent than did small Strata districts.

Only one other practice was found to be above the 50% usage threshold for the entire sample: "Board members as a group visit or
Table 10

DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO INTERNAL OPERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences^a</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent sends the board a schedule of school events.</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Superintendent sends the board copies of staff studies and reports.</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.020*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent forwards between meetings copies of important State Department Directives, petitions, legal notices, letters from the prosecutor, solicitor, mayor, architects, etc. to board members.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.027*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Board members as a group visit or tour schools with the superintendent.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Superintendent sends the board administrative announcements and directives given to the school staff.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Superintendent sends the board the staff newsletter or &quot;house&quot; news organ.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Planned use is made of children, slides and films of school activities...and/or school exhibits...to communicate to the board ideas or progress at formal or informal meetings.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>0.011*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Board members as individuals visit or tour schools with the superintendent.</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent sends the board minutes of staff meetings, including athletic board and departmental meeting minutes</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
tour schools with the superintendent." The statistical test for dependence of position upon usage of the practice showed that districts of Stratum II size gave the practice a higher preference.

A practice which is used only one-third of the time by all districts was used, however, by the larger districts significantly more. The practice—"Superintendent sends the board administrative announcements and directives given the school staff"—was shown to be statistically favored by Strata III and IV. During the interviews, respondents in the small districts indicated that few formal staff announcements were written, thus precluding any use of the practice as a board-superintendent communication instrument.

House newsletters were published by only one-third of the districts, and the majority of these are in Stratum IV. As might be expected, a difference in favor of the largest districts appeared in the use of internal district publications as a method for communication with the board of education, since smaller districts were less likely to have such publications.

The final three practices listed in Table 10 were used by less than one-fifth of all districts. Only two of the largest Strata of districts indicated more usage than the other districts for the utilization of slides, displays, and films at meetings to communicate information to the board. The remaining two practices fell above the .05 level, indicating usage to be independent of district categories.
Practices related to between-meeting contact of individual members and the superintendent. -- Table 11 shows only three practices used by 50% or more of the sample districts. The first practice, used by three-fourths of the districts, showed a probability above the .05 level; hence, the practice among the districts appeared to be unrelated to the size. Importance for the item rests in its universality of usage.

Superintendents in all sizes of districts were shown to keep in phone contact with board presidents between meetings. Board members initiated phone calls to the superintendent between meetings in nearly two-thirds of the sample districts. Why Stratum II and Stratum IV districts are significantly greater in their usage of the practice than Stratum III which they straddle remained unexplained.

Strata III districts stood alone in their greater preference for two items: "A reply to one board member's inquiry if of general concern is sent to all members," and "Superintendent sends a specially prepared briefing or summary to absent board members." Stratum IV districts used the practice of sending letters and memos to members between meetings to inform or to answer questions more than other districts; however, the practice was used only by one-third of the total sample.

In one-third of all the districts, Strata I and II used two practices significantly more: "Superintendent meets formally with the president between meetings;" and "Superintendent phones each board member as a routine practice between meetings about school business."
Table 11

DIFFERENCES AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY SIZE CATEGORIES IN THE ACTUAL USE OF BOARD COMMUNICATION PRACTICES:
PRACTICES RELATED TO BETWEEN-MEETING CONTACT OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENT

|   | Practice                                                                 | % of Districts Using Practice | Rank | Probability of Strata Differences
differences^a | District Strata Using Practice More |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>N=47</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Superintendent phones the board president between meetings as a routine practice, about school business.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Board members initiate phone calls to the superintendent between meetings.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.027*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>A reply to one board member's inquiry if of general concern is sent to all members.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Superintendent meets formally as a routine practice, with the president between board meetings.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Superintendent phones each board member, as a routine practice, (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Districts Using Practice</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Probability of Strata Differences*</td>
<td>District Strata Using Practice More</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Superintendent sends a specially prepared summary or briefing about the meetings to absent board members.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.011*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Superintendent sends letters or memos to each member between meetings to inform or answer questions.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Formal communications are sent by a board member directly to school staff members who are subordinate to the superintendent.</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent meets individually as a routine practice, with each board member (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Formal conversations with board member(s) on topics of consequence between formal meetings are verified by a written follow-up summary.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Communications from members are, as a regular practice, sent through the president to the superintendent between meetings.</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Districts Using Practice</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Strata Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>District Strata Using Practice More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=24</td>
<td>N=47</td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Communications from board members, as a regular practice, are sent</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through the Clerk-Treasurer to the superintendent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Personal letters of members are sent by board members to the</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superintendent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
The remaining practices related to individual contact between meetings did not show statistical differences in usage by size categories. Since they are used at most by only 9% of the district sample, they were discounted as communication practices of importance in the field.

Four of the six practices used most are verbal--face to face meetings or by telephone--thus indicating less reliance upon the formal, written word. Such a pattern, of course, should have been expected among busy administrators and board members, according to respondents.

Summary of tables concerning actual usage of practices. Nineteen of the practices were used by 50% or more of the districts surveyed. Three of these practices were found to show no differences in the pattern of their usage by sizes of districts, and it is possible only to say that all districts use these practices in approximately the same proportions. The sixteen remaining practices in the list of nineteen were used to proportionately greater degree within the four Strata in thirty instances, indicating that, of course, several strata used the same practices among the sixteen in greater degree than did the other strata.

There was agreement by Strata III and IV in usage of 8 practices (of nine used proportionately more by Strata IV). The small districts, Strata I and II, held the use of only three practices in common--the usage of which was related to their sizes.
The practices used to greater extent by the larger districts were those which were of a more formal nature, as referral to Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 shows. It is interesting to note that the larger Strata districts preferred in usage twice the number of practices used by the smaller districts.

One practice is used by all districts--use of an agenda--and only eight practices are used in two-thirds of the districts. Half the districts used 19 practices. Since respondents were given an opportunity to supply other practices they used, and none were forthcoming, it was assumed that communication was limited to the relatively few practices indicated by the study findings.

Caution must be taken when reviewing the ranked practices not to equate frequency with importance, or to confuse frequencies of the districts using a practice with the frequency with which the practices are used.

Perceived desirability of practices

Tables 12 through 18 present the data concerning perceptions by superintendents and presidents of practice desirability. Shown are the percentage agreements for the entire sample; the rank order of each practice in the listing; the probability statistic of differences among the respondent groupings; and a presentation of the groups which proportionally favor given practices beyond what is to be expected.
The tables serve to group the practices under common classifications for purposes of discussion.

Practices related to regular meetings. --Although all districts made use of the written agenda, fewer--93.8%--of the superintendents and board presidents believed that the practice was desirable (see Table 12). The probability statistic indicated differences among the respondent groups in their perceptions of desirability. Dissenters to use of the practice usually stated as their reasons that an agenda was "unnecessary" or was susceptible to usage in bad faith.

The remaining three practices in Table 12 were believed desirable by over 80% of all respondents, representing for each approximately a 20% increase over actual practice. Representatives of the larger districts, \( S_L \) and \( B_L \), favored the three practices in which probabilities indicated that opinions were related to respondents' categories. Only on the item concerning "written recommendations" was there a change in this pattern, with \( S_S \) joining \( S_L \) and \( B_L \) in their preferences.

Rankings of the practices in actual usage and in perceived desirability were nearly similar.

Practices related to special meetings. --Referral to Tables 7 and 13 reveals major differences in the percentage of usage and of the perceived desirability of several practices. The practice of holding a periodic review of the superintendent's work changed from 20.8% usage to 95.8% practice desirability. The item concerning formal
Table 12
DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT PRACTICES:
PRACTICES RELATED TO REGULAR MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>Rank N=47</td>
<td>S S L B B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A written agenda citing the order of business should be sent to the board before formal meetings.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supporting evidence for the superintendent's recommendations should be sent to the board before meetings.</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Written recommendations of the superintendent should be sent to the board before formal meetings.</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Minutes of all regular meetings should be sent to each member in written form.</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
review of board policies changed from 50% usage to 93.8% desirability. All remaining items showed less striking percentage increases in desirability over usage.

Probability levels were too high to indicate response differences in the first and last ranked items in Table 13, thus allowing the conclusion that no differences exist among the categories. $S_L$ and $B_L$ agreed in their indication of preference for Items 3 and 4 both near or above the 50% threshold of desirability, while $S_L$ and $S_S$ showed agreement on only one item: "formal review of board policies should be held." $B_L$ indicated a greater preference for the idea of "retreats" than did the other respondents; however, a majority did not believe the practice desirable.

Practices intended to build good will or to influence opinion. -- Of the practices listed in Table 14, three were held above the 50% threshold of desirability by the sample respondents. Only one was above the 50% threshold of actual usage--the item concerning the sending by the superintendent of publications and clippings to the board. In both desirability and usage, this practice was first, gaining nearly 30% from district usage to sample desirability.

The desirability of "social visitation of the superintendent with all board members present, including spouses" and the inviting of board members to attend meetings or to tune in formal TV or radio appearances of the superintendent was near the two-thirds threshold of
Table 13

DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO SPECIAL MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable N=48</th>
<th>Rank N=47</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences^a</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable S S SL S L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A periodic review and evaluation should be held by the board with the superintendent concerning the superintendent's work.</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A periodic formal review and evaluation of board policies should be held by the superintendent and board.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.046*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;Work Meetings&quot; or study sessions (not exceeding several hours) should be held to discuss and to inform.</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summaries of informal board-superintendent discussions should be developed and sent to board members.</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</td>
<td>Probability of Category Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N=48</strong></td>
<td><strong>N=47</strong></td>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. All day or &quot;week-end&quot; retreats or conferences should be held for board-superintendent planning and discussion.</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Impromptu sessions without the presence of all members should be held with the superintendent (other than Board committee meetings).</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
Table 14
DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES INTENDED TO BUILD GOOD WILL OR INFLUENCE OPINION.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences (^a)</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent should send publications or pertinent newspaper and professional journal clippings to each board member.</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>0.014*</td>
<td>x, x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There should be social visitation of the superintendent with all board members present, including spouses.</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>0.007*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent should invite board members to attend major meetings where he is to speak, to tune in his TV or radio appearances, or to read any articles he has published.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x, x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There should be social visits of the superintendent with each individual board member, including spouses.</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>0.018*</td>
<td>x, x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable (N=48)</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable (S&lt;sub&gt;S&lt;/sub&gt; S&lt;sub&gt;L&lt;/sub&gt; B&lt;sub&gt;S&lt;/sub&gt; B&lt;sub&gt;L&lt;/sub&gt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Superintendent should &quot;plant&quot; ideas in the community with the intention of influencing board members.</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.021&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Probabilities starred with an asterisk<sup>*</sup> are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
perceived desirability. This latter practice was held definitely more desirable by $S_L$ and $B_L$, where such acting was more prevalent, and it was seen to be twice as desirable as measured by the ratio of respondents' desirability perceptions to actual district usage. $S_S$ showed through its proportion of responses a definitely greater favoring of the item than did the other categories.

The large increase over actual usage, percentagewise, of the item, "superintendent's public appearances," must be observed with caution. It appeared that many who believed the item desirable did so more as a gesture of friendliness rather than because they "wanted to pry."

Table 14 indicates little agreement among respondent groups on items: $S_L$ and $B_L$ agreed once; $S_S$ and $B_S$ never; $S_S$ and $S_L$ once; and $B_S$ and $B_L$ never.

Practices related to formal reporting. --The percentage of respondents who held each of the 10 practices desirable changed in a positive direction over the percentage of districts using each practice (Tables 15 and 9). Items 2 and 4, increased 40%; five items increased over 20%. All but one of the items were near or above the 50% threshold of sample perceived desirability.

Seven of the 10 practices were held more desirable by category $S_L$; five by category $S_S$, of which three were in agreement with category $S_L$. Presidents from large districts $B_L$, agreed with $S_L$ three times. All
Table 15
DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO FORMAL REPORTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable N=48</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There should be periodic &quot;State of the Union&quot; message outlining the plans of the superintendent for the future.</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A comprehensive periodic report of past progress and/or present status of the system should be prepared by the superintendent for the general public, including the board.</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent should devote a portion of the board meeting to a personal oral report on the status and problems of the system.</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Board members should receive special reports periodically in depth and in scope from or about a particular school division.</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates statistical significance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable N=48</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differencesa</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Board members should receive routine non-financial descriptive reports from the major school departments or divisions, e.g., each school, transportation, cafeteria(s), maintenance and/or custodial division, central office departments, concerning their problems, plans and activities.</td>
<td>70.8 19.5 0.009*</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Superintendent should use experts or witnesses from outside the school organization in presenting a point, case, or recommendation to the board.</td>
<td>70.8 19.5 0.003*</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Superintendent should have administrative, supervisory, or central office staff report or be available for reporting at all regular meetings with the board.</td>
<td>68.8 21.5 0.002*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</td>
<td>Rank N=47</td>
<td>Probability of Category Differences&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Superintendent should present at regular board meetings a personally prepared written comprehensive overview of the entire school system, its problems and progress.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent should have members of the instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Superintendent should have members of the non-instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.027*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
respondent categories accepted the desirability of Item 1 concerning a periodic "State of the Union" message for which a probability of 1,000 was obtained--permitting statistical assurance that no differences among the categories exist. Of the 15 categories of respondents favoring various practices in formal reporting to the board, 12 were in the superintendent classifications. The small board category respondents indicated no desirability preference over any of the other categories.

Practices related to internal operation.--While only 4 of the practices related to internal operation (Table 10) were actually used by 50% of the districts, eight were believed desirable (Table 16) by at least one-half of the respondents. The rank order of the items in usage and desirability remained only slightly changed. The item which showed the greatest rank order variation, "Superintendent sends the board the staff newsletter or 'house' news organ," assumed a position of sixth place in actual usage while maintaining third place in perceived desirability. The percentage figure for each item of those who hold the items desirable increased substantially over the percentage of districts actually employing the item (see Tables 10 and 16).

A total of 19 differences favoring the practices were distributed among the four categories. Thirteen differences were in categories $S_S$ and $S_L$. Categories $S_S$ and $B_S$ agreed on the two items held by the entire sample as most highly desirable; $S_L$ and $B_L$ agreed on four practices. The items held in common desirability by categories, or
Table 16
DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO INTERNAL OPERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent should send the board a schedule of school events.</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.031*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Superintendent should forward between meetings copies of important State Department Directives, petitions, legal notices, letters from the prosecutor, mayor, solicitor, architects, etc., to board members.</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.032*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent should send the board the staff newsletter or &quot;house&quot; organ.</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Superintendent should send the board copies of staff studies and reports.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Board members as a group should visit or tour schools with the superintendent.</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significant at the .05 level.
### Table 16 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>Rank N=47</td>
<td>S  S  L  B  B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Board members as individuals should visit or tour schools with the superintendent.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>0.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Superintendent should send the board administrative announcements and directives given to the school staff.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.006*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Planned use should be made of children, slides and films of school activities, and/or school exhibits, to communicate to the board ideas or progress at formal or informal meetings.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent should send the board minutes of staff meetings, including athletic board and departmental meeting minutes.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
items held desirable by any given category, appeared not to indicate evident patterns of interrelationship.

Practices related to between-meeting contact of individual members and the superintendent. -- Four of the 13 items in Table 17 were above the 50% threshold of desirability as rated by all respondents, three of which were above the 50% threshold of usage (see Table 11). The item, "Superintendent sends (should send) a specially prepared summary or briefing about meetings to absent board members," moved from 33.3% district usage to first rank in desirability with nearly 80% respondents favoring. The items concerning verification of formal conversations, and the sending of communications to the superintendent through the president, items 7 and 8, Table 17, were held as desirable by one-third of the group; whereas actual practice showed practically no districts where these practices were in effect.

All other items assumed approximately the same rank-order in usage and in perceived desirability.

