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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG THE ANNUAL GALLUP
POLL OF ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL NEWS
ARTICLES APPEARING IN A SELECTED METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER
AND ACTIONS TAKEN BY A SELECTED SUBURBAN SCHOOL BOARD
FOR THE TEN YEARS FROM 1969 THROUGH 1978

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE TEN YEARS FROM 1969 THROUGH 1978

by

Larry L. Dlugosh

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

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Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Edgar A. Kelley
and Associate Professor Larry J. Walter

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 1981

TITLE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the first four decades of the twentieth century the responsibility for educating America's youth rested primarily at the local level, in the communities where the student and his family resided. Much of what was known of the educational process was gleaned from local facts or opinions regarding the school system in the local community. Local decision makers set the policies and procedures by which the schools were governed.

As the role of the state and federal government in education increased during the 1950's and 1960's, more decisions impacting upon local schools were made by the state and federal legislative, judicial and regulatory bodies. The media--radio, television, newspapers and magazines--reported federal and state actions covering topics such as desegregation and court-ordered busing, decline of test scores, mandated special education programs and violence in the schools.

During the decade of the 1970's the public and its schools experienced a time when the prevailing mood within the nation was one of disillusionment brought about by the war in Vietnam, the student protest movement, racial strife, Watergate, inflation and political unrest. Davies has provided one description of these conditions:

Conflict and struggle have always been the road for education, but it would appear that, in today's society, the struggle is amplified. No longer are we a nation of small communities and slow change, nor do our citizens continue to enjoy the closeness and unity of purpose

which once characterized America. Instead, we have become a metropolitan nation with instant access to influential news reports and a growing impatience with the status quo.¹

This almost instant access to information through news media was accompanied by varied reactions toward, and perceptions of, education. When concern about education is reported through the news media, regardless of locale, the public might assume that the concern exists in all schools, including the local school. This assumption has been described by George Gallup:

When local residents learn through the media that high school students are being graduated who are functionally illiterate, that national test scores are declining, and that the schools are having problems with discipline, drug use, and vandalism, their predictable reaction is to question the added costs and the way the schools are being administered.²

The first content study of newspaper treatment of education news in the United States was made by Belmont Farley in the 1920's; in the 1940's, Stanley Elam conducted a similar study. Both concluded that very little school news other than sports was reported in the American Press.

At the time this study was completed, George Gallup had conducted national polls of public attitude toward education on an annual basis since 1969. In this report of the 1973 Gallup Poll he stated:

¹Lee K. Davies, "The School Boards Struggle to Survive," Educational Leadership (November, 1976), p. 96.

²George H. Gallup, "A Decade of Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Public Education 1969-1978," Phi Delta Kappan (1978), p. 1.

The attitude one holds toward the public schools depends heavily on whether he gets his information from the media or from more direct experiences with students or parents of students. The more people know first hand about the public schools, the more favorable their views. . . . most important is the fact that persons who depend on the media for their information are most critical of the schools.³

A report by the National Committee for Citizens in Education described societal issues which further complicated the matter.

More than ever before, technology, mobility, differences in and expansion of population are contributing, however subtly, to an ever greater degree to the confusion of how the system works and who influences it. The problem is further complicated by the addition of the issues of unionism, parents' and students' rights, local control, citizen participation, ethnic and minority cultural interests, and special education, to the more traditional issues of structure, financing, and community goals.⁴

There are problems in the flow of the information vital to policy making in the schools. Information is the essence of intelligent policy making. What sources do school boards and administrators use when gathering information in making decisions? What factors do school administrators and board of education members consider when planning and voting on programs and policy concerning the schools? Where is information regarding the public attitude concerning schools and schooling gathered and is this information employed to assist boards of education in decision making?

³Stanley Elam, "Attitude Formation: Direct Experience Best," NASSP Bulletin (January, 1974), p. 57.

⁴The National Committee for Citizens in Education, Public Testimony on Public Schools (Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1975), p. 9.

What were the educational issues reported in the national polls and the news media from 1969 through 1978? Did these issues influence decisions made by local boards of education?

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship that existed between and among the Annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education, educational news articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper and actions taken by selected suburban school boards as recorded in the minutes of the official board meetings for the ten years from 1969 through 1978.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the relationship between and among the results of the Gallup Poll, reporting of education issues in a selected metropolitan newspaper and actions taken by selected suburban boards of education?
2. Did the education issues identified by Gallup Poll respondents receive the same intensity of treatment from selected suburban boards of education?
3. Did the education issues identified by Gallup Poll respondents receive the same intensity of treatment in a selected metropolitan newspaper?
4. Did the education issues reported by a selected metropolitan newspaper receive the same intensity of treatment from selected

suburban boards of education?

5. Are the rankings of educational issues similar in the Gallup Poll, the selected metropolitan newspaper and the official minutes of selected suburban boards of education as evidenced by the frequency of appearance of that issue?

Definition of Terms

Board actions. Any recorded action in the official school board minutes as evidenced by the introduction of a formal motion, a report, an announcement, or a discussion by the board, administration, or visitor.

Educational issue. Any educational theme or topic which has been reported or publicized.

The Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education. A survey conducted annually by George Gallup. The purpose of this survey was to measure and record the attitudes of the American public toward education. This sample was described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Interviewing was conducted in every area of the country and in all types of communities. These communities, taken together, represent a true microcosm of the nation.

Education news item. Any article, column or editorial which reported a local, state or national educational issue and was located in the education file of the library of a selected metropolitan newspaper.

Metropolitan newspaper. A daily newspaper with a metropolitan circulation of 139,526 and a state circulation of 234,449.

Year. The term year, as used in this study, denotes calendar year, January through December.

Local control. Local control, as used in this study, denotes the process of self-government in each local school district.