Those items (five) above or near the 50% threshold of perceived desirability describe practices which are non-routine, number 3 excepted. These practices permit either the superintendent or board member to pass along only communication believed to be important. The above noted exception, however, suggests that three-fifths of the sample believe the "superintendent should phone the president as a
### Table 17

**DIFFERENCES AMONG CATEGORIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: PRACTICES RELATED TO BETWEEN-MEETING CONTACT OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND THE SUPERINTENDENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable N=48</th>
<th>Rank N=47</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable S S L B L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Superintendent should send a specially prepared summary or briefing about the meetings to absent board members.</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A reply to one board member's inquiry if of general concern should be sent to all members.</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>0.031*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent should phone the board president between meetings as a routine practice, about school business.</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.011*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Board members should initiate phone calls to the superintendent between meetings.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Superintendent should send letters or memos to each member between meetings to inform or answer questions.</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
<th>Probability of Category Differences</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>N=47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Superintendent should meet formally as a routine practice, with the president between board meetings.</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Communications from members should, as a regular practice, be sent through the president to the superintendent between meetings.</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Formal conversations with board member(s) on topics of consequence between formal meetings should be verified by a written follow-up summary.</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent should phone each board member, as a routine practice, (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communications from board members, as a regular practice, should be sent through the Clerk-Treasurer to the superintendent.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Respondents</td>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who Believe</strong></td>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Differences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Desirable</td>
<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>N=47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Superintendent should meet individually, as a routine practice, with each board member (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.

12. Personal letters or memos should be sent by board members to the superintendent (as a major communication method).

13. Formal communications should be sent by a board member directly to school staff members who are subordinate to the superintendent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Who Believe Practice Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
routine practice between meetings, "and is held most desirable by $B_L$. Of the top five practices, $S_S$ and $S_L$ held three practices in common as definitely favored in relation to other items in their categories. Three were favored by $B_L$.

The board presidents in the large districts, $B_L$, favored seven of the nine practices above the 20% threshold of sample desirability; $S_L$, 4 practices; $S_S$, 2 practices; and $B_S$, 2 practices.

Summary of tables concerning perceived desirability of practices.---

Of the 47 practices listed in Tables 12 through 17, 33 of the practices were above 40% threshold desirability, and 31 were above the 50% threshold for all sample board presidents and superintendents.

Further, 23 of the practices were held desirable by two-thirds of sample respondents. By comparison, it was noted that in usage, only 19 of the practices were used by 50% of the districts, and only 8 were used by two-thirds of the districts represented by the respondents. Only one practice was used by 80% or more of the districts; whereas, twelve practices were held desirable by over 80% of the superintendents and presidents. Fifty-eight categories indicated that they substantially favored certain of the 31 practices above the 50% desirability level.

There was no great difference in the number favored by $S_S$, $S_L$, and $B_L$ -- 16, 23 and 17 practices, respectively, while $B_S$ differed as a category from the other categories on only 2 items.

There was a discernible pattern among categories in the favoring
of given items. The professionals, $S_L$ and $S_S$, agreed in proportions greater than expected on 11 practices above the 50% threshold of practice desirability. $S_L$ and their presidents, $B_L$, agreed on 14 practices. Agreement dropped off sharply with all other categories: $S_S$ and $B_S$, 2 practices; $S_L$ and $B_S$, no practices; and $B_S$ and $B_L$, no practices.

Satisfaction of strata respondents with communication practices used

To determine the satisfaction of the 48 superintendents and board presidents with communication practice in the total sample districts, usage and nonusage of practices were compared with perceptions of individual practice desirability and undesirability. To do this, the number of respondents holding a given practice as desirable and, also, using the practice was ascertained. This figure was then converted into a percent of the total sample, affording, thus, a measure--an index--of satisfaction within the sample. By like syllogistic procedure, the number of those holding a practice item as undesirable, but, also, not using the practice was converted into a percentage of the entire sample.

Practices which are both used and are perceived as desirable by their users are shown in Table 18. Only practices are listed for which there was common agreement by more than 50% of the sample, thus
Table 18

**PRACTICES BOTH USED AND HELD DESIRABLE BY MAJORITY OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Sample Using and also holding Practice desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A written agenda citing the order of business is sent to the board before meetings.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Periodic &quot;State of the Union&quot; messages outline the plans of the superintendent for the future.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Superintendent devotes a portion of the board meeting to a personal oral report on the status and problems of the system.</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. &quot;Work Meetings&quot; or study sessions (not exceeding several hours) are held to discuss and to inform.</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Superintendent sends the board a schedule of school events.</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Written recommendations of the superintendent are sent to the board before meetings.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Supporting evidence for the superintendent's recommendations is sent to the board before meetings.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Sample Using and also holding Practice desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Superintendent phones the board president as a routine practice between meetings about school business.</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Superintendent sends publications or pertinent newspaper and professional journal clippings to each board member.</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Board members receive special reports periodically in depth and in scope from or about a particular school division.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Minutes of all regular meetings are sent to each member in written form.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Superintendent gives the board copies of staff studies and reports.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Superintendent forwards between meetings copies of important State Department Directives, petitions, legal notices, letters from the prosecutor, solicitor, mayor, architects, etc. to board members.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. A periodic review and evaluation of board policies is held by the superintendent and board.</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
indicating majority satisfaction with the practice by the sample. Fourteen practices are included in this table. Likewise, Table 19 lists another 14 practices which are both held to be undesirable and are correspondingly not used by a majority of respondents.

Of the remaining 19 practices obtained through the pilot study after items for Tables 18 and 19 had been extracted, all but 2 indicated 50% or greater total respondent agreement. The total respondent agreement percentage was obtained by adding two figures; a) the total sample percentage using the practice and also holding it desirable; and b) the total sample percentage not using the practice and holding it not desirable.

With only two item exceptions, the analysis indicates that the majority of respondents in the sample were satisfied in the actual usage (or non-usage) of all practices. The rationale for determining the quality of satisfaction, of course, has been arbitrarily postulated as simple majority preference by the sample. This method requires summing the individual agreement tallies and, hence, does not lend itself to a discussion of differences between opposing opinions. Agreement on all practices for all respondents was 63.9%. Note should be made in analyzing percentages of agreement that the degree to which familiarity with current usage of practice blocks consideration by a respondent of other possibilities was not ascertained.

A second index of overall satisfaction was obtained through
Table 19

PRACTICES BOTH HELD UNDESIRABLE AND NOT USED BY MAJORITY OF SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>% of Sample Not Using and also holding Practice undesirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Personal letters or memos are sent by board members to the superintendent.</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Communications from board members as a regular practice are sent through the Clerk-Treasurer to the superintendent.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communications are sent by board members directly to school staff members who are subordinate to the superintendent.</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Superintendent meets individually with each board member (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Impromptu sessions without the presence of all members are held with the superintendent (other than Board committee meetings).</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. All day or &quot;week-end&quot; retreats or conferences are held for board-superintendent planning and discussion.</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Superintendent has members of the non-instructional staff report at meetings with the board (excluding supervisors).</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>% of Sample Not Using and also holding Practice undesirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Social visitation of the superintendent with each individual board member, including spouses.</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Formal conversations with board member(s) on topics of consequence between formal meetings are verified by a written follow-up summary.</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communications from members are as a regular practice sent through the president to the superintendent.</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Superintendent gives the board minutes of staff meetings, including athletic board and departmental meeting minutes.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Superintendent &quot;plants&quot; ideas in the community with the intention of influencing board members.</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Superintendent phones each board member (excluding member-clerk) between meetings about school business.</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Summaries of informal board-superintendent discussions are developed and sent to board members.</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
correlation of the ungrouped original scores for both actual use of practices and perceived desirability of practices. The product-moment method determined whether there was a relationship between usage and desirability, and whether there were common factors influencing the two variables. The correlation coefficient for all 48 respondents was

\[ r = .779 \]

significant at the .01 level, with .500 accepted as indicating definite relationship. Those respondents who scored one variable high also scored the other high; those who scored one low, correspondingly tended to score the other low. Such agreement permits positive conjecture concerning sample satisfaction with the communication practices listed by the study.

Content of Communication

A stated goal of the study was to investigate board-superintendent communication content. The review of the literature in Chapter I suggested several straightforward ways to study and to analyze communication content. Since the sheer range and volume of content in board-superintendent communication practices and materials precluded intensive short-term direct study, respondents' perceptions of communication content were chosen as a point of departure for this investigation. Perceptions of the importance and frequency of topics
of communication were obtained from participants through use of instruments and procedures previously discussed. These perceptions and their analysis are presented in the following section.

**Importance of topics in communication**

The pilot study verified twenty-eight areas or general topics which were held to be representative of the subject content in superintendent-board communication. Some of these topics, it was expected, would be regarded as relatively unimportant, while many would be held as quite vital. Table 20 presents the ranked importance of topics (importance as measured by totaled perceptions) viewed by the superintendents and board presidents. Probabilities indicating differences concerning the topics among respondent groupings are shown in the table. Where group differences are indicated at the .05 level or below, the groups which perceived greater importance for certain topics than did the other respondent classifications--groups for whom perception was related to their categories--are recorded opposite the item.

The threshold of topic importance--50% of the respondents--listed 19 of the 28 items as important. Two-thirds held 14 topics as important, and 10 topics were regarded as important by 75% of the sample.

Topics concerning business management occupied four of the ranks above the 50% threshold; however, six topics related to curriculum and
Table 20
PERCEPTION OF TOPIC IMPORTANCE IN SUPERINTENDENT-BOARD COMMUNICATION
BY RESPONDENT GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of Total Sample Holding Topic Important&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Group Differences&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Groups Perceiving Topic Important Group N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Budgeting and financing for current operations.</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New building planning, financing, and construction.</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Curriculum development and improvement.</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relations of the school with the community; public relations and publicity.</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Administrative Personnel—concerning their school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.014&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personnel welfare, including salary schedule development and administration.</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.014&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> N=48

<sup>b</sup> S<sub>S</sub> S<sub>L</sub> B<sub>S</sub> B<sub>L</sub>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of Total Sample Holding Topic Important&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Group Differences&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Groups Perceiving Topic Important Group N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Teaching Personnel—concerning their school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Administrative Personnel—their background and personal information.</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pupils—their classification, testing and progress reporting.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Classroom work and classroom progress of students.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Public complaints and grievances.</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Textbooks and library books.</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Maintenance of buildings, grounds, and equipment.</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Inservice training of personnel.</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.009*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> N=48

<sup>b</sup> Calculated using statistical test.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of Total Sample Holding Topic Important&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Probability of Group Differences&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Groups Perceiving Topic Important Group N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Instructional materials, teaching aids, and related devices.</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>0.012*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teaching Personnel--their background and personal information.</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Non-teaching Personnel--concerning school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Athletics, bands and other extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Pupil health services.</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Non-teaching Personnel--their background and personal information.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Transportation of pupils.</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Pupil behavior and discipline</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> N=48

<sup>b</sup> S S L B S B L
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of Total Sample Holding Topic Important</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Probability of Group Differences</th>
<th>Groups Perceiving Topic Important Group N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. Grievances and complaints of employees.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Purchasing, other than routine bills.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Management and use of facilities and equipment--rentals, etc.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Food service.</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Accounting, both district-wide and individual school.</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Supply management, including storage and supply control.</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aThis category includes all responses marked "Very Important" and "Somewhat Important".

*bProbabilities starred with an asterisk* are within the .05 significance level accepted for indication that differences exist among the groups.
instruction were in the above 50% group. "Budgeting and financing for current operations" was the first ranked topic. "Curriculum development and improvement" shared the second rank with a business management item, "New building planning, financing, and construction."

The items on public relations and on public complaints occupied two of the top 12 ranks, with "Relations of the school with the community; public relations and publicity" in the position of third rank.

Interest in communication content about personnel was indicated by the placement of all six personnel items at or above the 50% threshold. Concerns related to the professional activity of the staff ranked above topics pertaining to background and personal data concerning professional personnel. All items concerning the professional staff ranked higher than items concerning the non-teaching staff.

Group preference was indicated by $S$ for all six personnel items. Agreement with $S_L$ was shown by $B_L$ on the personnel topics concerning administrators; however, $B_S$ agreed with $S_L$ on all other topics. No proportional preferences were shown by $S_L$ above the other groups in which the group opinion was related to its classification. The four top ranked topics were held to be important by nearly all respondents, and no statistical differences of perceptions were shown to exist among the respondent groups. These four top ranked topics concerned financing current operations, curriculum, new building financing and construction, and public relations.
No definite pattern was discernible in category relationships among the curriculum and instruction items. The agreement between categories of superintendents and between board members varied. Each item must be considered separately. Interestingly, $S_L$ stood alone in its group preference for the topic, "Inservice training of personnel," and also for the topic concerning athletics, bands, and extra curricular activities. For this latter item, all categories except $S_L$ showed recognition of the topic as important in proportions greater than expected from the contingency table.

As data was gathered concerning the perceived importance of the 8 lowest ranked topics in Table 20, respondents elaborated upon their low evaluation of the topics' importance. The typical comment for each item, in effect, was: This is a problem for the staff or administration to handle and need not be an important communication topic unless extraordinary circumstances or occurrences arise. The greater number of both board presidents and superintendents offered this rationale.

**Topic frequency**

The frequency of communication for every topic was scored by each respondent. The perception scores were added for each topic, then converted into percentages of the total possible frequency score which could be achieved by a group responding to the item. The items were ranked from high to low according to the percentages obtained and
assigned to a 1 to 28 rank-order in the listing. The ranking was divided into upper, middle, and lower thirds. The procedure was carried out not only for the entire sample, but for each of the four size components within the total sample. Table 21 presents the arrangement of the topics according to hierarchical frequency of use. A discussion of the frequencies follows according to the rank-order thirds into which they fell.

All district size classifications perceived the same topics as first and second in frequency, "new building planning, financing and construction," and "budgeting and financing for current operations." All district size categories listed "curriculum development and improvement" third, except $D_I$.

Four topics were placed in the upper third rank order by three district size categories. The categories, $D_II$ excepted, held in common, "Instructional materials, teaching aids, and related devices," and "Administrative Personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance." All but $D_I$ placed "Curriculum development and improvement" in the upper third of the frequency rank-order. "Maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment" was excluded from the top third by $D_III$; $D_IV$ excluded "Athletics, bands, and other extracurricular activities."

The large districts, $D_{III}$ and $D_{IV}$ agreed that three topics were in the upper third: "Relations of the school with the community;"
Table 21

TOPIC FREQUENCY IN BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION AS PERCEIVED BY SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRESIDENTS RANKED ACCORDING TO TOTAL POSSIBLE FREQUENCY-USE SCORES; SHOWING ITEM RANK-ORDERS AND RANK-ORDER THIRDS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Item Frequency, Rank-Order, Rank Order Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New building planning, financing, and construction.</td>
<td>$D_S$  93.8(1) $D_I$  91.7(5.5) $D_{II}$  83.3(6) $D_{III}$  100.0(3) $D_{IV}$  100.0(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Budgeting and financing for current operations.</td>
<td>$D_S$  91.7(2) $D_I$  91.7(5.5) $D_{II}$  83.3(6) $D_{III}$  100.0(3) $D_{IV}$  91.7(5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Curriculum development and improvement.</td>
<td>$D_S$  87.5(3.5) $D_I$  58.3(18.5) $D_{II}$  100.0(1.5) $D_{III}$  91.7(7) $D_{IV}$  100.0(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment.</td>
<td>$D_S$  87.5(3.5) $D_I$  91.7(5.5) $D_{II}$  100.0(1.5) $D_{III}$  75.0(13) $D_{IV}$  83.3(9.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Instructional materials, teaching aids, and related devices.</td>
<td>$D_S$  85.4(5.5) $D_I$  91.7(5.5) $D_{II}$  75.0(10) $D_{III}$  91.7(7) $D_{IV}$  83.3(9.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Relations of the school with the community; public relations and publicity.</td>
<td>$D_S$  85.4(5.5) $D_I$  75.0(13.5) $D_{II}$  75.0(10) $D_{III}$  100.0(3) $D_{IV}$  91.7(5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Athletics, bands, and other extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>$D_S$  83.3(7.5) $D_I$  100.0(1) $D_{II}$  83.3(6) $D_{III}$  83.3(9.5) $D_{IV}$  75.0(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>( D_S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Personnel welfare, including salary schedule development and administration.</td>
<td>83.3(7.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Administrative Personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>81.3(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teaching personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>79.2(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Classroom work and classroom progress of students.</td>
<td>75.0(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Non-teaching Personnel--concerning school activities and job performance.</td>
<td>66.7(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Administrative Personnel--their background and personal information.</td>
<td>62.5(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Pupils--their classification, testing and progress reporting.</td>
<td>62.5(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>( D_S )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Textbooks and library books</td>
<td>62.5(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Purchasing, other than routine bills.</td>
<td>60.4(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Management and use of facilities and</td>
<td>60.4(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment-rentals, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Public complaints and grievances.</td>
<td>60.4(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Inservice training of personnel.</td>
<td>58.3(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Teaching Personnel--their background</td>
<td>56.3(20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and personal information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Food service.</td>
<td>47.9(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Transportation of pupils.</td>
<td>45.8(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Non-teaching Personnel--their background</td>
<td>43.7(23.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and personal information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Grievances and complaints of employees.</td>
<td>43.7(23.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Item Frequency, Rank-Order, Rank Order Third by District Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$D_S$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Pupil behavior and discipline.</td>
<td>41.6(25)$^c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Accounting, both district-wide and individual school.</td>
<td>33.3(26)$^c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Pupil health services.</td>
<td>31.3(27)$^c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Supply management, including storage and supply control.</td>
<td>16.7(28)$^c$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Frequency data for the total sample and each district size category are shown: (1) in percentage of highest attainable frequency score (see b, below); (2) according to numerical rank-order of the percentage (in parentheses); and (3) according to rank-order thirds. Rank-orders are noted: upper third "a"; middle third "b"; and lowest third "c".