Assumptions

One assumption was central to this study: the frequency of mention or discussion of a topic in any of the data sources is an accurate representation of its relative importance.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to four data sources: (1) the ten biggest problems facing education as identified by the respondents to the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education from 1969 through 1978; (2) educational news articles reported in a selected metropolitan newspaper for the ten years from 1969 through 1978 and filed in the library of the newspaper; (3) school board actions of a selected suburban school district as recorded in the official board minutes from 1969 through 1978 (School Board A); and (4) a companion study which analyzed school board actions in a selected suburban school district as recorded in the official board minutes from 1969 through 1978 (School Board B).

2. When primary sources were referred to in any of the four data sources, these primary sources were not reviewed to establish accuracy.

3. The information available in the library of the metropolitan newspaper (educational news articles) and the school board minutes (board actions) did not necessarily represent all of the happenings reported by the newspaper or all actions taken by the board.

4. The Gallup Poll did not consistently explore the same issues or ask the same questions from year to year.

Procedures

1. The reported data of the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education for the years 1969 through 1978 were reviewed and the ten biggest problems in education for each year and for the ten-year period were identified.

2. Education news items which were filed in the library of the metropolitan newspaper for the years 1969 through 1978 were read, analyzed and placed into one of the ten categories identified as the biggest problems in education according to the results of the Gallup Poll. The total number of articles recorded was tabulated by category and from that tabulation a rank order was assigned to each category.

3. The official board minutes for the selected school district for the period of time 1969 through 1978 were read and analyzed and the actions recorded in the minutes were assigned to one of the ten categories identified as the biggest problems in education according to the results of the Gallup Poll. The total number of actions was tabulated by category and from that tabulation a rank order was assigned

to each category.

4. The information collected from each of these sources was compared, contrasted and summarized to determine if there was a relationship between and among the three.

5. Specific procedures used in the analysis of data from each of the sources are described in Chapter III of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are numerous sources of information available to people in one's society. The abundance, or even over-abundance of information which the public must process in order to make intelligent decisions for family life is a modern phenomenon. Diversity in information sources and values compounds the difficulties experienced by elected officials when decisions are made which affect the well-being of the society.

The majority of the people (seventy-seven percent) get some of their information from the newspaper.¹ The results of one of the public opinion polls, the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education, determined what the public views as the major problems facing public education. Gallup pollsters interviewed 1,500 people to check the pulse of the public about its attitudes toward education.

Do boards of education pay attention to public opinion polls and the newspaper when they make decisions or do they operate from some other set of guidelines, such as personal preferences or the political power base in the community? What is known about school boards and how they operate; newspapers, their function and purpose in society; and public opinion polls, their power and influence?

¹Galvin Rarick (ed.), News Research for Better Newspapers, Vol. 7 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspapers Publishers Association Foundation, July, 1975).

Schools boards, newspapers and public opinion polls are reviewed in this chapter. The review of school boards concentrates on the role of traditional boards of education, community influence on school boards and public perceptions about the role and function of boards. Newspapers were reviewed from the perspective of their function in a democratic society and methods employed to report educational news items. The history, development and impact of opinion polling was reviewed with special emphasis given to a review of literature about the Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education.

The School Board: Its Role and Responsibility

The legal authority to provide for a system of public education rests with the state; thus, the state constitution and legislative statutes creating school districts are sources of that district's power. It is, however, left to the voters of the local school district to elect the citizens from their own community who will govern the schools and determine policy within the parameters established by constitutional and legislative provisions.

The school system is the largest public enterprise in most communities. It uses the most taxes, employs the most people, uses the most goods and services and is governed by elected local citizens, the school board.² How are school board members elected and by whom?

²George Gerbner, "Newsmen and Schoolmen: The State and Problems of Education," Journalism Quarterly (Summer, 1967), p. 223.

What is the purpose of the school board? How does the public perceive the school board?

Traditional democratic theory holds that political influence should follow lines of legal authority. The public elects a representative body such as a school board to make policy. The board elects or appoints administrators to carry out the policy. The administrators are supposed to carry out the instructions of the board which follows the instructions of its constituency. This theory holds that the source of power is popular electoral support and responsiveness to the public's wants and needs is the norm.³

A newer model, the technological model, holds that the governing process is changing due to the development of management science and information systems. This model contends that policy formation and problems are too complex for the public or its elected representatives to evaluate so professional administrators are employed to help formulate policy. Information becomes the major source of power; the new norm is not necessarily responsiveness to public desire but, instead, deference to expertise.⁴

The power to decide what the agenda is to include or not include is an ominous power entrusted to the school board. It is the kind of

³National Society for the Study of Education, The Politics of Education, ed. Jay D. Scribner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 218.

⁴William Boyd, "The Public, the Professionals, and Education Policy Making: Who Governs?" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 7.

social power that can lead to a harmonious relationship with a community or, instead, a source of continuous conflict. Goldhammer focused upon the relations between school board members and the community and concluded that the political affairs of schools were closely tied to the affairs of the wider community.⁵

McCarty and Ramsey, in a comprehensive study examining the operation of social power in school systems, identified four community types and how each community type was reflected in its school board and the subsequent role of the superintendent of schools.⁶ The four community types are: dominated, factional, pluralistic, and inert.

The dominated community. The dominated community is characterized by a power elite with a few people or one person at the top of the power pyramid. The school board like the community is dominated. Members are chosen on the assumption that they will take the advice of the power elite. The superintendent tends to be the type of administrator who sees himself as carrying out policy rather than developing it. The superintendent who is acceptable in a dominated community will agree with the dominant ideology and will not be a person interested in making important decisions.

The factional community. A second type of community is characterized by at least two factions competing for control. Factional

⁵Keith Goldhammer, "Community Power Structure and School Board Membership," American School Board Journal, 130 (March, 1955), pp. 23-25.