2 Percentages were obtained from division of total category topic frequency scores by category N. Topic frequency scores were scored: "1" if perceived to be used "Some" or "Very Frequently"; "0" if used "Never" or "Seldom."

3 $D_S$ "$N$"=48; $D_I$, $D_{II}$, $D_{III}$, $D_{IV}$, "$N$"=12.
"Personnel welfare, including salary schedule development and administration;" and "Classroom work and progress of the students."

In contrast, this latter item was placed in the lowest frequency rank-order third by the small district groupings, $D_I$ and $D_{II}$.

The small districts $D_I$ and $D_{II}$ ranked "Non-teaching personnel, their school activities and job performance" in the upper third of frequency of items, but $D_{III}$ rated it in the middle third, while the largest districts, $D_{IV}$, placed the item in the lowest third.

Two groups, $D_I$ and $D_{III}$, listed "Teaching Personnel--concerning their school activities and job performance" in the upper third category of frequency, and $D_{II}$ and $D_{IV}$ placed the topic in the middle range.

Four topics of board-superintendent communication were perceived to be in the top third of the frequency rank-order by separate district size groups. These topics and the district size groups are as follows:

1. Management and use of facilities and equipment: $D_I$.

2. Public complaints and grievances: $D_{II}$.

3. Text books and library books: $D_{IV}$.

4. Inservice training of personnel: $D_{IV}$.

The first item above was placed in the lowest rank-order third by $D_{III}$; the second topic was commonly held in the lowest third by $D_{III}$ and $D_{IV}$; the third item was placed in their lowest frequency rankings.
by $D_I$ and $D_{II}$ -- the small districts; and the last topic was held in the lowest third by $D_{II}$.

Topics which all four district categories placed in the lowest third of rank-order frequency were:

1. Accounting, district and school.
2. Supply management.

Three subjects were placed in the lowest rank-order third by all but one district size category. The category not placing the topic in the lowest frequency third is noted, following, after each item:

1. Food service; $D_{II}$.
2. Pupil behavior and discipline; $D_I$.
3. Pupil health services; $D_{IV}$.

Small districts, $D_I$ and $D_{II}$, agreed that "administrative personnel--background and personal information" fell in the lowest frequency third; large districts agreed upon "non-teaching personnel--background, personal information" as an item in the lowest third.

Reactions from districts $D_{II}$ and $D_{IV}$ presented a curious agreement by placing in the lowest frequency range two topics:

1. Teaching personnel--their background and personal information.
2. Transportation of pupils.

$D_I$ and $D_{III}$ communicated less frequently about grievances of employees (item 24, Table 21), and presented another curious category size split in topic frequency.
Item 16 in Table 21, "Purchasing..." was held in the lowest frequency third by only one group—$D_{III}$, schools of the 4001-4500 pupil population size.

It is noteworthy that the small districts agreed upon the frequency level placement of 16 items, and that the large districts also agreed upon 16, but not on the same 16. Categories of size $D_I$ and $D_{III}$ agreed upon 11 topics; $D_{II}$ and $D_{III}$ found agreement upon only 9.

Category independence in perceptions of topic frequencies. --To determine whether respondents in each of four sizes of district ranked the topic list in Table 20 according to a common plan, a test of concordance was applied to the four rankings. The Kendall test gave

$$W = .597$$

which showed significance at the .01 level.

Rankings of the 28 topic frequencies by the four categories, then, were not independent. Ranking depended upon factors held in common by the respondents representing various sizes of school districts.

Correlations of communication content measures

For each topic of communication, the 48 respondents' perceptions of topic frequency were correlated with their perceptions of topic importance. If the item correlation was found to be high, then the individual respondents graded both frequency and importance high. If low, there would be no relationship among the respondents' views of topic frequency and topic importance, and the two variables would be
independent. Independence would argue that there was little agreement or consistency among the 48 respondents, and that under such circumstances potential bases for strained relationship between superintendent and Board may exist.

Since the range of correlation coefficients for the 28 items was .013-.562, (see Table 2, Appendix C), and the S. D. = .114, it was permissible to average the item correlations. The average linear correlation for all 38 items was:

$$r = .307$$

An r of .500 was accepted by the study as indicative of definite relationship; hence, the obtained correlation of .307 indicated an inadequate degree of positive relationship, showing tendency only.

Uncertainty as measured by little agreement appeared to exist in thinking of sample respondents on communication content frequency and importance. For only one item was there a correlation of respondents' frequency and importance perceptions above .500--and this was .562, permitting only minimal speculation regarding the relationship. The mean r of .307 argued for independence, thus positing a potential basis for poor relationships between and among the study's respondents.

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Communication Difficulties

Ninety-four board-superintendent communication difficulties were derived from 903 statements offered by respondents in the pilot study, from the literature, and from the writer's experience and experiences of his colleagues. These 94 difficulties were tested in the study to determine their universality, and to determine commonalities within and among the items with respect to respondents' classifications. The data presented herein constitutes the findings of the research and are presented in Tables 22 and 23 with textual discussion.

During the course of the interviews, respondents did not give a common interpretation to four of the original communication difficulty statements and, therefore, these were dropped in the analysis of data. The study refers, hereafter, to 89 communication difficulties. The four items which caused respondent confusion appear as the asterisk starred items on page 67 of the listing of communication difficulties. No difficulties in addition to those incorporated in the questionnaire were ascertained during the conduct of the interviews.

Difficulties perceived to exist by respondents

Each of the difficulties included in the questionnaire were perceived to exist as a communication problem by at least one respondent among the twenty-four superintendents and their twenty-four board presidents. However, many were of low total frequency (36 had a frequency of 10 or less) and when the low population frequencies were spread among
their sub-populations, the data proved of little value for analysis purposes.

Presented in Table 22 are only those difficulties perceived by at least half of the total population or half of each of the sub-populations. This approach utilizing the 50% threshold of importance concept overcame the problem presented in attempting to discuss many low frequencies. It further had the advantage of reinforcing single respondent's opinions with consensus. The 35 difficulties appearing in Table 22, hence, are those which, in the opinions of various population majorities, exist in their board-superintendent communication process to a serious degree.

Only one communication difficulty, "spur-of-the-moment questions or points are raised in meetings which result in unimportant, time-wasting discussions," was recognized by all five populations. That the item was indeed ubiquitous was further substantiated in terms of raw data with 82% of all respondents having checked the item while the next highest proportion for an item was 55%.

How much agreement was there among the sub-populations in the recognition of communication difficulties? Answers to this question may be found by noting, first, the number of total difficulties in Table 22 checked for each sub-population, $S_S$, $S_L$, $B_S$, and $B_L$. These totals were, respectively, 18, 16, 11, and 14. Second, a review of Table 22 was made to determine the number of times the same difficulty was
Table 22

DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION AS PERCEIVED BY FIFTY PERCENT OR MORE SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD PRESIDENTS FROM VARIOUS SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Difficulty Classification</th>
<th>All Respondents N=48</th>
<th>District Size Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spur-of-the-moment questions or points are raised in meetings which result in unimportant, time-wasting discussions.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Little use of visual aids is made to supplement verbal communications, e.g., slides, charts, chalkboards, diagrams.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Board members discuss administrative details when time should be spent on policies and evaluation.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communications for which there has been no background or warning--&quot;surprise&quot; communications--result in a negative reaction (to the communications).</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Difficulty Classification(^{a})</th>
<th>All Respondents N=48</th>
<th>District Size Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Information concerning the many and complex aspects of the school system is obtained from sources &quot;outside&quot; the school system.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The large quantities of necessary business and the pressure of immediate demands prevent communication about other topics.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The communication of information and problems does not take place through involvement in tours, fact-finding, data gathering, and decision making.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Too often communication exchanges which call for action are inconclusive.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The communicator fails to develop the background of the content of the communication.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communications sent are not as important to the receiver as to the sender.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Difficulty Classification&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>All Respondents N=48</th>
<th>District Size Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Busy schedules of members and superintendent prevent adequate communi-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Too many minor details in the communication obscure the central theme.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The essential content of communication is not understood because the</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>receiver is new to his position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Unable to communicate satisfactorily because of disruptions due to</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an &quot;individualist&quot; member of the team who diverts attention and time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from central or important tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A premature stand is taken; commitment is made before all the facts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are known.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Communications reach the person for whom intended before they are</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presented formally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>Difficulty Classification&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>All Respondents N=48</td>
<td>District Size Categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Communication is often on a person-to-person individual basis resulting in somewhat different phrasing, emphasis, impacts, impressions, and facts given to each person.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The communicator permits emotion to control or color his communications.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Failure to have adequate supporting facts for statements and recommendations.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Failure to have communications well organized.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Communications are not repeated often enough to &quot;let the idea sink in.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Reports are too lengthy to be easily read and the pertinent information absorbed.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Communications are sent so late that prior study is difficult or impossible.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty</td>
<td>Difficulty Classification (^a)</td>
<td>All Respondents (N=48)</td>
<td>District Size Categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Written notes or minutes are not kept following an oral communication, which results in inaccuracies or misunderstandings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. The specialized language and jargon of education and administration are not understood.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. New board members have improper expectations of communication content and procedures.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Few, or no, &quot;work&quot; or executive sessions are held in which uninhibited, free, informal reaction and discussion can take place.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. There is a failure to &quot;share&quot; problems with others as the problems become noticeable.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Irresponsible statements and facts are frequently issued.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Difficulty classification: 1 = Minor, 2 = Limited, 3 = Severe, 4 = Critical, 5 = Catastrophic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Difficulty Classification</th>
<th>All Respondents N=48</th>
<th>District Size Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. Periodic reports to the board omit or miss certain phases of operation; not comprehensive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. No precise summation is made after group discussions; this results in the possibility that each person leaves with a different impression.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Information concerning problems under study is released prior to conclusion of the study.</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Basic personality flaws in the receiver--suspiciousness, stubbornness, etc.--prevent reception of whatever communication is given.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Recommendations and reports reflect only one person's or a limited group's views.</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 22 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty Classification&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>All Respondents N=48</th>
<th>District Size Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S&lt;sub&gt;S&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>S&lt;sub&gt;L&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Failure in written communication to anticipate and answer questions which will be raised in the mind(s) of the receiver(s) of the communication.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Numbers 1-9 refer to classifications which appear on text pages 178-179
recognized by both $S_S$ and $S_L$. This was done for the two categories $B_S$ and $B_L$, $S_S$ and $B_S$, and, finally, for $S_L$ and $B_L$. The sums of the difficulties for the two categories were combined and divided into the number of times the categories agreed, resulting in the following "agreement percentages":

$$
\begin{align*}
S_S \text{ and } S_L & \quad - \quad .529 \\
B_S \text{ and } B_L & \quad - \quad .240 \\
S_S \text{ and } B_S & \quad - \quad .275 \\
S_L \text{ and } B_L & \quad - \quad .333
\end{align*}
$$

The two categories of professionals--superintendents from large and from small districts--showed a higher between-group agreement than did any of the other groups. The older, more experienced group of professionals, $S_L$, agreed with their presidents only one-third of the time; both other categories listed above agreed with each other even less--only one time out of four.

Board members from the smaller districts, while perceiving numerically fewer communication difficulties than the other category respondents, checked difficulty items independently of the other size categories of presidents or superintendents in greater proportion, as shown in the list which follows. The percentages of items viewed as difficulties by each category alone are shown. This percentage is a ratio of the total number of items in which the category was entered alone, in Table 22, to the total number of entries for the category.
These "independence" ratios related that the sample sub-populations varied considerably in the percentage by which their categories alone had recognition of difficulties. Further, the ratios provided supplementary data. This data was the percentage of times the respondent categories agreed with at least one other category. The percentage with which a category found agreement with another was the difference of the above listed percentages and unity.

The question of whether or not any kind of relationship existed in the order or hierarchy with which difficulties were perceived by respondent groups was tested with the rank-difference method of correlation. Since all 89 items received recognition by one or more respondents, the entire list was used to obtain the correlation. All sub-population superintendents were grouped and their registered difficulty perceptions were correlated with those of all sub-population board presidents. This dichotomization of the sample--categories of superintendents and presidents--was required in order to increase category frequencies for meaningful application of the rank-difference method. Every item for each category was ranked in its category with respect to the number of respondent's perceiving the item as a difficulty.
The item rankings in the two categories were then compared by the rank-difference formula, giving

\[ \text{Rho} = 0.678 \]

a coefficient correlation between all superintendents and all presidents in the sample, significant at the .01 level. A coefficient of .5 between the groups in difficulty perception had been postulated as necessary to assume the existence of agreement and to assume the operation of common factors within the groups.

**Classification of communication difficulties**

Inductive analysis of eighty-nine difficulties derived from the pilot study, each of which was verified as in existence through recognition by at least one respondent from the major sample, resulted in identification of nine superordinate communication difficulty categories. All items were possible of incorporation under one of these nine overarching general classes of communication difficulty. The communication difficulty categories, including definitions, are:

1. **Poor presentation of communication.** -- Actions of the communicator in transmitting the message, either in signal, media, or channel, cause the message to be ineffective.

2. **Blocked reception.** -- The receiver through his own internal or external processes fails to receive the communication.
3. **Distorted or inaccurate communication.** -- This is a quality of the communication created by the communicator in which an untrue or distorted situational picture or concept is developed.

4. **Lack of feedback.** -- Factors which prevent reaction to a communication cause the communication to be only partial.

5. **Misunderstanding.** -- The communication, for reasons resident in the communication or in the receiver, is misunderstood.

6. **Absence or lack of communication.** -- Information is not generated.

7. **Inadequacy of communication.** -- Communicatee's reaction to communication is that it is inadequate in quantity or depth.

8. **Impact not satisfying.** -- The communication evokes dissatisfaction in the communicatee, thereby detracting from the value or influence of the communication.

9. **Poor preparation.** -- Actions by the communicator in developing the content or format of the communication cause the communication to be ineffective.