⁶Donald J. McCarty and Charles E. Ramsey, The School Managers: Power and Conflict in American Public Education (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1971), pp. 17-24.

communities experience power shifts from one faction to another depending on which group is most popular with the constituency. The factional school board is composed of members from the "competing" factions in the community. Board elections are spirited events. Voting is the important action in a board meeting and members vote to see which faction will be successful. Board members represent the ideology of the group or faction which elected them. In the factional community the superintendent must work closely with the majority faction while being very careful not to become too closely aligned with one faction or the other. The superintendent tends to be a political strategist and rather than taking a stand on issues that tend to be controversial will usually adopt a middle-of-the-road attitude. The effective superintendent behaves in such a way as to be in a position to not alienate any of the factions so as to be able to work with each of them when the balance of power shifts.

The pluralistic community. Some communities have a variety of centers of influence with no one of them able to maintain power at all times. Power exists in those pluralistic communities but it is contestable, situational and temporary. In a pluralistic community, education is important to all of the community interests and the board of education tends to be composed of people who represent a wide variety of positions. These boards are referred to as status congruent school boards whose members are collegial and treat each other as peers. Discussion dominates the meetings since consensus is the goal in the decision-making process. The superintendent serves as a professional

advisor to the status-congruent board; a more statesmanlike role; and can present the board with alternatives and can be objective in the assessment of the actions the board might take when adopting policies or making other decisions.

The inert community. The fourth and final community type is the inert community. This type of community is characterized by the status quo. Generally, the school board in an inert community tends to be a sanctioning board; one that takes little action without the direction of the professional staff. The superintendent makes the decisions and is free to initiate action without being concerned with factions or dominant groups. In fact, if the educational program is to be effective at all the superintendent must be the driving force behind it.

The four theses of the McCarty and Ramsey study are: (1) power varies from community to community; (2) power is held over community type boards and the professionals employed by the board; (3) the power structure of a community is based on the relationship between and among community power figures, community boards, and professionals; and (4) those interrelationships vary in the various types of communities.

Since boards of education are elected and since they react to either the wants and needs of the electorate, or upon information received and processed by professionals, it is to be assumed that there is a set of expectations or responsibilities they need to fulfill. What is the function of the board of education?

One function of a school board is to establish policies for the operation of a school system. Most boards find a body of policy already established as a result of the accumulated actions recorded in the minutes of past board meetings; there are, however, other functions expected of a school board. Tuttle identified eight leadership responsibilities of school boards in addition to that of establishing policies: (1) working together in a harmonious manner, (2) maintaining a well-qualified administrative and teaching staff, (3) working for a curriculum which meets the needs of the students and the community, (4) providing adequate facilities for the school population, (5) taking a stand in favor of generous support of public education, (6) encouraging cooperation between school and community, (7) taking an interest in the advancement of public education at all levels, and (8) supporting the idea of a strong and active school boards association at the state and national level.⁷ Dickensen⁸ and a New Jersey State Federation of District Boards of Education⁹ have established similar lists of duties or responsibilities for school board members. All of these responsibilities are placed upon a group of locally

⁷Edward M. Tuttle, School Board Leadership in America: Policy Making in Public Education (Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers, 1958), pp. 27-28.

⁸W. E. Dickensen, Successful School Board Practices (New London, Connecticut: Croft Educational Services, 1965).

⁹New Jersey State Federation of District Boards of Education, What Every School Board Member Should Know (Trenton, New Jersey: The Federation, 1969).

elected citizens who receive little or, almost always, no pay while they are charged with managing one of the nation's largest enterprises. While carrying out their responsibilities, the school board members find each community places a special kind of pressure on its board of education depending on the kind of community it is.

The Role of the School Board

Local control is a powerful force in America, but the concept of local control is misunderstood. Constitutionally, local control is a power granted to the state. In this context, local control is the process of government which applies to control of state policies by the people of the state. In contrast, the common use of local control in a cultural sense applies to the self-government process in each local community. When people use the term local control they are speaking of the latter definition. Local control is an appealing concept because there is direct accountability to the people and the constituency always has the last word if it chooses to exercise the right to vote. Do school boards know what the public expects and are they doing their jobs as measured by the people they serve?

Critics of schools boards have been announcing their demise for the past seven decades but school boards are still very much alive.¹⁰

¹⁰The relationship between schools and their governing bodies is reviewed from a more radical perspective by Stein, "Strategies for Failure," Harvard Educational Review (May, 1971); Ravitch, "Community Control Revisited," Commentary (February, 1972); and Katz, Class, Bureaucracy and Schools, 1975. These authors perceive a need to replace the current pattern of school board operation (representative democracy)

While their usefulness is questioned by critics, school boards spend the majority of their time supervising budget expenditures, bond issues, and at times, acting as the protector of the community against unpopular or, sometimes, innovative ideas. In times of serious conflict the board acts in an administrative capacity to attempt to assuage public opinion, a role for which it is ill-prepared. In tranquil times the board has a tendency to approve the ideas of the administration while reserving its prerogative to safeguard the tax rate.

Perhaps the greatest blow to the independence of school boards has been teacher militancy which led to unionization of teachers, collective bargaining, and strikes. In addition, grievance procedures, tenure laws, court-ordered integration, and other mandates to the public schools have catapulted the board of education into new dimensions of the political arena. Board members are now vulnerable public servants and even though their role is part-time, it demands long hours of reading and digesting reports, recommendations, budgets, building plans, reduction-in-force policies, and a multitude of assorted activities. "The prospect is that boards are in for hard times; the buffer role between the public and the professional school personnel is nettlesome indeed, particularly when society is unsettled and insecure."¹¹

with a system which would conceivably be more responsive (participatory democracy). Although it is important to realize different viewpoints about school governance exist, the radical perspective was not included in the review of literature because representative type school boards were not one of the sources used in this study.

¹¹McCarty and Ramsey, op. cit., p. 213.

Many school board members fear that the public does not understand them and worse yet, does not appreciate them. In 1975, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) published the results of a unique study it conducted regarding the public's attitudes toward school boards. In summarizing the article, Webb noted that the public notions of what school boards are and what they do was dismally distorted.¹² The findings of the poll showed that most adults in the United States did not understand what school boards were or what they were doing. Thirty-four percent of all United States adults over the age of eighteen had no opinion about their school boards while sixty-three percent of all United States adults could not name a single thing their school board did in the past year. Only a third of the people surveyed by the NSBA in 1975 knew that boards established policy and did not "run" the day-to-day affairs of the school. Only half of the public in the survey knew the difference between the board and administration and 40 percent of the people did not know how they got the school board they had. The study also revealed that 58 percent of those polled identified the school board as one of several agencies running the public school system; an alarmingly small group, 38 percent, actually believed that school boards acted as representatives of the public. Webb noted that it was clear from the data that school boards "are a barely visible government." This situation was seen as

¹²Harold Webb, "A New Gallup Study: What the Public Really Thinks of Its School Boards," The American School Board Journal, 150 (April, 1975), pp. 36-58.

particularly unhealthy since locally elected school boards direct the nation's largest enterprise after defense in terms of tax dollars spent from combined local, state and federal sources.

According to the 1975 study, the public believed the school board had the most authority over personnel matters, budgets and provision of school facilities and services such as transportation, and the least amount of authority over matters relating to what and how children were taught and disciplined. This was true of parents as well as non-parents.

Thirty-six percent of all adults contacted believed that school boards should set overall policies and goals and "run" the schools; 36 percent believed school boards should set policy but not run the schools; six percent felt the board should only give advice and have no real power on their own; and 22 percent did not know what they believed school boards should do.

It is wise to keep in mind that the survey conducted by the NSBA in 1975 followed the Watergate era, but the results cannot be written off as "sour grapes." The public indicated it did not have enough information about the schools. Sixty percent of those polled stated that their best source of information regarding schools came from what they read in the newspaper, heard on the radio, or saw on television and only 16 percent reported that their board spent a great deal of time and effort keeping them informed.

In a second study conducted in 1975, the National School Boards Association surveyed its own members at its annual convention in Miami

Beach.¹³ School board members were asked to draw upon their own experiences and indicate where they thought their authority was necessary to ensure proper functions of the schools. The list from which they selected their responses was the same used by Gallup to gather information from the public regarding the same question.

School board members stated that their main responsibilities were in the areas of building new buildings, budgets and taxes, teacher salaries and contracts, hiring principals and superintendents, changing school boundaries, and providing transportation. They were less concerned with matters of what was taught, by whom, and how. From these two studies it was clear the public and even the school board members perceived the school board as being involved in the building program, budgets, boundaries, transportation and hiring of administrators, but considered to a lesser degree the things they were elected to safeguard or improve--what was taught.

As long ago as 1969, the first annual survey of the public schools conducted by Gallup International concluded that while the American people seemed reasonably well-informed about school activities they knew very little about education.¹⁴ Sixty-five percent of the people in that poll wanted to know more about schools. In the same

¹³Paul D. Blanchard, "School Board Meetings," NSBA Research Report No. 1976-Z (Washington, D.C.: National School Boards Association, 1976).

¹⁴Gallup, op. cit., p. 8.

poll, school boards were thought to be doing a good job. Sixty-nine percent of the public interviewed for the survey thought boards worked hard to improve the quality of education and 62 percent felt the school boards worked hard to ensure high efficiency at low costs.

Only one important aspect of the work of the board was questioned; more people answered yes to the question: Is your local school board politically motivated? Generally, boards were looked on very favorably although it deserves mention that no attempt was made in the 1969 survey to identify what boards should do or what their primary responsibilities were in reference to the overall governance of school activities.

Bagin reported that a 1976 U.S. Office of Education survey showed a sharp decline in public confidence in people running educational institutions.¹⁵ The survey showed that public confidence dropped by eighteen percentage points from 1974 to 1975.

As they face crisis upon controversy, the school board and administration are under continuing and increasing pressure to communicate with their publics. It behooves them to explain to the public how they manage the policy making process, spend tax monies and provide for the education of children. As society becomes evermore complex, managerial systems need to adjust to increasing complexity when it affects the public domain and must be explained to the community. The public realizes it owns the public schools and wants some assurances

¹⁵Don Bagin, PR for School Board Members (Washington, D.C.: American Association of School Administrators, 1976).

from its representatives, the local school board, that school systems are in good hands.

The Newspaper: Its Function in a Democratic Society

The newspaper's primary function is to communicate to the public what people do, feel, and think. This is the crux of the statement which appeared in the Canons of the American Society of Newspaper Editors as adopted by that organization in 1922.

A journalist's charge or job is to render services to the community by serving as the people's ears, eyes, and voice through articles in the newspaper.¹⁶ Journalists cannot be viewed as individual communicators, or, for the most part, as people representing independent news organizations. Approximately two-thirds of all reporters work for organizations tied to larger chains or newspaper networks. Many of these networks are controlled ultimately by industrial conglomerates whose primary interest may not lie in the field of communications.¹⁷

The newspaper must amuse, provoke, excite and stimulate people in order to sell newspapers and thus please the advertisers, the newspaper's chief supporting client. The paper must also show a profit. One study found that almost two-fifths of the press and one-half of the

¹⁶ Carolyn Mullins, "How to Get Along with Your Local Newspaper and How to Get Good Press, Too," American School Board Journal (October, 1973), p. 31.

¹⁷ John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman, Newspeople, A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 181.

superintendents interviewed believed there was a basic conflict between the public service reporting functions of the press and the inescapable fact that it is a business.¹⁸

Wright stated that the media can serve to extend the horizons of the readers and provide them with information that would otherwise have been obscure.¹⁹ In contrast, Park perceived the role of the newspaper as one of taking over the job of the town gossip and that was its primary function.²⁰

In a 1975 study of adult newspaper readers, it was reported that 77 percent read a daily newspaper, spending approximately 34 minutes on each newspaper they read. (Adults were classified as persons over 18 years of age.)²¹ Thus, regardless of what purpose it fills, three-fourths of the adult population read the newspaper on a daily basis.