Table 23 shows the categories of communication difficulty ranked according to the frequency with which the items of difficulty they incorporate appeared for the four sub-populations, $S_{S'}, S_{L'}, B_{S'}, B_{L'}$. Category frequencies when inspected for each of the sub-populations, while too low for useful comparison, did not deviate noticeably from the rank-order of the total frequencies shown in Table 23.
Table 23

CATEGORIES OF COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTY RANKED
ACCORDING TO THE RECOGNITION OF THIRTY-FIVE
COMPONENT DIFFICULTIES BY STUDY SUB-POPULATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Absence or lack of communication</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Blocked reception</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poor presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Impact not satisfying</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Poor preparation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Misunderstanding</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Distorted or inaccurate communication</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lack of feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inadequacy of communication</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Influence of Communication upon
Board-Superintendent Working Relationships

A questionnaire was administered to all respondents which sought, first, to determine their perceptions of the importance of board-superintendent communication in establishing the level of their existing board-superintendent working relationship, and, second, the questionnaire sought to determine the actual level of the working relationship. The questionnaire used may be found in Appendix B. Each respondent checked the discrete ordinal category which represented a description of the working relationship existing between the board and the chief administrator. These categories, four in number, suggested a continuum from "Definitely Unsatisfactory" to "Very Satisfactory."
The respondent likewise provided a perception of the extent to which the working relationship depended upon communication. Categories for this check list ranged from "No or little connection between communication and the working relationship" to "Communication is the sole basis in determining the level of the working relationship." The complete questionnaire appears in Appendix B.

High correlation (.5 or larger) through the product-moment method would have indicated that the two variables were not independent and were determined or conditioned by common factors. Zero correlation would have argued for no common relationship between the rankings of the two ordinal scales as assigned by respondents. All 48 study respondents were involved.

Table 24 presents the correlations obtained for the sample and for selected sub-populations. The correlations obtained were not of sufficient level to suggest definite relationship between the scales, and the findings signify lack of agreement concerning the perceived influence or place of communication in establishing and conditioning the board-superintendent working relationship. Superintendents showed greater recognition of the interrelationship (.473) than did board presidents (.014).

Chapter Recapitulation

The preceding pages of Chapter III have presented the data obtained through field interviews with superintendents and board presidents in 24
### Table 24

**RELATIONSHIP OF PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION TO PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_1$</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_2$</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_3$</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_4$</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Presidents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Respondents in each district category include both superintendents and board presidents.
randomly selected Ohio school districts in 4 size strata. This data consisted of respondents' perceptions concerning practices used in board-superintendent communication (both actual and desirable practices), topics of communication (frequency and importance), difficulties of communication, and perceptions of communication with respect to existing board-superintendent working relationships. All of the perceptions were treated by statistical means in order to determine commonalities, differences, and similarities between and among respondent categories. Usually these categories were determined by school district size. Through the use of tables and narrative these differences and similarities of respondents toward items in the questionnaires were presented.

Because so much of the presentation and analysis of the data was dependent upon the use of various statistical procedures, these procedures are discussed at some length. The discussion appeared at the beginning of Chapter III.

Wherever possible, interpretation or implication has been avoided in presentation of the data. An attempt was made to have the data presented unadorned of value judgments and conclusions, offering only facts. In some instances it was believed desirable to describe the settings of the obtained facts since the setting quite often exerts significant influence upon facts themselves. As in the cases of the correlations presented, the purpose of obtaining each correlation was made known.
A purpose should not be regarded as a conclusion, however, and is stated in order to contribute a meaningful background to data.

Chapter IV is reserved for interpretations and conclusions. From the factual information of Chapter III, answers to the study's hypotheses are offered, implications drawn, and recommendations for further study are formulated. A discussion of the significance of the study to the profession and practice of education concludes the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study attempted to determine and to describe in a systematic manner the phenomenon of communication as it exists between superintendents and their boards of education and as it relates to the board-superintendent working relationship. Data was obtained through original field investigation. The reportorial format of the study dictated that the data would be largely quantitative in nature.

Chapter III of the study report presented the communication process in terms of practices, difficulties, and content. These features, portrayed through respondents' perceptions, have been brought into relief by way of summary, conclusion, and implication. The patterns and afterthoughts suggested and evoked by the data and the relationship of the data to the study's original hypotheses constitute a most important dimension of this chapter.

Communication is an activity which permeates the whole fabric of organizational and inter-personal relationships. The magnitude and complexity of communication are immense, and no one study however ambitious could hope to encompass the whole phenomenon with its direct
and tangential implications. This report provides a glimpse, hopefully a well defined, systematized, and completely described glimpse, of certain aspects of the overarching problems of communication in the board-superintendent setting.

Findings in Relation to the Research Objectives

Eight working hypotheses and/or questions related to the central problem were selected for investigation. The hypotheses were defined in Chapter I as systematized statements which would serve the research design by permitting conclusions to be reached about the problem. Instrumentation and research design were developed around each of these hypotheses to provide information and data. The data obtained regarding certain of the hypotheses were tested by indirect or oblique means (as with correlations to provide measures or indices), while the data on other hypotheses were evaluated upon quantitative results provided by the research instruments. All hypotheses were considered in terms of what the data revealed; in terms of respondent variances concerning the data; and, whenever feasible, in terms of what readily observed situational factors appeared in or influenced the situation. Throughout the study no ordinal hierarchy of significance or of importance was attached to discussion of the hypotheses.

The extensive quantity of evidence at hand would seem to make it possible that all forces and facets which impinge upon or describe
communication could be isolated. However, completely unambiguous response patterns for respondent groups seldom appeared, and conclusions were frequently based upon evident trends, tendencies, and inclinations. When useful, exceptions appearing in the data to the conclusions drawn, were noted.

Hypothesis I: A listing of communication difficulties between the superintendent and his board can be established and verified

From the literature and the pilot study, nearly 900 comments were recorded as perceived difficulties in communication. Later classification categorization and sifting netted 94 definitive difficulties which appeared to incorporate all of the original comments. The list of 94 was further reduced to 89 by taking into account certain ambiguities in five items. The revised list of 89 items was submitted to 48 respondents in a sample of districts randomly selected. All of the 89 difficulties were identified as existing in, at least, one of the sample districts. The weight of majority opinion was used to measure whether the difficulties existed to a substantial degree. Only eight of the 89 difficulties were recognized by a majority of all 48 respondents. These eight are, as follows:
1. Spur-of-the-moment questions or points are raised in meetings which result in unimportant, time-wasting discussions.

2. Little use of visual aids is made to supplement verbal communication, e.g., slides, charts, chalkboards, diagrams.

3. Board members discuss administrative details when time should be spent on policies and evaluation.

4. Communications for which there has been no background or warning--"surprise" communications--result in a negative reaction (to the communications).

5. Information concerning the many and complex aspects of the school system is obtained from sources "outside" the school system.

6. The large quantities of necessary business and the pressure of immediate demands prevent communication about other topics.

7. The communication of information and problems does not take place through involvement in tours, fact-finding, data gathering, and decision making.

8. Too often communication exchanges which call for action are inconclusive.

When the respondent group was divided into four categories, 35 difficulties were recognized by a majority of respondents in, at least, one of the four categories. The four categories represented board presidents and superintendents divided according to large and small districts.
By listing communication difficulties by the four respondent categories noted above, it was apparent that there were broad differences between and among the groups in their perceptions. Only one item was viewed as a difficulty by all of the categories. This was the difficulty item involving the disruption of meetings by the raising or introduction of spur-of-the-moment, extraneous points. Further, only six items were viewed as difficulties by three of the categories. These are shown in the listing in the preceding paragraph, numbers 1 through 6. Board presidents from small districts composed the category constituting the exception. Only ten difficulties were viewed as difficulties by two of the categories. The majority (19) of the 35 communication difficulties were seen as existing difficulties by only one respondent category.

The "agreement percentages" by which one category recognized the same difficulties as another were .240, .275, .333 and .529. Superintendents from large and small district categories agreed on difficulties the greatest percentage of times (.529), and board presidents from large and small districts agreed the least percentage of times (.240). The other percentages, .275 and .333 were agreements between superintendents and board members from small districts, and between superintendents and board members from large districts in that order. All of the agreement percentages are relatively low; however, superintendents from both large and small district size categories were in agreement with each other concerning
at least half the difficulties, a fact which may reflect the results of a professional training and/or the commonality of demands and requirements of the position.

Independence ratios—i.e., the number of difficulties perceived by a category alone expressed as a percentage of the total number of difficulties perceived by the category—further showed the existence of a definite pattern for the sub-populations in their perceptions of difficulties. Board presidents from small districts had an independence ratio of .55; superintendents from large districts a ratio of .43; board presidents from large districts, .29; and superintendents from small districts, .11.

The frequency rank order correlation of the items of difficulty as perceived by all superintendents and all board presidents was .678, arguing for a community of agreement in perception of and in the perceived frequency of difficulties. This agreement of two groups adds support to the position that communication difficulties can be listed and verified.

The answer to the question of the hypothesis as to whether a listing of communication difficulties can be established and verified, must be in the positive as shown by the evidence found in this study. An ancillary finding was that there were definite patterns of difficulties for sub-populations, e.g., board presidents and superintendents in large and small districts, and that each of these sub-populations perceives a
majority of its difficulties alone or in the company of only one other category.

Hypothesis II: Difficulties will be subject to classification by categories and elements of the communication process.

The communication process postulated in Figure 1, Chapter 1, as a result of the review of the literature contains the following elements: Purpose, Signal, Medium, Channel, Reception, Interpretation, Impact, and Feedback. This paradigm was believed to represent a complete communication process and would incorporate all the difficulties discovered in board-superintendent communication. Analysis of the communication difficulties obtained through the pilot study and verified in the major study spotlighted nine categories of difficulty, as follows:

1. Absence or lack of communication
2. Poor preparation by the communicator
3. Poor presentation of the message through the fault of the communicator
4. Distorted or inaccurate communication
5. Blocked reception (by the communicatee)
6. Misunderstanding
7. Impact not satisfying to the communicatee
8. Inadequacy of communication (content not complete)
9. Lack of feedback in the communication process
The above listing was found to fit (to fall into) the communication process paradigm postulated in Figure 1, Chapter I, with one exception—the category which encompassed the greatest number of felt difficulties in the study; Absence or lack of communication. While not a true element of the mechanical process of communication transmission and reception, the difficulty obviously is the one which, if serious, brings the communication process to a standstill. Provision will need to be made for this category in future symbolic representations of communication.

With the exception cited, the hypothesis that difficulties are subject to classification by categories of the communication process is not challenged. The paradigm originally postulated provides an accurate general description of administrator-board communication.

**Hypothesis III:** Several major factors can be identified that are perceived to inhibit superintendent-board communication.

Analysis of the difficulties perceived by the sample revealed that the highest frequencies of difficulties were in the following four categories (Table 23, Chapter III):

1. Absence or lack of communication
2. Blocked reception by the recipient
3. Poor presentation of the communication content
4. Impact of communication is not satisfying to the communicatee
Within each of these categories were incorporated diverse kinds of difficulties, widely ranging in individual importance. Nearly eighty percent of all difficulties fell under the above four category headings. One specific item deserves mention, since it was the only difficulty held by all sub-populations to be a problem: Spur-of-the-moment questions or points are raised in meetings which result in unimportant, time-wasting discussions.

The fact of low agreement among superintendents and presidents from small and large districts concerning specific difficulties, and the fact that large percentages of difficulties were seen only by each of the categories of respondents alone, argue as inhibitors to communication. Where there is little agreement concerning the nature of a large number of difficulties, there exists a major inhibitor to communication requiring recognition and attention. To achieve consensus or even a successful modus operandi among administrators and their boards, common recognition or isolation of difficulties would seem to be imperative. A subtle but basic inhibitor to good superintendent-board communication would appear to be the lack of agreement and recognition of the importance of communication to good working relationships. Without this realization, the principals in the communication setting can only with difficulty make deliberate improvements in communication.

The "lack of formal reporting" in small districts (Table 9, Chapter III) appears to be the present major inhibitor to good communica-
tion among the small districts. This lack can be safely labeled as an inhibitor since most of the respondents in these districts indicated preference for the more formal practices when feasible.

Concerning desirability of practices, 30 practices are held desirable by 50% of all respondents, whereas only 19 are used by 50% of the districts. This discrepancy may indicate at least a latent inhibition to communication in the board-superintendent setting.

Another inhibitor to communication (in the generation of content rather than in the process) is the wide variation concerning the perceived importance of various topics for communication. Respondent groups did not hold topics in the same degree of importance. This factor would serve at the operational level to make communication content less desirable to the receiver whenever there were differences of opinion, and the communication for the communicatee would be inhibited in the direction of or in the degree of perceived undesirability.

Evidence in this study supports the hypothesis that major factors which inhibit superintendent-board communication can be identified. The inhibitors mentioned consisted of: categories of major communication difficulty which were synthesized from the data; recognition that certain specific difficulties were either universal or nearly so (Table 22, Chapter III); low agreement between categories of superintendents and presidents in various sizes of districts concerning what the situational difficulties were; lack of common recognition by respondents
of the place of good communication in the making of effective working relationships; differences between "what ought to be" and "what is" in usage of communication practices; and differences between categories of respondents concerning the importance of various communication topics. The evidence, however, does not preclude the existence of other inhibitors which might best be defined or viewed through a variety of other investigational orientations, as personality analysis, community expectations, and the like.

Hypothesis IV: Practices employed in superintendent-board communication will not take on any pattern of consistency

Certain patterns were apparent in the use of communication practices among the various district size strata. Among the 19 practices used by 50% of all the districts, the use of seventeen practices was related to size of district. These exhibited different patterns for the four strata of district size.

For practices used by less than 50% of the districts, the great majority of practices were not related to any district size category. Many of these practices by and large, tended to be those colorful suggestions appearing in the literature which capture the imagination, such as: board-superintendent retreats; periodic review of the superintendent's work; summarization of informal meetings; board member tours of classrooms with the superintendent, and the like. These have made
few inroads in actual usage. Among the remaining practices which were little used nor favored are included those which theorists in educational administration have viewed as debilitating, if not corrupting to sound administration. These may be found in Table 11, and were largely concerned with between meeting contacts of individual board members and the superintendent. Examples are: Communications are sent to the superintendent through the board clerk; Superintendent between meetings meets individually with each board member; and, Formal communications are sent by board members directly to school staff members.

In the use of practices, larger districts preferred, in total, twice the number of practices used by the smaller districts. The two larger strata districts agreed in the usage of 8 practices; while only 3 were held in common by the small district strata. The practices used to the greatest extent by the larger districts are those definitely of a formal nature. While the large strata districts favored the use of greater numbers of practices, they also favored greater diversity.

The evidence markedly emphasizes the obvious tendency toward agreement of usage concerning communication practices both between the small strata districts and between the large strata districts and challenges the hypothesis of non-consistency.

Another challenge to the hypothesis of non-consistency is contained in the lists of practices in Tables 18 and 19. These lists are of practices 1) held desirable and practiced by a majority of the respondents, and
2) of practices not held desirable and not used. Each list contains 14 such practices, or approximately three-fifths of all practices considered. Such a substantial agreement would indicate a high measure of consistency by respondents in their perceptions of and usage of communication practices.

Based upon the data obtained, this study argues against lack of consistency concerning practice usage. Between and among districts of various size, tendencies and predispositions of a consistent nature are shown toward agreement concerning the use of communication practices and in the patterns of practices used or not used. Thus, the hypothesis of non-consistency cannot be substantiated.

Hypothesis V: The content of formal superintendent-board communication as perceived by superintendents and board members will exhibit a hierarchy of importance and frequency.

Twenty-eight topics were identified by respondents as constituting the content of communication. The responses were arranged into a frequency rank order listing. The percentage of respondents perceiving each topic as important determined the place of the topic in the ranking. A definite hierarchal order was established. The percentage rankings ranged from 14.6 to 97.9. This hierarchy was, itself, subjected to internal analysis. The respondents were divided into four sub-populations defined by position and size of district. The
responses of these four categories concerning the importance of each item were treated statistically to determine whether there were category differences in perceptions. Only four topics, the top four items in the hierarchal listing, showed they were held in equal importance by all sub-groups. These were 1) Budgeting and Financing for current operations, 2) New building planning, financing, and construction, 3) Curriculum development and improvement, and 4) Relations of the school with the community (Public Relations).