There are certainly other means of obtaining the news than through the newspaper--electronic media being one of the more popular methods. However, the average 30-minute telecast has difficulty covering only the news stories appearing on the front page of the paper. Often people may hear of late breaking news first on the electronic media, but

¹⁸Neal Gross, The Schools and the Press (Cambridge, Massachusetts: New England School Development Council, 1956).

¹⁹Charles R. Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Random House, 1959).

²⁰Robert Park, The City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

²¹Rarick, loc. cit.

still have the tendency to check it out in the newspaper in order to obtain a more complete report.²² The print media also enable the reader to save the copy of the story for future reference.

The newspaper research study also ascertained that at one time or another, 93 percent of the adults had taken some sort of action involving the daily newspaper. This action may have been in the form of writing letters to the editor, placing ads, clipping news articles, or discussing news articles with other people.

Tarde makes a strong statement about the impact of the press on conversation and believes the newspaper has a great amount of influence. If people did not converse about news articles, newspapers would appear to no avail--in which case it would be difficult to conceive of their publication because they would exercise no profound influence over any minds.²³

It would be remiss and irresponsible to declare that articles appearing in newspapers tell the reader what to think. But, if conversations do occur regarding the contents of the paper, it seems likely the newspaper does influence what people might think about. An exact cause and effect relationship is impossible to determine due to the many complex social situations. Merrill indicated this situation

²²John Hohenberg, The News Media: A Journalist Looks at His Profession (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1975), p. 25.

²³Gabriel Tarde, On Communication and Social Influence (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 309.

might be looked at as the cause-effect-interaction position.²⁴ This concept maintains the media, along with other forces, operate simultaneously within a nation and that interaction brings about growth and progress.

When did the coverage of educational news begin to receive attention? Actual specialized coverage about news in the field of education did not appear until 1923 with the advent of Time magazine. Fifteen years later, Newsweek magazine began to cover educational happenings. In 1947, the Education Writer's Association, comprised of working newsmen, was organized. Prior to 1947, newsmen considered the reporting of education a second class job. Journalists assigned to education ranked somewhere below the editor for real estate and above the copy boy.²⁵

A postwar demand for new schools, new teachers, and new curriculums generated a spirited interest in public education. After World War II, schools were forced time and again to go to their public or their legislators to secure monies to continue to operate. Bond elections as well as general tax elections provided new ammunition for attacks on the schools by the public. After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, the news began to focus more on national issues in education. The reporting of education took on some of the visibility of business and

²⁴John Calhoun Merrill, The Imperative of Freedom, A Philosophy of Journalistic Autonomy (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1974), p. 53.

²⁵Gerbner, op. cit., p. 212.

politics. School news began to have a potential effect on bond issues, teachers, community power, and curriculum. Yet, in the area of education, as well as in other underdeveloped areas of journalism, progress was slow at best. It seemed to take the jolt of Sputnik, an issue of forced integration, or a crisis of declining test scores to bring the issue of education to the forefront. Each of these issues was national instead of local.

Nearly 50 percent of the daily metropolitan newspapers reported an education assignment in 1955. In 1965, nine out of ten of the same papers reported such an assignment. Most of the newspeople who covered education were general assignment reporters, working the school beat under the direction of the city desk.²⁶ In 1968, there did not appear to be any strong movement to give education the kind of coverage it should have. News of education, for the most part, was considered dull. The only newspapers staffed with educational reporters in the 1960's era were well staffed metropolitan dailies.²⁷

Some reporters believe that becoming a specialist in one area might be a disadvantage in regard to objective reporting. Newsmen are cautioned not to get too close to their news' sources so as to insure that the system of priorities remain the newspaper's instead of those of the news source. Reporters who have experience in education may have

²⁶Charles T. Duncan, "The 'Education Beat' on 52 Major Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly (Summer, 1966), pp. 336-338.

²⁷Hohenberg, op. cit., p. 192.

a tendency to give the educator's point of view so completely they would be unable to regain the average citizen's outlook. Therefore, most newsmen do not feel that teaching experience or work in education is a necessary qualification. The non-educator may tend to approach the subject more objectively.

What type of information is generally reported in the newspapers? The majority of educational news is described as "hard local news" policy. This policy encourages the local reporter to cover committee and board meetings. These meetings are given highlight coverage. A very cordial treatment is given to stories suggested by the schools about new techniques, expanded programs, or stories on faculty or students. Educational research, technology, philosophy of education, convention coverage and educational breakthroughs are reported most often when these topics get into the wire service. The national developments, as received through the wire service, rarely are expanded by the newspaper's educational writers unless the writers are able to find a local angle on the story.

The Associated Press and United Press International are the main suppliers of news events to the press. These two American global wire services gather and distribute a file of news inside and outside of the United States. These two large organizations provide the nation with articles, pictures, and special features on a daily basis. If educational articles have influence on the public then stories from the wire services play a major role.

Since space is limited in a newspaper, how do newsmen go about

establishing priorities as to what wire service articles and local stories of education go into an issue of the daily newspaper? How does the education reporter decide upon priorities? The report has an audience ranging from doctors, lawyers, professors and engineers to poverty-stricken welfare recipients. Certainly this diversified group must have different wants, needs, aspirations and interests. The reporter receives reports from schools, colleges, universities, teacher organizations, teacher unions, the Council for Basic Education, the National School Board, state administrator groups, the general public, and the list goes on and on. How does the reporter decide which stories to cover and which press releases to print? One study of newspaper work suggests that the reporter, through management policy, responds to the social structure and pressure of the newsroom.²⁸

Some reporters contend that much of their time spent on education news is devoted to what they term as junk. Reporters receive numerous releases regarding educational topics each week. Much of what they do may be no more than opening envelopes and processing news releases. Many education reporters do not have assistants to do this job and therefore, instead of being out in the public covering news, they find themselves in the office processing releases.

Even though newsmen complain about the prepared press releases they do find the information helpful. They prefer working with

²⁸Walter Gieber, "Two Communicators of the News: A Study of the Roles and Sources of Reporters," Social Forces (October, 1960), pp. 76-83.

professional public relations people; thus, a good personal relationship between a public relations specialist and the press could be a valuable asset to a district. A comment made by a Seattle reporter implied that professional educators often do not recognize news when they see it.²⁹ Public relations specialists became a visible part of the education scene in the 1920's. In 1935, the School Public Relations Association was formed. School public relations programs were initially set up for bond elections but the concept has since expanded to all phases of education.

Mullins pointed out that boards of education welcome the press to their meetings with about the same degree of enthusiasm as might be displayed if they were receiving a visit from the Internal Revenue Service.³⁰ Perhaps the relationship of boards with the press is a one-sided sword. The press has the potential to hurt schools, but schools have little effect over the press. Perhaps schools have no alternative but to be cooperative with the press.

In 1956, Gross studied the major problem areas identified by newsmen in their contacts with school people, grouping them into three main areas: (1) secretiveness, (2) occupational jargon, and (3) differing concepts of news value.³¹

The secretiveness issue was to be attributed to fear and lack of

²⁹Gerbner, op. cit., p. 216.

³⁰Mullins, op. cit., p. 32.

³¹Gross, op. cit., pp. 218-220.

confidence. They perceived educators as having a fear when working with the press. The press perceived boards as operating in ways that destroyed public confidence. They abhorred executive sessions conducted by the board. Nothing seemed to antagonize reporters more quickly than the suspicion that a board was ducking an issue by discussing it in an executive session. Executive sessions seem to bring out the bloodhound in a reporter. Newsmen guard the public's right to know. The reporters did not believe the newspaper could be responsible in its reporting if it was not given the proper background information.

The most widespread complaint was the use of educational jargon when talking to educators. The reporters did not perceive educators giving straightforward answers to straightforward questions. The charge made was that educators were unable to answer the questions, thus the use of the jargon. The reporters said they could not report educational developments to the public in the educator's language. The complaints of the use of jargon revealed other underlying assumptions. Educational jargon perhaps was used as a means of a cover-up, another example of secretiveness; talk of educators is a ritual which hides all thought; jargon conceals ideas which are obscure, controversial or expensive; and finally the use of jargon indicated indifference or contempt of the press.

The third complaint was the different perceptions regarding news value. School people flood the paper with junk news and ignore or avoid really interesting copy. The reporters indicated that school people generally handle a controversy poorly, thus avoiding it altogether. The

two major complaints regarding news value might reflect a divergence of goals of the two institutions, the school and the newspaper. To be a successful school administrator one must have visibility but attempt to avoid controversy. Good news copy, as pointed out by the respondents, gives high visibility to controversy which may lead to a conflict of values between the school and the press.

Another type of news value conflict, rooted in a difference of interest between the two institutions, is social or occupational typing or stereotyping. The most common form of social typing is the professional or occupational tag next to a name in a news item. "Windows Broken in Shopping Center" may be a common headline, but it takes on different meaning when it reads "Students from Whoopie High School Destroy Windows in Shopping Center."³²

Balanced coverage was also an issue listed under news value. Newsmen contend that school people do not call them with a story containing bad news. Good is usually routine and bad news usually makes good copy. Gross³³ found that overemphasis on bad or sensational news

³²This problem of stereotyping leads the reader to associate acts with students from a particular school rather than to associate them with their family, community group or church. When a teenager is involved in an incident seldom do you read that the teenager is involved with any of the above mentioned groups but rather with the school attended. For example: "Sandra X, member of St. Thomas Church or daughter of Mr. and Mrs. X arrested for possession of marijuana." Instead the headlines very likely would appear "Girl from X High School picked up for possessing marijuana." This type of headline leads the reader to assume that the possession of marijuana is present in the high school or that the girl had the marijuana in the high school, when in fact, it could have happened on the weekend in a remote part of the city.

³³Gross, loc. cit.

was the educator's major grievance against the press. Reporters indicate that they are constantly criticized by educators for printing bad news. One educational writer believed this type of criticism is due to an unenlightened view and consequently invited the educators to look at the clipping files and see for themselves. The invitation was never accepted. If editors or writers offered only news they could absolutely certify as unslanted and properly balanced they could scarcely claim good copy for their report. If this were the case, one would have to consider J. Montgomery Curtis's famous unpublished lead: "While 1,286 students of Metropolitan High School pursued their studies quietly this morning, another student murdered the principal in his office." They would also find themselves faced with the problem of finding a favorable quote to balance an unfavorable quote in each news item.³⁴

The newspaper might best be viewed as a reflector or an indicator of a nation's progress and problems, but not necessarily as a determinant of that progress or those problems. Accepting the fact that this is an imperfect world, its imperfections are thusly reported. If they are not, the free press has failed in one of its major functions--presenting the world as it is. The ingredients of conflict have been and will remain an integral part of the daily news.

³⁴Hohenberg, op. cit., p. 23.

Public Opinion

Almost everyone has an opinion on something and by asking the correct question or set of questions that opinion, along with a collection of others, can be used to determine what kind of soap is most widely used, which television programs are most popular, or what, in general, citizens believe about their government, their schools, or the state of the economy.