Nineteen topics were held important for communication by 50% of all respondents. These are shown in Table 20, Chapter III, and appear in descending order of importance. The concerns of these 19 topics were similar to the four first ranked "importance topics" noted in the above paragraph. No particular concern, e.g. finance, dominated any range or end of the rank-order topic importance list. The topics and the predominant concerns they represented were commingled.

The hypothesis predicting a hierarchy of importance assigned to communication content was substantiated, both for the entire sample and for the sample's sub-populations. The persistent deviations shown in Table 20, Chapter III, for each sub-population emphasized the existence of hierarchies for each group as complex as that seen in the major sample.

When the content of communication was considered in terms of the frequency of mention of topics, a hierarchy was seen to exist among the
topics as definitely as that which appeared for the perceived importance of topics. The average of respondents' perception scores concerning topic frequency provided a rank-order list of topics ranging from 16.7 to 93.8 on a linear percentage scale. Similar hierarchal topic rankings were obtained for each of the four sizes of districts. The Kendall concordance test showed that the different size districts communicated about the same topics with the same general frequency. There were several notable exceptions, however, where topic frequency was in the highest third of the rankings for one size of district, but in the lowest for other districts. These exceptions may be seen in Table 21, and the discussion regarding them may be found in Chapter III.

The topics concerning finance, new construction, curriculum development and improvement were commonly held by all sub-populations grouped by district size in the highest third of rank order frequency; topics concerning supply management and accounting were in the lowest third of rank order frequency for all district size classifications. Other than these agreements concerning rank-order thirds, there were no other topics in which there was a unanimity of frequency perception by the four sample sub-groups. There were, as Table III illustrates, many agreements by three respondent sub-groups in the ranking of topics according to frequency.

In summary, a hierarchy of topic frequencies was shown for the entire group of respondents, as were also hierarchies of topic
frequencies for each of the sub-populations. The sub-populations indicated, through the Kendall test, a high correlation of concordance for the four sub-populations. Therefore, the hypothesis that the content of board-superintendent communication (where content is measured in terms of discrete, defined topics) exhibits a hierarchy of frequency is supported by the evidence in this study.

An attempt to demonstrate definite, joint correlation between perceptions of frequency and importance for each topic of communication, indicated low correlative relationships. The 28 correlations were, with one exception, quite low (below .500) and argued against any very significant relationship. It is interesting to note, therefore, that where respondent group hierarchies were established for topic frequencies and for perceived topic importance, there was no relationship between the ways in which individuals perceived topic importance and topic frequency.

Hypothesis VI: Board presidents and superintendents will agree that effective communication has a direct relationship to satisfactory superintendent-board relations

The hypothesis makes an assumption that both superintendents and board presidents would indicate that communication is highly related to good board-superintendent relations. The correlations obtained (Table 24) do not support the stated hypothesis. Of the two groups,
superintendents and presidents, superintendents indicated a greater recognition of the influence or place of communication in establishing and conditioning the board-superintendent working relationship.

Although the hypothesis sought to test only whether agreement existed between superintendents and presidents, the research showed that respondents from the four sizes of districts varied approximately the same as did the superintendents and presidents. Respondents in district size Strata D_I (smallest) and D_III (next to largest) showed nearly non-existent correlations between "communication" and "importance of communication to the working relationship," while D_II districts (next to smallest) and D_IV districts (largest) showed correlations which approached the .500 correlation required in this study for indication of significance. The non-appearance of any kind of trend or tendency among the districts according to their size as shown by these patternless correlations, further substantiates the existence among respondents of a state of confusion and/or lack of awareness of any relationship between good board-superintendent communication and an effective working relationship.

Hypothesis VII: Superintendents and board presidents will differ upon ways in which board-superintendent communication can be made more effective and satisfying

The assumption of the hypothesis is that superintendents and board presidents differ in their perceptions of ways to make communication
more effective and satisfying. With this in mind, it followed, when considering communication practices, that superintendents from large or small districts would differ in their perceptions with board presidents from either large or small districts. Statistical tests were applied to the responses of categories of superintendents and board presidents concerning their perceptions of the desirability of 47 communication practices. When those practices (31) held desirable by 50% or more of the sample were considered, the number of practices favored by the categories, large and small strata superintendents, large and small strata presidents, were, respectively, 16, 23, 17, and 2. The great majority of the practices favored by one category of superintendents were also favored by a category of board members. This finding concerning those communication practices held to be desirable indicated that categories of superintendents and board presidents seldom differed according to any easily recognizable pattern.

Table 20 presented as varied an overall pattern of communication topic "importance" preferences, as was indicated by the preceding discussion concerning practices. The four topics held important by the largest percentages of respondents in the listing were unrelated statistically to respondent categories, i.e., neither superintendents nor board members from both large and small districts held these topics as being more important than did the other categories. In these cases, it may be stated that agreement existed between all categories
of board presidents and all categories of superintendents. For the remaining 16 topics held important by 50% or more of the sample, 10 topics showed that the perceptions of their importance were related to both a superintendent's and a board president's district size category. Thus, in 14 of 20 topics held important by half or more of the sample, agreement was shown between, at least, one category of superintendents and one category of board presidents.

The difficulties of communication encountered in districts of various size were placed in two rank-order listings, one list for board presidents, and another representing superintendents' perceptions. The rank order correlation for the lists was .678, suggesting a substantial measure of common agreement between the two groups in their perceptions. Analysis of this statistic would indicate that the two respondent groups did not differ to a great extent in perceiving problems, which if eliminated, would improve communication.

From the evidence gathered by this study, it can be assumed that superintendents and board presidents agree significantly in their perceptions of communication practices, content, and difficulties. Ways of making communication more effective and satisfying must be based upon common perceptions. Since common perceptions are indicated between the groups of superintendents and board presidents, as might be reasonably expected, they would tend to view ways of making communication more effective and satisfying similarly. It
seems reasonable, then, to conclude that the hypothesis, "Board presidents and superintendents differ in the ways in which communication can be made more effective," was not substantiated.

**Hypothesis VIII:** The perceptions of superintendents and board presidents will vary significantly

**IX:** Respondents' perceptions will vary significantly with the size of the school system

Reference to tables in Chapter III will demonstrate that for the great majority of the items concerning use of communication practices, desirability of communication practices, content topic importance, and difficulties of communication, statistical differences were shown in which one or more categories of superintendents or board presidents significantly favored an item. The categories were formed by grouping superintendents and board presidents according to school district size. This evidence can be said to support the hypotheses if the hypotheses are interpreted to simply ask for proof of variation.

Should the hypothesis, however, be interpreted as testing whether variation exists between superintendents and between board presidents in their perceptions, a different problem is posed. The statistical treatment of the data showed that respondents, when classified according to their position and size of district, frequently agreed with each other in their perceptions. Thus, for example, superintendents from small districts may have agreed with board presidents from large districts.
concerning an item, but both varied with the perception of board presidents in small districts in respect to the same item. Because of the prevalence of these kinds of relationships among size categories of superintendents and board presidents, it is possible to argue that perceptions of categories of superintendents and board presidents agree. The most noticeable pattern of variation was between board presidents from small districts on one hand and all other categories. Superintendents, however, from large and small districts were frequently in agreement with board presidents from large districts concerning questionnaire items.

For the purposes of this study, the hypothesis of significant variation will be interpreted to mean that the perceptions of all constituent categories of superintendents vary with the perceptions of all constituent categories of board presidents. By this definition the hypothesis was not substantiated.

The second part of the hypothesis argued that perceptions will vary with size of the district. Perceptions appeared generally to be related to district size more than to the respondents' positions. As was noted, presidents from large districts agreed more with the professional educators than with their counterparts in small districts. A tendency was evident in which superintendents from the small districts agreed with the presidents in these districts more than did the other categories.

The only direct challenge to the hypothesis that perceptions are
dependent upon size of district, came from the concordance correlation concerning the frequency of communication about topics. The correlation showed that the four district size categories tended to agree among themselves in the frequency with which topics are communicated. This, however, appeared to be the only serious exception to the hypothesis of variance. All evidence considered, the finding of the study was that respondents' perceptions, in general, do vary significantly with the size of the school system.

Hypothesis X: A model or models of board-superintendent communication practices will appear from an analysis of superintendent-board communication.

Several models of communication practices appeared from data analysis. One example may be found in Chapter III. Here, Table 18 presents a listing by the study's respondents of 14 communication practices both currently used and held desirable by a majority of the respondents. This listing may appropriately be described as an "ideal" group of practices. A companion list, Table 19, recorded 14 practices both held undesirable and not used by the study respondents and represents a negative "ideal."

Tables 6 through 11 presented those practices actually used and whose use was related to the size of the district. Following the actual practices, Tables 12 through 17 offered practices held desirable by the four respondent categories.
From inspection of these tables, it was possible to extract those practices which are definitely favored by any category—a category of superintendents or presidents; or a category of respondents differentiated by district size—and to present a model of communication for a given category. Components of models of both existing communication practices and those practices perceived to be desirable will be discussed in the following section.

Based on the evidence at hand, it can be concluded that models of communication practices did appear in the analysis of superintendent-board communication. The original hypothesis, thus, found support through analysis of the data and was substantiated.

Although the hypothesis was concerned only with practices, several other "models" in communication warrant mention. These will be noted briefly.

A paradigm of communication was postulated in Chapter I (shown in Figure 1) as a model of the communication process. Nothing was found as a result of this study which would refute the process model proposed in the paradigm.

Topics defining the nature of communication content developed as a result of the study also can be offered as a content model. Certain difficulties and inhibitors in communication found common to districts of all size should be considered as nucleus of models concerning the problems in board-superintendent communication.
Summary of Major Findings and Conclusions

Specific data on the findings concerning the hundreds of items of communication practices, topics of communication, and communication difficulties were reported in Chapter III. This section presents from these data those findings which appeared to indicate definite tendencies or trends, and upon which tentative conclusions may be drawn with a measurable degree of confidence and assurance.

Substantiation of hypotheses

Within the limits of this investigation and in full recognition of the limitations, errors, interpretations, size of sample, and other frailties of the research design, the findings heretofore presented appeared to substantiate the following hypotheses:

1. A listing of communication difficulties between the superintendent and his board can be established and verified.

2. Difficulties will be subject to classification by categories and elements of the communication process.

3. Major factors can be identified that are perceived to inhibit board-superintendent communication.
4. The content of formal board-superintendent communication as perceived by superintendents and board members will exhibit a hierarchy of importance and frequency.

5. Respondents' perceptions will vary significantly with the size of the school system.

6. A model or models of board-superintendent communication practices will appear from an analysis of superintendent-board communication.

Similarly, the following hypotheses seemed not to be substantiated by the evidence in this investigation:

1. Practices employed in superintendent-board communication will not take on any pattern of consistency.

2. Board presidents and superintendents will agree that effective communication has a direct relationship to satisfactory superintendent-board working relationships.

3. Superintendents and board presidents will differ upon ways in which board-superintendent communication can be made more effective and satisfying.

4. The perceptions of superintendents and board presidents will vary significantly.

Communication practices

The findings related to communication practices included those concerned with both actual practices and those practices perceived as desirable by respondent groups. No order of importance is attached to this listing.
1. The number of different communication practices used by over fifty percent of all districts is relatively few in number (15). Only five practices are used by three-fourths of all districts. These are: 1) Use of a written agenda before meetings; 2) Use of "work meetings" or "study sessions"; 3) Oral report at the board meeting given by the superintendent; 4) Periodic message to the board by the superintendent outlining his future plans; and 5) Use of the phone by the superintendent between meetings to discuss school business with the president. The large group (32) of practices used by only one-half or fewer of all districts are, in general, not related to or preferred by any given district size category.

2. The large districts included in the study indicated in usage definite preference for double the number of communication practices used by small districts.

3. A general agreement on actual usage of practices was evidenced between both small and large districts.

4. As to media for reporting, formal, written reports were used substantially more by the large school districts than by small districts. Although oral reporting was the most common practice used among all sizes of districts, it was more favored by the small districts. Superintendents in all categories preferred a far greater number of formal reporting practices than did board presidents in both large and small districts. Not only in actual use, but in perceived desirability, respondents from large districts held formal routine reporting practices as more desirable than did respondents from small districts. However, respondents from small districts expressed a desire to utilize more formal reporting practices than are now being used.
5. Large districts tended to utilize more communication practices which prepare for and follow-up formal board meetings.

6. Study sessions and work meetings were used by all districts, but to a somewhat greater degree in the large districts. Few other practices were used which apply to special meetings.

7. Relatively little social visitation takes place among boards and superintendents. What informal socialization was detected appeared mainly to exist in small district situations. The majority of respondents, however, desired more group social activities.

8. Superintendents from all categories indicated a general preference for practices which would bring the board into contact with the day-to-day, ongoing operation of the central office and schools. Superintendents and board presidents in large districts showed greater preference than their counterparts in small districts for tours and visitation in the schools, and for slides and pictures which show ongoing school activity. In actual practice, small districts indicated that board members are brought into first hand association with the schools mainly through extra-curricular activities; a fact that was not as apparent in large districts.

9. All categories of sample superintendents and board presidents indicated a desire for periodic evaluation of the superintendent's work.

10. The majority of all respondents believed that the chief administrator should send publications and clippings to the board with the object of educating and informing.
11. Respondents from all categories unanimously accepted as desirable a periodic presentation by the superintendent of a formal plan which outlined his future activities.

12. Superintendents from both large and small districts indicated a preference for reporting practices which bring staff members or outside experts face-to-face with board members.

13. The telephone was the most frequently used means of communication between board members and superintendents in the interim between meetings for all classes of districts. Few formal written practices were employed. The majority of respondents believed that it was desirable to use "non-routine" practices only as important needs arose.

14. Those communication practices viewed by educational theorists as weakening or undermining the superintendent in his administrative relationships with the staff were neither used nor held as desirable by any of the categories of superintendent and board presidents. One example of such a practice: Board members should communicate instructions directly to school employees.

15. Superintendents and board members in the sample indicated a strong desire for the increased use of most practices used in communication.

16. From the evidence concerning perceived desirability of practices, few definite patterns of preference appeared for the various respondent categories. Each respondent category expressed preference for a variety of different types of practices, e.g., written and oral reports, personal inspection, use
of between-meeting methods of communication, etc. No one category desired only one type of communication, but desired employment of various methods.

17. Strong agreement was evidenced between all superintendents and between superintendents of large districts and their board presidents concerning communication practices believed to be desirable. The extent of the agreements between these groups was substantially the strongest of any other respondent group agreements.

18. Presidents in the smallest of the district strata studied deviated greater than the other categories of respondents in their perceptions of desirable practices by appearing to have fewer strong opinions about the desirability of any specific communication practices.

19. General satisfaction of the majority of sample respondents in their individual usage, or non-usage, of communication practices was indicated. A majority of all respondents indicated that they either a) used and also held desirable or b) did not use and also held undesirable 96% of all practices discussed. This implication of satisfaction was further reinforced by a positive correlation of .779 between respondents' usage of practices and respondents' perceived desirability of the practices.

**Communication content**

The major findings concerning content in board-superintendent communication were extracted from the data concerning topic
importance and use frequency. As with the previous presentation concerning practices of communication, the findings are not in any order of rank. The major findings were:

1. Curriculum and instructional concerns were regarded by superintendents and board members from both large and small districts as belonging among the first ranks of communication topic importance. Public relations was also recognized universally as a topic of first rank importance. A different rank order of topic importance was indicated for each of the sub-populations for the remaining topics in the list.

2. Generally, board presidents from small districts differed from all other respondent categories in tending to view as important all the topics which were regarded by less than half the entire sample as being important. These topics were frequently concerned with the managerial aspects of administration, e.g., accounting, supply management, food and bus service, purchasing, employee complaints, and management and use of facilities.

3. Small district superintendents and board presidents held as important more than other groups those topics concerning the activities of and personal information about administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

4. Superintendents from large districts showed their perceptions of topic importance to be, item by item, less subject to strong emphases as compared with superintendents from small districts and with all categories of board members. Of the 28 topics in the listing, only three were related to the category: Superintendents, large districts--thus signifying a strong belief by the category in the importance of the three topics.
For the remaining 25 topics, no categorical relationship was shown. In contrast, board members from small districts as a category were statistically related to 18 topics; and superintendents from small districts held important 12 topics, as did board presidents from large districts.