Public opinion can be individual or aggregate, held by a majority or a concerned minority and have some or no influence on public policy.³⁵ Given this disparity in definition, Key has noted, "To speak with precision of public opinion is a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost."³⁶

The term "opinion" usually refers to more superficial and transitory issues, the term "attitude" to somewhat deeper and most lasting convictions, and the terms "value" or "belief" to very deep seated convictions. It is not until people generalize their attitudes or beliefs in the form of opinions that one is able to ascertain what public opinion really is. It is the gathering of these "public opinions" by pollsters which results in reports about how the public feels on a particular issue at a point in time.

³⁵Jack Best, Public Opinion: Micro and Macro (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1973), p. 1.

³⁶V. O. Key, Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 14.

Pollsters ask only certain questions of certain people. Erickson and Luttbeg noted that on the basis of about 1,5000 carefully selected interviews, polling organizations can predict with remarkable accuracy how the American public as a whole would divide on the questions they ask.³⁷

There are more than a thousand polling organizations in the United States and their total revenue in 1975 was estimated to be in excess of 500 million dollars. Gallup, Harris, Sindlinger, and Nielsen are among the most well-known pollsters in the world. They have in effect become the vox populi and their work touches the lives of all citizens.

Wheeler reported that at any moment, day or night, the Gallup organization is busy knocking on doors, gathering public opinion.³⁸ Gallup's affiliated firms are constantly at work all over the world-- in Greece, Japan, Iran and India. Gallup is engaged in global pulse taking.

Every night of the year the Sindlinger Company calls randomly selected telephone numbers throughout the country in an effort to gather the public's opinions regarding the United States economy. Private companies pay up to \$5,000 for this information. It is estimated that

³⁷Robert Erickson and Norman Luttbeg, American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content and Impact (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973), pp. 23-24.

³⁸Michael Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics (New York: Liveright, 1976).

Sindlinger had interviewed four and one-half million people over the past twenty-five years.

Louis Harris surveys the public on everything from presidential politics to international conflict. The Harris Alert System enables the pollster to activate his field operation almost instantly to gain an up-to-the-minute reading on the public's reaction to late breaking events.

Perhaps one of the better known polls is conducted by the A. C. Nielsen Company. Television monitors are wired to a central computer which silently monitors the viewing habits of each selected household. Based upon this monitoring technique, the Nielsen ratings help determine which shows stay and which shows go.

Opinion polls are used by virtually every candidate for public office, in the formation of government policy, in researching new and better products, building better corporate images, and when determining which television programs will be watched by the entire country.

In short, public opinion polls are a powerful influence on the American scene. To a very great degree these opinion polls and the organizations which administer them help determine the quality of one's life. How and when did they gain so much power and influence?

The systematic gathering of information about the American public began late in the eighteenth century.³⁹ A Frenchman, J. Hector St. John

³⁹ Charles W. Roll and Albert H. Cantril, Polls, Their Use and Misuse in Politics (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1972), pp. 5, 9, 11.

de Crevecoeur, began traveling the American frontier in approximately 1774 for the purpose of finding out how settlers were adjusting to life, what improvements they were making in their homesteads, and on what their prosperity, if any, depended. He made his visits semi-annually, gathered and reported his findings and as far as is known, did this collecting of information for his own interest.

In 1824, the first political fact-finding measure was conducted by the Harrisburg Pennsylvanian. The newspaper recorded a straw vote it had taken in Wilmington, Delaware for the purpose of determining which presidential candidate, Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay or William Crawford, had the edge with the voters. The poll indicated majority support for Andrew Jackson, a fact which was verified by his overwhelming defeat of the other candidates.

For the next few decades the newspaper polls were the most popular and depending on which newspaper was read the polls showed a variety of claims. As the population grew, various other attempts were made to gather public opinion. For example, in the early days of the nineteenth century, New York City's Tammany Hall workers would fan out across the city, stationing themselves at bridges and other key spots, asking people their political preferences. The "Tammany Poll" was conducted daily with different pollsters at each key location so the day-to-day readings would be less biased.

In 1932, Mrs. Alex Miller, the first woman to be elected Secretary of State in Iowa, made use of a sampling technique developed by her son-in-law to assess voter preference. A poll was conducted and it

was found that she had a good chance of winning. Not only that, but the pollster predicted the approaching Democratic sweep in Republican Iowa. Mrs. Miller won, so did the Democrats and her son-in-law, Dr. George Gallup, launched what Stuart Chase called "one of the most important contributions of social science in the twentieth century--the public opinion poll!"⁴⁰

What distinguished the Gallup poll, and others by Roper and Crosley, from newspaper and magazine polls was their alleged use of scientific sampling procedures which assured their accuracy within a few percentage points. In 1936, a popular magazine poll conducted by the Literary Digest was challenged by a Gallup type polling organization to ascertain which could most accurately predict the winner of the presidential election. The Gallup type poll reigned supreme.

By the end of the 1930's the Gallup Poll seemed to have become an institutional fixture. A new literature developed on the techniques of sampling and the pollsters did much to revive interest in the role public opinion played in a democracy.

But not all is honor and glory for the polling industry. There are disturbing signs that the surveys may be fundamentally flawed. In late 1975, the New York Times reported that the public was growing tired of answering the questions of the opinion researchers. To make matters worse the changing work habits and leisure habits of the public made it

⁴⁰Harwood L. Childs, Public Opinion: Nature, Formation and Role (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., April, 1965), p. 36.

more difficult to find people at home. Some people were becoming more protective of their privacy and just did not want pollsters invading it. In addition, the public was beginning to question the validity of polls and how they were reported. Many people realized what enormous profits were collected by pollsters and the fact that an unscrupulous polling organization may come up with a poll which says whatever its clients want it to say. It would, in fact, not be difficult to rig a poll; by subtly altering the wording of a question the results of any poll can be changed dramatically.

Since the power, influence and history of polls in general have been reviewed it now becomes necessary to gain some insight into the survey which is the subject of this study, the Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education.