5. Generally board presidents from the spectrum of district size categories held more topics to be important than did superintendents. Numerous individual exceptions, however, were noted.

6. Modest positive agreement appeared among all four district size strata in the ranking of topics in the order of frequency with which communication about them takes place. The ranking by frequency of topics, thus, appears to depend upon factors held in common by the four school district size strata. Stronger agreement was seen between the two small size strata than for the entire group. This greater agreement, also, held true between the two larger strata than for the entire group.

7. Financial, business, and new construction topics were the subjects most frequently communicated in all sizes of districts. Discussion about curriculum, classroom work, instructional materials, public relations, and books was found more frequently in the large districts than in the small districts of the study.

8. Small districts indicated the highest degree of frequency, and large districts the lowest degree frequency for the following topics: a) non-teaching staff members; and b) public complaints and grievances.
9. Little agreement or consistency was found to exist between all respondents' perceptions of communication topic importance, and their perceptions of actual frequency of topic communication. Lack of consistency, thus, indicated a measure of confusion among respondents. Those who had frequent communication concerning a topic, for example, did not agree as to the relative importance of the topic.

Communication difficulties

Perhaps the most important result of the research in the area denoted as "communication difficulties" was in the isolation, identification, and itemization of difficulties through the pilot study, and in the verification of their existence through the interviews conducted with the randomly selected sample. Reference should be made to pages 60-67 of the text for these items. A general summary of the findings concerning difficulties is offered below.

1. Superintendents from large districts and superintendents from small districts agreed one-half of the time in their perceptions of common communication difficulties existing in their districts. The agreement between these categories was the greatest between any of the respondent categories. Superintendents and board members from the large districts held one-third of their perceived difficulties in common. Superintendents and board presidents from small districts agreed with each other concerning difficulties only one-fourth of the time, as did board presidents from large and small districts. Thus, categories of superintendents, because of their position or because of common training,
perceived the greatest number of identical communication difficulties. Board presidents in small districts and their superintendents saw the fewest common difficulties indicating the probability that small communities have different expectations for administrator-board working relationships.

2. Many difficulties were seen only by certain categories of districts. Board presidents from small districts in half of their difficulty perceptions were the only respondents recognizing the difficulties. This also was true of superintendents from large districts. The implications, here, were that for situational or personal reasons these categories of respondents were "different." The great majority of difficulties perceived by board presidents from large districts, and the great majority of difficulties perceived by superintendents in small districts were viewed in concert with at least one other superintendent or board president category.

3. Superintendents' and board presidents' perceptions of the frequencies with which the 89 communication difficulties which were included in the survey instrument existed, were positively correlated. The significant correlation of .678 was found to exist between the superintendents and presidents in the rank-order with which they perceived the difficulties to have being in school district communication.

4. Communication difficulties were found to be subject to classification, and these classifications encompassed difficulties in a quantitative rank-order. The major classifications are shown in the following rank order list:
a) Absence or lack of communication  
b) Blocked reception  
c) Poor presentation  
d) Unsatisfactory impact of communication upon the communicatee  
e) Poor preparation  
f) Misunderstanding  
g) Distorted or inaccurate communication  
h) Lack of feedback  
i) Inadequacy of communication

Eighty percent of the difficulties held to be "serious" by a majority of the respondents in the sub-populations fell under the first four categories, a, b, c, and d, above. The category with the highest frequency of difficulties, "Absence or lack of communication," was not capable of incorporation in the communication process paradigm originally postulated (Figure 1).

Relationship of communication to the board-superintendent working relationship

Sample respondents, particularly board presidents, did not appear overtly to recognize the importance or influence of communication in establishing and in conditioning the board-superintendent working relationship. On the other hand, superintendents' responses showed a correlation of near significance (r of .473) for the two variables; while board presidents exhibited an extreme lack (r of .014) of recognition of a relationship. Certainly this implies that board presidents are seemingly much less conscious of the relation of communication to the board-superintendent relationship than are administrators. Reasons for this are speculatory at best, but it could be that superintendents by training in the theory of educational administration are able to recognize
the importance of communication and effective working relationships. Another possible reason is that superintendents through their education and experience in working with curriculum are given to divide activities or fields of knowledge into their components, and to look for relationships among these components. From the lay board member's position, the average member may simply be exhibiting a limited view of his role. The board, he reasons, is legally elected to be "in charge"--any further distinction or role definition is unnecessary, and, perhaps, unwarranted. The superintendent is "employed" to do the board's work, so this reasoning may go, and it is not necessary for the board to consider or look for ways of fostering relationships between the board and superintendent; however, the superintendent is quite naturally expected to keep the board completely informed.

The two smallest district size categories differed approximately the same as did the superintendents and presidents in their perceptions of any existing relationships. The two largest district size categories showed a similar variance. Therefore, it can be assumed that the same lack of recognition of the importance of communication in fostering good board-superintendent working relationship exists in both large and small school systems.
Implications and Recommendations

In the background for this study, discussed in Chapter I, the need for more knowledge about communication as it relates to board of education-superintendent relations was described in some detail. Although this investigation is but a small beginning of a perceptual analysis of some facts of communication consensus, as seen by a small sampling of administration and board members, some of the findings may have significant implications worthy of mention.

The revelations of the study have certain possible broad implications for the profession of education, for superintendents and board members, and for the institutions and associations providing pre-service and in-service education for prospective administrators and board members. While study revealed information about many specific findings, only the findings which appeared to be most meaningful for the profession have been selected to be drawn upon for implications.

Several findings concerned communication practices currently used by boards and their administrators. First, communication practices in common usage were found to be relatively few in number. Secondly, they were the ones which avoided the appearance of complexity. Thirdly, these practices were generally favored by those using them. Several implications of these findings are evident. One implication is that the
goal of simplicity in communication efforts is self deceiving. Busy administrators and board members strive for--often insist upon--the use of the simplest approaches possible to communication, when the problems about which the communication takes place are complex. Sophisticated as well as simple communication efforts may be required to convey adequately the nuances and intricacies offered by the problems if sound solutions are to be found.

A second implication of the above noted findings is that more time may need to be consciously set aside for devotion to the use of communication techniques. Time for communicating is understandably minimal for busy administrators and board members. For a number of years, the largest districts have had departments of information, thus relieving the superintendent of some burden in the communication process. Boards in smaller districts may need to consider similar help for their superintendents so that other than the simplest processes of communication are employed. For this goal to be realized, there will need to be a recognition by both board members and administrators of the importance of communication in fostering effective working relationships between the board and the superintendent. As long as boards and superintendents do not relate the importance of good communication to good board-administrator relationships, and the consequent impact of effective working relationships upon the school organization and program, there can be little likelihood of
concerted interest in or attention to the communication phenomenon and its improvement. In the absence of such awareness, introduction of new communication practices in the superintendent-board setting will be largely for superficial reasons.

The use of only a few practices among the districts reaffirms the adage that people apparently do or use that which is familiar to them, obtaining a measure of security from the use of practices which have been established as customary. For this reason, should it be found impossible to extend the use of other practices in communication, the recommendation is made that it would be fruitful to emphasize the best usage of practices currently accepted by boards and administrators. Such a task patently represents an assignment capable of realization within the province of the professional graduate schools and professional improvement associations as well as the school boards' associations.

Oral reporting, while found to be the most common communication medium was the most neglected of all the media. The universality of the telephone and the ease with which modern transportation can bring people together have given methods of oral reporting first rank importance. Will (does) oral reporting supplant the need for written reporting, or does increased oral reporting whet the appetite of board members for more formal reporting in addition to their personal contacts with the superintendent and staff? Such questions cannot be answered without further study. Any search for the elusive Golden Mean between oral
and written reporting obviously imposes on the administrator a necessity to be alert to the inclinations of his board and to the data to be presented. One definite recommendation may be made, however: attention should be given to enhancing oral communication by making such communicating a structured, meaningful, and effective vehicle for conveyance of information and ideas. No teacher education program should be devoid of a course in effective oral communication; no administrator preparation program should default by not preparing its students to meet as administrators the requirements of effective oral communication.

The research showed that written reports were preferred more by superintendents than by presidents, and boards in large districts used and preferred written reporting more than those in small districts. Undoubtedly, it is true that the superintendents' preference for written reporting is due to the nature of their training and their profession in the emphasis upon the written word; the professional educator should always be aware that even if he is "not guilty" he will be suspected by boards and the public of placing undue importance upon verbal symbolism. For written reporting to be effective, cognizance must be taken of the fact that many board members have neither the time nor the disposition to read lengthy reports. The superintendent can easily be deluded that he is doing an excellent job of communicating to his board by transmittal of frequent and protracted reports; whereas,
in actuality, the material is little read. Indeed, the receipt of overlong reports might lull a board member into complacency, erroneously believing that he is well informed even though he seldom reads the reports or reads them thoroughly. At the same time, when such reports are read, there is the inherent danger that the "too regular" written report because it has been routinized will have little resulting impact. A recommendation to superintendents is that timing and timeliness of information, coupled with quality in presentation, far outweigh quantity or sheer volume in written reporting. The chief strength of the written report is that, if well done, misunderstanding is not as apt to occur as with oral reporting, and a permanent record of the information communicated is established for future referral.

An interesting finding concerned the fact that presidents in large districts preferred written reports more than those presidents in small districts. An implication of this may be either that large district board members may be more sophisticated in large enterprise management, thus reflecting their personal occupational backgrounds and their educational levels. Implied, also, is that the sheer complexity of the larger district and of the school management in these districts requires more formal reports in the medium of writing. The role played by board members in larger districts may tend to be of a more formal nature. Newspaper interviews, proposals from pressure groups, and other inquiries would usually concern issues which merit formal answers
best obtained (or only capable of being obtained) through referral to documents and reference materials.

Large districts also were found to use more written reports than did small districts. One question which would be interesting to pursue would be whether the greater numbers of practices used by the larger districts as compared with the smaller districts is due to availability of personnel for "grinding out" reports, or whether the board members and chief administrators in the larger districts actually recognize that there are factors which stimulate production of reports. It may be that the superintendents who are in the leadership positions in the larger districts are the more sophisticated and, hence, see a need to use more formal (written) practices of communication. Further, the process may be compounding: as superintendents use more written reports, the board members come to expect their usage. In small districts administrators physically come in contact frequently with their boards, and administrators in these districts may be led to the erroneous conclusion that written reporting can be limited or is even unnecessary. The fact was that more written reports were desired by small district boards than they were currently receiving. It is somewhat reasonable to conclude that formal reports would not be needed in small districts to the same extent as they are required in large districts because of physical proximity of members to the school plant and, indeed, to the school program. The danger in this line of thinking,
however, is that it can easily be carried to an extreme. A superintendent who does not report to the board in formal fashion, believing that the board because it is visible is informed, may be consigning his board members the initiative in securing information about the school's operation. Secure information or misinformation they certainly will, and from any and all convenient sources.

An inescapable recommendation of this study would be that superintendents, especially those in small districts, devote time in board study session(s) to discussion of the reporting--both the extent and content--which should be carried on. The clearcut goals of the reporting process and their corresponding value to school leadership must be carefully formulated by the superintendent and justified to his board. An important by-product is seen to accrue when formal attention is given reporting. As the study data was gathered, the impression was noted that while pat role definitions were readily advanced by respondents--policy making for the board, implementation for the superintendents--there was, in actual practice, a gray area of uncertainty concerning many specific responsibilities. By discussing the "who, what, where, why, when, and how" involved in board-superintendent reporting, the roles of the superintendent and the board would be more definitively established, pointing up the executive functions which are delegated to the superintendent and the policy making role of the board of education.
The desire for formality in reporting extends, also, to the need for more formality in connection with meetings—in preparation and in follow-up. The most commonly expressed difficulty in communicating concerned the interruptions during meetings caused by inability to proceed in a businesslike manner with the formal agenda. Implied in this difficulty is lack of skill by the chair in deftly returning to the business at hand. New presidents, it is recommended, should be given, through regional or state school boards associations, training in the expectations held of the presiding officer. A fruitful companion effort might be made by these associations in orienting all board members, especially newly elected members, to the proper process and order in which business should be considered in a meeting.

Disrupting to even the most smoothly run meeting is the "surprise" communication. The finger of guilt seemed to point toward superintendents concerning this difficulty. Board members expressed genuine dissatisfaction at having major proposals offered them for which no prior facts had been presented, and upon which immediate action by the board was required. A probable cause of such difficulty is that superintendents face many problems daily. The superintendent and his staff become intimate with the problems and their details, watching them grow or recede. As the necessity arises to recommend action to the board when a problem becomes major, the false assumption is made that everyone must know about the situation since it has been common-
place concern for so long. Thus, board members become understandably annoyed when, in hearing about a problem for the first time, (and only when the major proportions stage has been reached), they are asked quickly to make important judgments. Avoidance of such a situation requires recognition by superintendents that all problems are potentially important. Comprehensive regular reporting becomes an essential to good administration. Those problems which are suspected as requiring future board action should be pointed out to the board and a continuing informational background should be provided.

The informal board meeting--conference meeting, committee of the whole--more strictly known as the study session or the work meeting, has become apparently a necessity and is used almost universally as a means of communication. Board members and administrators claim that such meetings have become necessary in order to think through problems and to formulate bases for action without being quoted or subject to the pressures of action at a formal board meeting. Few ground rules are evident in connection with this practice in board-administrator communication, except the fact that these are informal in nature, and no legal action may be taken. There are implications here that a formalized set of ground rules is both justifiable and desirable. Questions arise, as: when are such meetings called? Who calls them? Are they organized? What should
be the nature of the ground rules? No simple set of answers can be offered, since many situational variables are involved. It is recommended, however, that no inhibition be made which would impair the freedom for the meetings to be truly informal. Rules should be simply of the nature of understandings designed to avert possible internal and external criticism of the meetings' purposes and should serve to expedite and enhance whatever work is undertaken in a given session.

The study revealed that social visitations and relationships between the board and its superintendent existed less than might be expected. While this lack was more evident among the larger districts, superintendents and board members in all districts saw value to the more formalized kinds of socialization, but involving all members of the school leadership team. The personal, intimate type of socialization was not favored and was seen to contain seeds of danger. The superintendent who becomes too familiar with a board member offers opportunity for the suspicion to arise on the part of other members that they are excluded from the councils of administration, or to afford grounds for a cry of "politics," "the board president's man," "rump sessions" and the like from public critics. However, the study results implied that there was a desire of the board members and their superintendents to know each other better, but avoiding intimacy as noted above. The implication was that this close contact can lubricate the working relationship between and among members of the school
district's leadership team. A wise superintendent realizes that board members will overlook many major blunders if they know, understand and "like" him as an individual; contrariwise, board members who have had only a cold, formalized relationship with their superintendent, not appreciating him as a complete human being, will find it infinitely easier to be critical or to be suspicious of even the most minor error or rumor. The recommendation is made that superintendents, wherever feasible, bring the board, and, occasionally, their spouses, together in a social setting.

Superintendents evidenced that in the past they have been unable to communicate to board members a complete picture of ongoing operation through use of only the spoken or written word. Superintendents from both large and small districts indicated that their board members needed to tour schools--to see the school program in operation--in order fully to experience and to appreciate the complexity and magnitude of the tasks undertaken by the district. Several implications or questions may be drawn from this finding: superintendents as a group recognize the limitations of language as a means of communication; superintendents are simply not competent reporters, and first hand observation is necessitated; board members do not read, comprehend, or assimilate that which is given them in the way of information by the superintendent and/or his staff; and superintendents have a basic belief that the place of the board member is to be frequently
in the schools. The corollary finding was that board presidents saw
less need than their superintendents to visit buildings or to view the
program in operation. In small districts this can be attributed to the
following reasons: board members have always lived in the district
and feel close to the schools, and, thus, believe they "know" their
schools; board members may exhibit unwitting snobbism—they may
have served on the board longer than the superintendent has held office
and do not believe that he could really "show" them anything new;
board members "obtain all the information needed" from 'the kids'
or 'the town"; and the board members believe that by visiting the
school's extra-curricular activities (often only athletic) they are
keeping their fingers on the pulse of the system. These reasons, as
well as many others, may serve to delude the small district board
into believing they obtain information which provides an accurate or
adequate view of the total school system. When this is true, the
superintendent faces a formidable barrier should he wish to carry out
his desire to communicate to his board through tours and visitations.
The superintendent in the large districts faces still another obstacle.
The sheer size of the educational enterprise places practical limitations
upon the visitation which physically can be accomplished by board
members, and serves as a primary inhibiting factor to this type of
board-superintendent communication.
One recommendation may be seen to accrue from the above discussion. Superintendents, aware that they place a somewhat different value or emphasis upon non-verbal communication, must seek with their board a common delineation of the visitation activities which will provide the most meaningful insights into the school and its program. Purposes of such visitation need definition. Priorities in school contact need to be established if optimum good is to be achieved with the least expenditure of time and effort by board members.

An inconsistency is resident in the cry of superintendents that there has been in recent years deplorable increase of board member interference in direct administration; yet, these superintendents professed a desire for more board contact with direct operation. The problem obviously calls for the most astute kind of professional leadership by superintendents if the two factors are to be reconciled. Fortunately, superintendents may take a considerable measure of comfort in the responses of presidents which, in general, did not condone communication practices perceived to weaken or undermine the superintendent's authority with his staff.

Congruent with their belief that information should be obtained through direct observation of the school program in operation was the assertion of superintendents that outside experts conducting studies for the school system should report to board members. It is interesting to speculate about the origins of this position—-that it is engendered by:
1) the inability of the superintendents to report accurately the findings of experts; 2) the hesitancy of the boards to accept from their superintendents information as readily as they do from an "outsider"; 3) a penchant of superintendents to avoid responsibility; or 4) a desire of board members to be more intimately involved in administration.

All of these factors are encountered frequently enough in practice that they provide implications beyond this specific situation in which they were engendered. It is recommended that superintendents and boards apply these speculations as a measuring instrument in their own districts. The insights gained reflect directly upon the quality of their own basic working relationships, and a point of beginning is plotted from which improvement in these relationships may proceed.

Boards want to be educated. The evidence suggested strongly that boards desire superintendents to supply pertinent publications and clippings which shed light upon problems with which they may be wrestling. This practice, followed judiciously, and intelligently, can be an excellent opportunity for the superintendent to provide himself with a more knowledgeable board. The implication may be drawn that boards do not now currently believe themselves completely competent. Granting this, it may then be charged that the organizations with responsibility for board training and improvement are not fulfilling or succeeding in their assignment. School boards associations may need to reevaluate the methods currently in use for board member
orientation. More importantly, they may need to seek for new ways of assisting busy superintendents in the continuing education of their boards.

Board members would understandably be resentful of approaches which suggest that the profession has the only "correct" answers. Any program of instruction, if it is to be telling, will make provision for reciprocity in idea exchange. Superintendents need to do more than hear new ideas about curriculum or new approaches to persistent problems as expressed by board members--superintendents must truly listen to new ideas (although these may violate a party line) without enshrouding themselves in an air of professional superciliousness or resentment.

From the evidence of the study, superintendents should be aware that boards desired opportunities to sit in conference with their executive and to be supplied with an outline of future plans and activities. Further, boards (and superintendents) embraced the idea that the superintendent's work should be periodically evaluated in a formal manner. The aforementioned practices if implemented hold a promise that "explosions," or "crises" can be avoided. Obviously, it is difficult because of natural reluctance for a direct confrontation, lack of time, lack of opportunity, etc., for a board member to criticize an action of the superintendent, unless it be a difference of major proportion. Human as he is (and will continue to be), the average
board member will wait until a new contract is to be negotiated before expressing himself. Too often the superintendent is the last to know when dissatisfaction with his work is felt. Worse, he might be led to insecurity by certain actions of his board, when no criticism of his work was intended. By establishing a climate and making it possible for periodic, personal evaluation to take place, the superintendent can significantly strengthen his working relationship with his board and can assure a more harmonious future for himself and the educational program. A recommendation of this report is that the superintendent deliberately hold a meeting at least yearly in which evaluation of his activities is made. At the same time it would be most appropriate if the superintendent were to look into the future, discussing and outlining in a formal "State of the Union" paper (or in less structured fashion) major plans and activities of the administration. While some plans may be blocked initially, wasted effort is saved. If the conference is a two-way street, suggestions and ideas will undoubtedly accrue which will enhance the original ideas.

A strong measure of agreement was found to exist between professional administrators from the different district size groups studied concerning practices held desirable in board communication. A possible implication is that the professional undergraduate and graduate schools are producing quite similar educational products. Whether the like-mindedness is a result of training, job requirements,
or habit and custom is not ascertainable from the data at hand. It would be interesting to determine, not only the origin of this symptom of similarity in thinking, but whether similarity is, in fact, desirable. Specifically, are the same communication practices necessary or desirable in districts of different size? The problem is recommended as a vital one which should be researched by those engaged in formulating preparation programs for educational leaders. A more practical, compellingly urgent problem is what should be done when there is no commonality of thinking between the administrator and his board in the use of certain practices. It would be naive to believe that a new superintendent can communicate as he will, employing varied practices, using several or all of these unlimitedly and uninhibitedly, and fly in the face of tradition. Such a procedure can actually develop a vague sense of resentment and dissatisfaction among the board. For documentation, reference is made to a condition interpreted to border upon smugness evident among the study respondents concerning practices in current usage: a majority of respondents believed, for 96% of all practices discussed, that each practice used was either 1) used and held desirable, or, 2) not used and also undesirable. Failure of a superintendent to take into account this measure of placid self-satisfaction seen to exist among half or more of sample superintendents and board members is to court rebuff unless groundwork is carefully prepared. A procedural recommendation is offered that whenever
changes are made in a district's practices, they must be brought about cautiously, with a defensible, practical purpose held in open view.

The opinion often expressed that boards and superintendents are not, as a rule, given to regard other than finance and physical plant topics as important must be discounted by the findings of the study. Curriculum and instructional concerns and public relations topics were held in nearly equal importance to the first ranked plant and finance topics as concerns of interest to board members. The direct implication of this finding is that superintendents need to make certain that information to board members on curricular and instructional matters is offered with the same regularity, completeness, and care as is given financial, plant, or equipment subjects. The challenge of this implication, however, is to assure that in areas of curriculum and instruction, board members are kept properly informed without leading them to make professional decisions and judgments. The findings of this study did indicate that for different district size groups, there was no common hierarchy of topic importance after the five first ranked topics mentioned above. No generalization can be offered, therefore, concerning the importance superintendents in all classes of districts should place on topics. The impossibility of generalization is further validated when it is considered that there are "seasons" or emergencies when one topic will predominate to the exclusion of others. Further,
each member of a board varies at least in degree concerning the personal emphasis he puts upon given topics.

Although there was no common hierarchy of topic importance among the size categories, size of a district does contribute to different general administrative interests and concerns. Less emphasis was placed upon personal information about staff members in the larger districts; and superintendents in the large districts appeared to take a more sophisticated view of topics--an approach best described as "relaxed"--in not evidencing either the strong likes or dislikes exhibited by superintendents in small districts (and all categories of board members). These differences imply that the content of communication generated by the chief executives in the larger districts can be expected to be somewhat different from that in the small districts. Indeed, since administration may be described as the practical implementation of what people believe to be and what they hold to be important, these perceptual differences may breed distinct indigenous administrative approaches. Such an hypothesis would appear worthy of testing. Two other research studies are recommended which would further illuminate the area of communication topic importance: 1)what is the emphasis placed upon topics by various groups of board members classified according to experience, education, and pre-service orientation--do these factors influence conceptions;
and, 2) what are the causes for board presidents from small districts viewing the importance of topics "differently" from the other categories of respondents, holding important many individual topics which were disregarded by other respondents (as shown in the data)?

In the preceding two paragraphs topic importance in communication has been discussed. The conservative recommendation in view of the several findings which were considered is that: a) superintendents should communicate about topics concerned with program as well as about physical plant and business topics; and b) communication must be comprehensive and frequent if the diversity represented by situational and personal variables determining topic importance is to be satisfied.

Although perceptions of topic importance held curriculum concerns co-equal with business, plant, and finance subjects in the top hierarchal ranks, the frequency with which topics are discussed presented a different picture. This picture showed finance, new construction, and business topics as occupying the first ranks in communication frequency. A modest degree of positive correlation was found among the various sizes of districts concerning topic frequency. These facts can argue that the claims of the moment take precedence over desire. The picture's darker hues, however, may lend substance to the much bandied argument that people do, in the long run, what they "want" to do, rather than what they state they "should" be doing. Boards
and/or superintendents may be guilty of setting the level of their dialogues by discussing only those areas with which they are most comfortable and familiar. The task of the profession would appear to be the seeking of a reconciliation between stated perceptions of topic importance (gratifyingly correct, professionally viewed) and their current frequency of communication. This, of course, sensibly can be desired only in broad, general terms since frequency rank-order lists should never be mistaken as measures of quality in communication. Topics obviously can be discussed with great frequency but with little real understanding reached; topics may be discussed frequently, but with little conveyed upon each occasion. In comparison, a single report in depth, well done at the appropriate season, may be sufficient to satisfy the board of education for an ensuing school year.

The recommendation which arises from the findings concerning frequency of communication about the topics of board-superintendent communication is that superintendents and boards should consciously evaluate the motives which determine topic frequency by applying the following question: Is the frequency of topic discussion in the district a product of intelligent planning and necessity, or is it based upon habit, caprice, design, or personal desire? By communicating with proper frequency about topics arranged in their hierarchal importance, the school district's executive and legislative bodies can be provided perspective in their intention to serve the local educational system with incisiveness and distinction.
From the point of view of the professional educator several encouraging trends became evident among the larger districts as compared with the study's small districts. Here were found: more concern with curricula; more interest in instruction and the materials of instruction; less attention to the minutia of administration; and less interest in staff personalities. It may be hypothesized that these are the resultant fruits of better prepared administrators and board members. Viewed less optimistically, these trends may represent only an inevitable by-product of larger, more complex social and school settings--i.e., as districts have become large through growth and through consolidation, the trends noted are simply some of the unearned, unexpected, but not unwelcome dividends for better administration, and, ultimately, for better education. Whatever the reasons, the evidence is sufficient to urge for differentiation in communication topic emphases among various size school systems. The small district cannot stand in its communication as a microcosm of the large district, nor can the superintendent elevated to large district responsibilities safely impose an enlarged carbon of his last district's communication interests. Differences do exist, and cognizance must be taken of these differences by administrators, board
members, professors, and organizations interested in either preparing for or improving public school administration.

The adage, "no news is good news," may not hold true in board-superintendent communication. When the difficulties in communication were classified, "Absence of Communication" ranked above all other classifications in the numbers of difficulties it incorporated. "Absence," of itself, may be only a symptom of communication difficulty. It may indicate the personal dispute of a board member with the superintendent concerning what should appropriately be communicated; it may be an indication of "breakdown" in the channels or media of communication. Or it may be a straightforward acknowledgement of non-communication. And a fourth implication growing out of "Absence" may indicate that too much of what is considered to be communication is taken for granted, when actually there is no communication.

The finding again underscores the need of superintendents, especially, to initiate evaluation in their own situations as to whether complete coverage is being given all major topic areas with reasonable frequency, or whether there are failures and blocks in the process of communication. Since even the words "complete" and "reasonable" as used in the preceding sentence are capable of various interpretations, attempts at their definition may serve as the beginning point for a conscious team effort in establishing agreements concerning appropriate communication for a given setting, or in repairing a strained
working relationship. The recommendation is made that superintendents and board members begin any study of their communication by considering the difficulty category, "Absence of Communication," and all the direct and tangential implications it suggests.

Four difficulty classifications—Absence of Communication, Poor Presentation, Blocked Reception, and Unsatisfactory Impact of Communication—accounted for approximately four-fifths of all difficulties seen to exist by the respondents. The first of these, Absence of Communication, has been discussed above. Two of the remaining, Poor Presentation and Unsatisfactory Impact of Communication upon the Communicatee, are also categories which seem to be especially amenable to control and improvement through the actions or qualities of the superintendent. The professional schools, as has been pointed out previously, share a responsibility for, first, isolating needed communication skills, then, preparing executives in these skills so they may be effective communicators. The implication may be drawn that should certain qualities be decidedly apparent in a prospective candidate for a degree in educational administration which are permanent, intrinsic disabilities—disabilities which are blocks to his performing effectively in the superintendent's role as a producer and instrument of communication, and are disabilities or lacks not subject to remedial action—the candidate must be excluded from the profession. The recommendation is made that a) those responsible for administrator
preparation programs should establish and require courses in communicology developed in conjunction with the university department of communicology, and b) establish such screening devices and procedures as are necessary to exclude from the administrator training program candidates who cannot benefit from training in speech and communicology.

Boards and superintendents tend to view the same difficulties in the board-superintendent setting as the correlation (.678) between the two groups indicated. The correlation gave one further measure of support to the authenticity of the difficulties list derived from the pilot study and its corroboration by the major study. It is suggested that the items in the list can be useful to superintendents and boards in ferreting out problems in their working relationships. Use of the list of difficulties by the superintendent is, also, recommended as offering an opportunity for an oblique glimpse into the crucial area of human relationships and inter-relationships which surrounds the school leadership team—a team for which the superintendent has an inferred responsibility in the exercise of substantial guidance. Conceivably this approach might be the basis of a technique to provide information in a sensitive, largely uncharted area.

Many differences, as well as many similarities, among categories of superintendents and board presidents were apparent concerning specific difficulties in communication. Superintendents' groups together
viewed the same difficulties more frequently than did any two other groups. The same speculation will apply here that has been offered in connection with previous findings where agreement was shown between the thinking of superintendents' groups representing various district size categories—whether this was due to like training or demands common to the office. Determination of the true cause would make for an engaging and valuable research project. Board presidents from small districts and superintendents from large districts, as categories, each saw difficulties resident in their situations which no one other category or categories recognized. The only immediate implication is that district size does make a difference in perception of difficulties by board members. The "why" of this implication, however, is not answerable from the data, and the problem is suggested as one most deserving of further research.

A statement seems pertinent at this point about the entire process of board-superintendent communication. The field of communication was investigated in this study through two approaches commonly used in the teaching of reading: an analytic approach, in which the component parts of a word are broken down from the whole; and a synthetic approach in which the parts and fragments of a word are built into a meaningful composite. This study in communication, at times similarly succumbed to both synthetic and analytic approaches. The section dealing with communication difficulties represented an attempt to
secure and to describe those negative components which set forth
the entire spectrum of poor communication. In isolating items of
communication difficulty, an analytic approach served best; but, in
seeking patterns and relationships among the items, the components
were synthesized into meaningful entities. These were found to be
necessarily built, however, upon shifting sand. The communication
process appeared to require numerous ingredients intermixed in
correct proportions with the requirements of the communication
setting, its principal actors and their relationships, constantly press-
ing for changes in the proportions and relationships of the ingredients.
The study findings and analysis permit postulation of communication
as an active and dynamic process, not as a "thing," static and remote.
Communication difficulties and components of the communication
process which were isolated for study were seen to suffer the limitation
and distortion of reposing unnaturally, removed from an animated,
impinging environment. As such, these components and difficulties
are seldom able to be viewed satisfactorily in isolation.

Specific recommendations for action

The foregoing section outlined implications of the research findings,
and certain recommendations were noted; in the section, numerous
suggestions for further research were offered. From this discussion,
specific recommendations for action were recognized which were
capable of implementation for the improvement of board-superintendent communication and are presented in the following list.

To improve board-superintendent communication, it is recommended that:

1. The first priority in communication research should be to enhance the effectiveness of those practices in common usage among boards and superintendents.

2. Superintendents and board members should recognize the complexity of the communication process and should not seek for only the simplest practices and shortcuts.

3. Help should be provided by boards to busy administrators to assist in provision of adequate board-superintendent communication programs.

4. Changes made by a superintendent in a district's existing board-superintendent communication patterns and practices should proceed slowly, with a defensible purpose held in open view.

5. Written reports from the superintendent to the board should be a standard reporting practice in districts of all sizes.

6. Written communication should be given value as working documents in the administration of the district, for information and for reference.

7. Written reports should be evaluated by superintendents by criteria other than routineness, e.g., timing; timeliness; and quality in presentation.

8. Superintendents and board members should devote time in study sessions to a joint determination of the goals, topics, frequency, and extent of board-superintendent communication.
9. New board officers and new board members should be given instruction by professional associations in the proper communication which may and should take place in formal meetings, and in the proper conduct and control of meetings.

10. Superintendents should prevent "surprise" in communication by providing board members with regular comprehensive information concerning potential problems or problem areas.

11. Rules for expediting the conduct of work in study sessions should be established, but not such as to violate the benefits derived from the informal nature of such meetings.

12. Board members, the superintendent, and their spouses should meet in occasional informal situations.

13. Superintendents and their board members should consider and should establish priorities in ways the board can best gain information about the schools through other than oral or written reports, e.g., exhibits, visitations, films.

14. Superintendents should consciously establish a program to provide board members with pertinent research and new information in the field of education.

15. Superintendents and boards should establish means which will stimulate and encourage the unhampered flow of, and will permit the serious consideration of ideas and information from board members to the professional administrative staff.

16. Superintendents and their boards of education should hold periodic (not less than yearly) sessions in which the past performance of the superintendent is candidly evaluated.
17. Superintendents should provide their boards with a look into the future by outlining major plans and activities of the administration for an ensuing period.

18. Curricular and instructional topics should be given equal emphasis in communication to financial, business, personnel, and plant subjects.

19. Superintendents should continually evaluate the frequency with which topics are communicated by assessing the motives or causes of the current rate of topic occurrence.

20. The use of a comprehensive list of communication difficulties should be used periodically as an analytical check list by the superintendent and/or board members to 1) forestall problems from becoming serious, and 2) to seek greater insight into the board-superintendent working relationship.

21. Those groups interested in pre-service and in-service education of administrators and board members for their role as an effective communicator must consider differences in the emphasis accorded individual communication topics and procedures in communication which exist in the varying size districts.

22. Those responsible for administrator preparation programs should 1) develop and require courses in written, oral, and non-verbal methods of communication for prospective administrators, and should 2) initiate a screening procedure which will exclude or eliminate from the program those prospective students who cannot or who fail to benefit from the training offered in communication.
Major Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of any study in which opinions are asked of people is the lack of native perceptiveness of certain subjects. Every person has a different capacity to be penetrating in his analysis and in his interpretation of situations and of questions asked of him. Many degrees of quality of perception exist. This fact became evident on several occasions as subjects were interviewed—when the interviewer was almost positive from external evidence that certain problems existed, but were reported by the interviewee as being absent. However, since people act upon their own knowledges or perceptions, an interviewee's opinions must be accepted as operational facts.

Certain subjects were unwilling, for many reasons, to discuss their problems with other people—especially an interviewer, who in their eyes represented both a prestige center of professional education and an important educational association, The Ohio State University and The Ohio School Boards Association, respectively. The researcher, of course, made every effort to give assurance that the subjects' responses would be kept confidential.

Another limiting factor derives from subjects who have undergone extensive professional education. Often, professionally trained people have so ingrained a knowledge of "what ought to be" that their perceptions of "what is" are affected, possibly even to the extent that
they have become immune to existing problems and difficulties. The extent to which this factor was operative during the interviews was unknown.

Several of the superintendents and board presidents were serving their first year in their positions. For this reason, these officers may not have had as acute an understanding of their situations and roles as would be possible had they been in service longer. Again, since the sampling technique was designed to secure representative respondents for the study from a larger universe, it must be assumed that the first term superintendents' and presidents' responses indicated true perceptions for the sub-sample they represented—persons new to their positions.

The study was limited to certain facets of communication between administrators and board members and was not intended to be exhaustive. Communicology, the science of communication, itself is a highly complex, technical field—indeed, fields, as was noted in the chapter which discussed relevant literature. This research necessarily had to exclude and to limit its concerns to topics about which data could be obtained through normative survey methods and which, in the judgment of the writer, were of major concern to students and practitioners of educational administration.

It was not possible to study all school districts, or even the universe represented by Ohio; consequently, the methodology used
limited the study to school districts representing four size classifications. All generalizations from the data must perforce be confined to these size classifications, although guarded extrapolations were possible.

The findings are subject to several other problems which should be mentioned. These are, first, the limitations imposed by sample size, second, the instrumentation presented limitations and inadequacies, third, limitations inherent in design, fourth, difficulties in establishing absolute validity and reliability, and, fifth, the personal shortcomings of the researcher to interpret data and its statistical analysis with the competency possible for an experienced researcher. These limitations, as well as those noted previously, must be considered when reviewing the study.
APPENDIX A

Copy of Instructions Sent Jurors

Copy of Letter Requesting Cooperation in Pilot Study

Definition of "Communication" Given Pilot Study Respondents

Pilot Study Questionnaire
You are asked as an expert in educational administration and as an observer of Ohio administrators to serve as a juror in the selection of superintendents who have established and practice with varying degrees of effectiveness two-way communication with their boards of education. Listed in Section III, below, are three categories of superintendent communication situations. Guidelines for selection are noted in Section II, Items D, E, F, and as requirements stated in each category description.

II. Instructions to Members of the Jury:

A. Please make all judgments and agreements as a jury.
B. One set of names is to be compiled for each category.
C. Three names of superintendents are desired for each category.
D. Size of school district served is not a consideration in the selection of superintendents.
E. Superintendents selected are to be presently serving in Ohio superintendencies.
F. Communication is defined as the formal exchange of attitudes, ideas, information, proposals, and questions concerning the local school system, or about education in general, which takes place between the superintendent and the board. Communication from the superintendent may be to the board members sitting in committee, as a legal board entity, or to individual board members. Communication to the superintendent from the board may be from individual board members, board committees, or the board as a whole.
III. Categories:

A. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they have established and practice superior board-superintendent communication.

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<th>Name</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</table>

B. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they have established and practice board-superintendent communication which can be described as "average."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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</table>

C. Superintendents who in the judgment of the jurors have evidenced that they are ineffective or poor in their provision for and performance in the area of board-superintendent communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.</td>
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</table>
(Sample of Letter Requesting Cooperation in Pilot Study)

This letter is to seek your cooperation in a research project being conducted at The Ohio State University in a truly critical area of the superintendent-board relationship—formal communication between superintendent and board. As part of this study a personal interview is to be conducted with certain superintendents who have been selected from among administrators in Ohio by a jury of "educational experts." You were one of the superintendents selected because of certain professional attributes and abilities you have evidenced.

With your permission, I would like to visit with you for an hour to obtain oral responses concerning several broad questions on communication problems. Your reactions will form the basis of a questionnaire to be mailed later to an extensive sample of Ohio superintendents and board members.

The interviewing stage of the study also calls for a meeting with your board president (1963) and a session with one other board member. If it is acceptable with you, I will contact your 1963 president and any board member you might care to nominate. Would you have your secretary send me the names, addresses, and phone numbers of these board members when you set the time and date for your interview? The findings of this study can have tremendous significance as they contribute to an understanding of one of the areas which so often cause superintendents' job difficulties. I believe that the time you spend on the project, even though reluctantly taken from a demanding schedule, will be most worthwhile.

Enclosed is a reply form and envelope for your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you and visiting with you in the very near future.

Appreciatively,

Eugene Bennett
(Definition of "Communication" Given Respondents Participating in Pilot Study)

The concern of this interview is **Formal Communication** between board members as individuals and when sitting as a legal body and the superintendent of schools about local and profession-wide educational matters.

**Formal Communication** is that communication about schools or the field of education which takes place because of some purpose, forethought and planning. Such communication may be oral and written. Written communication may be in the form of memos, agenda, letters, or printed reports.

**Formal Communication** between the superintendent and board or individuals on the board, or from the board and board members to the superintendent, transmits the following:

1. Information
2. Questions
3. Advice
4. Ideas
5. Proposals
6. Attitudes
7. Problems
PILOT STUDY OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Are there any additions you would make to the School Management Concerns listing you have been given below? These are the topics about which it is the duty of the board and superintendent to be concerned and about which communication should take place.

Suggested Listing of School Management Concerns

A. Staff Personnel
   1. Instructional
   2. Non-instructional
   3. Administrative

B. Pupil Personnel
   1. Classification, Testing, and Progress Reporting
   2. Discipline
   3. Health Services

C. Instruction
   1. Developing, Using, and Improving Curriculum
   2. Books, Libraries, and Instructional Materials and Devices
   3. Extra-curricular Activities, including Athletics and Music
Pilot Study Questionnaire (continued)

D. School Plant

1. Planning, Financing, and Constructing Facilities
2. Maintenance of Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment
3. Management and Use of Facilities and Equipment

E. Business Management

1. Financing Current Operation
2. Budgeting
3. Accounting
4. Purchasing
5. Transportation
6. Food Service

F. Public Relations

G. Other

II. What are the ways or practices you generally use in formal communication with your (board) (superintendent)?

III. What are the ways or practices your (board or board members) (superintendent) use(s) in formal communication with you?

IV. What are the difficulties you have encountered or know about in other systems in formal communication with (the board or its individual members) (the superintendent)?
Pilot Study Questionnaire (continued)

V. What do you believe to be the basic cause of each of these difficulties that you have just mentioned?

VI. Are there some things which can be done by both the superintendent and board members to make communication between them better (more effective and satisfying)?

VII. Is formal communication a major factor in satisfactory relationships between board and superintendent? In what way(s)?

VIII. What is the content of formal communication from
   a) superintendent to board, and
   b) board to superintendent?

IX. What should be communicated more than is presently communicated from
   a) board to superintendent, and
   b) superintendent to board?
APPENDIX B

Copy of Cover Letter to Pre-test Respondents

Copy of Letter Requesting Cooperation With the Study

Copy of Questionnaires Used in the Study:

A. Practices: Part I
B. Practices: Part II
C. Topic Frequency
D. Topic Importance
E. Difficulties
F. Relationship of Communication to Working Relationships
Dear

I would like to impose upon your time by asking you to help me work some of the "bugs" out of a questionnaire which will be used with Ohio superintendents and board members. This will be a questionnaire to gather data for my Ph.D. research on superintendent-school board communication difficulties and practices as perceived by superintendents and board presidents.

If you are able, during the next day or so, work through the questionnaire as if you were a (superintendent) (board member). Make notes "beside" or "on" any question whenever you spot errors, unclear meanings, semantic difficulties, etc. Scribble and mark as much as you wish.

Please be free in making any general critical comment about format, difficulty in completion, length, inconsistencies, etc.

I realize this is always a time-consuming, somewhat boring task. For this reason, I am doubly grateful for your cooperation.

Appreciatively,

Eugene Bennett
Center for Educational Administration
(Sample of Letter Requesting Cooperation with the Study)

OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

One of the most important reasons for success or failure in the working relationship between board members and their superintendents is the kind and quality of communication which takes place between them. Surprisingly, little or no formal research has been done in this area.

Mr. Eugene Bennett, Research Assistant at The Ohio State University and a former superintendent is conducting a research project to determine the differences in communication viewpoint, topics, practices and difficulties which actually exist among Ohio administrators and board members. The research is under the guidance of Dr. Theodore Jenson, Chairman of the Department of Education at Ohio State. Your name was suggested as one who should be included in the study.

The men and women included, I realize, are very busy, but, as is obvious, the problem can only be investigated through their assistance.

I have studied the proposed research and I would like to add my endorsement to the project, offering the hope that you will be able to cooperate. Mr. Bennett will be contacting you soon in order to schedule a confidential interview with you.

Results of the research will be "plowed back" as material for the training of new administrators and board members, and SMI seminars. It may provide guidelines to currently serving superintendents and board members. Ultimately, it will be children who will benefit from better administrative practices.

Sincerely yours,

Lewis E. Harris
Executive Director
COMMUNICATION PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE: PART I

Listed below are practices used by superintendents and board members in communicating with each other about the schools.

Please state the approximate FREQUENCY of the practice in your situation. The interviewer will record your response.

Respond with a number--the number of times the practice is used, whether this is for a "week," "month," or "year."

If the practice is never used, you need only to respond, "never."

The following examples will illustrate the responses required.

Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ times per ____</td>
<td>Superintendent presents an &quot;overview&quot; of the system in a special meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ times per ____</td>
<td>Minutes of regular meetings are mailed to each board member.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practices

(The 47 items which appeared in the questionnaire are listed on pp. 54-58 of the text.)
COMMUNICATION PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE: PART II

Now that you have gone through the list of practices used in communication and have indicated the frequencies with which they occur, please examine each item again beginning with number 1.

Indicate orally how desirable each item is (whether you currently use the item or not) according to the scale which appears on the large chart now before you. The interviewer will record your response as a number representing the degree of desirability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly Undesirable</th>
<th>Somewhat Undesirable</th>
<th>Somewhat Desirable</th>
<th>Highly Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example

(Practice) Superintendent should always communicate to board members by communicating to board members' wives.

Your Response: "Zero"

------------------------

Practices

(The 47 items which appeared in the questionnaire are listed on pp. 54-58 of the text.)
TOPIC FREQUENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

Listed in the questionnaire you now have before you are the "topics" of board-superintendent communication. The topics were obtained from board members and superintendents earlier this year.

How frequently do the superintendent and board in your district discuss these topics?

Please give your impression orally according to the scale you see on the large chart now before you. The interviewer will record your numerical response. Answer separately for each topic.

Never Seldom Some Highest
0 1 2 3

Topic Frequency

Example

(Topic) Maintenance of Buildings.

Your Response: "Two"

----------

Topics

(The 31 topics which appeared in the questionnaire used to ascertain topic frequency are listed on pp. 58-60 of the text.)
IMPORTANCE OF TOPICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Now that you have gone through the list of topics about which communication between superintendents and boards takes place and you have indicated "frequency," please examine each topic again beginning with number 1.

Indicate orally your belief concerning the Importance of each topic as an item for communication—i.e., how "important" is the item as a topic about which there should be oral or written board-superintendent communication?

Use the scale you see on the chart now before you. The Interviewer will record your numerical response for each topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance as a topic for communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Topic) Inservice Training of Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Response: &quot;Two&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topics

(The 31 topics which appeared in the questionnaire used to ascertain topic importance are listed on pp. 58-60 of the text.)
COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE

The list you now have in hand contains statements obtained from board members and superintendents which describe or are said to be causes of difficulties in communication between board members and superintendents. These apply, in most cases, equally well to communication initiated by either the superintendent or board members.

For each item please indicate orally your opinion as to whether the difficulty or the cause of difficulty exists seriously in your board to superintendent and superintendent to board communication.

It is important that you acknowledge each item only when it exists to such an extent and with such frequency as to seriously impair good communication!

Your response will be recorded by the interviewer.

------------------

Difficulties

(The 94 items which appeared in the questionnaire are listed on pp. 60-67 of the text.)
(Copy of Questionnaire Used in Major Study)

RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATION TO
BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the item below which most nearly describes the level of your present board-superintendent working relationship:

1. Definitely Unsatisfactory
2. Somewhat Unsatisfactory
3. Generally Satisfactory
4. Very Satisfactory

To what extent do you believe the working relationship (rated above) is dependent upon the quality and kinds of communication which exist? Check one statement.

A. No or little connection between communication and the level of the working relationship.
B. Communication is only one factor among many in determining the level of the working relationship.
C. Communication is the major factor in determining the level of the working relationship.
D. Communication is the sole basis which determines the level of the working relationship.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS


Knower, Franklin H., and Wagner, Paul H. Communication in Educational Administration. Center for Educational Administration, Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1959.


ARTICLES AND PERIODICALS


UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL


OTHER SOURCES