The first Gallup Poll of the public's attitude toward the public schools was sponsored by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation (C.F.K., Ltd.). The purpose of that poll and each of the subsequent polls was to gather information regarding the public's perceptions of its schools and education in general. The financial sponsorship of the poll shifted from C.F.K., Ltd. to the Ford Foundation in 1974, but only for one year. From 1975 through 1978, the Institute for the Development of Educational Ideas (I/D/E/A/) provided the financial backing for the poll.

Initially, public educators were the primary recipients of the information collected by the Gallup organization. The first poll in 1969 was reported in the I/D/E/A Reporter and summarized in the Phi Delta Kappan as well as several other educational journals. The second

poll was published in its entirety in the Phi Delta Kappan and thus made available to some 80,000 educational leaders. Each year since, the Kappan has published the complete poll, in its September or October issue. In 1978, an estimated 122,000 PDK members and 18,000 non-members were receiving the complete results. Hundreds of thousands of reprints of the annual polls testify to the increased interest attached to them by the educational community.

Each year a national panel is formed for the purpose of suggesting questions for the poll. After the questions have been studied, the research procedure is formulated. Generally the poll samples the opinions of between 1,500 and 1,700 adults, 18 years of age or older. It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation.

Personal interviews were conducted with each of the respondents. Trained Gallup interviewers visited people in all types of local communities in every area of the nation. Interviews, for the most part, were conducted in the home of the interviewee. Taken together these communities represent a true microcosm of the nation.

The time of interviewing ranged from February to June, depending on the year, but the length of time spent in the field never exceeded six days in polls 2 through 10. The time spent interviewing during the first poll in 1969 was 17 days.

The findings of the annual poll apply to the nation as a whole and not to any state or local community. Since its beginning, summarized results of the annual poll have been made available to the general public through the various news media. This annual reporting

event has attracted attention by the fact that the top ten concerns of the public are featured news. Subsequently, the results of each annual poll are compared and contrasted with those which preceded it.

While other measures could be reported, the Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education had the capability of influencing education policy in the United States since 1970, as state and federal lawmakers, boards of education at all levels and educators with policy-making and implementative responsibility study the reaction of the public to questions about the public schools.⁴¹

⁴¹Gallup, loc. cit.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Summary of Ten of the Major Problems in Education as Identified by Respondents to the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education for the Years 1969 through 1978

Between 1969 and 1978, issues in the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education included voting for tax increases, open education, voucher systems, families moving to suburbs, satisfaction with curriculum and placing blame for poor school work. Only one question asked in the Gallup Poll did not vary from year to year: "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?"¹ Each year the results of this question were tabulated and the responses were ranked in declining order. By virtue of the continued use of this question, a benchmark was established which allowed Gallup to ascertain changes which may have taken place regarding the biggest problems of the schools, as perceived by respondents to the poll.

In this study, ten of the problems identified between 1969 and 1978 were used to categorize and examine two kinds of data: (1) education news reported by a selected metropolitan newspaper and (2) action of a selected board of education as contained in the minutes of that board.

¹These problems are described as the "biggest" problems in education since this is the phrasing used by Gallup in his reporting. For this reason the term "biggest" will be used in other places in this study.

A summary of the biggest problems in education, as perceived by respondents to the Gallup Polls (1969-1978), is presented in Table 1. Seventeen problem areas received major attention during this decade. One of these categories, "other," contained a wide variety of issues. The problems are rank ordered by year from 1969 through 1978.

For the purpose of this study a ranking was used to determine the ten biggest problems for the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978. The system used to determine the ranking is as follows: (1) areas which did not receive attention for more than three years of the ten-year period were eliminated; (2) rank orders for each category were totaled and the sum was divided by the number of years which that category received a ranking; and (3) the category which received the lowest score was ranked number one and the remaining categories were ranked in ascending order according to their scores.

Using this process the following categories were eliminated: (1) Transportation, (2) School Administration, (3) Teachers' Lack of Interest or Ability, (4) Crime, Vandalism, and Stealing, (5) Management of Funds or Programs, and (6) Other. The remaining categories were rank ordered and a tie developed between School Board Policies and Pupil Lack of Interest for tenth place. Pupil Lack of Interest received sporadic attention in other categories over the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978. Occasionally it was perceived as a factor affecting curriculum and discipline. Due to these circumstances this topic was not treated as a separate issue in this study. Instead, it was included as a part of both curriculum and discipline. In contrast, school

TABLE 1
The Ranking of the Biggest Problems in the Public Schools for the Years
1969-1978 as Identified by Gallup Poll Participants

Year	Discipline	Integration	Budget and Finance	Teachers	Dope and Drugs	School Size and Class Size	Facilities	Curriculum	Parents' Lack of Interest	School Board Policies	Pupil Lack of Interest	Transportation	School Administration	Teachers' Lack of Interest or Ability	Crime, Vandalism, Stealing	Management of Funds/Programs	Other
1969	1	5	4	3	-	-	2	8	6	-	9	7	-	-	-	-	10
1970	1	2	3	4	6	-	5	7	8	10	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
1971	3	2	1	7	5	-	4	10	8	-	-	-	9	6	-	-	-
1972	1	3	2	4	9	5	7	8	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1973	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	7	8	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1974	1	2	3	5	4	6	10	9	7	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1975	1	2	3	4	6	5	9	7	-	-	10	-	-	-	8	-	-
1976	1	2	3	6	5	8	-	4	7	9	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
1977	1	2	3	4	6	8	-	5	7	-	-	-	-	9	-	10	-
1978	1	4	3	6	2	7	-	5	10	-	8	-	-	-	9	-	-
Composite for the 10 Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10*	10*	**	**	**	**	**	**

* Denotes a tie for tenth place.

** Eliminated from this study.

boards received more specific attention on a year-to-year basis and as a result the category was retained as part of this study.

Further, terms used in questions regarding specific categories were not always well defined. For example, the questions about curriculum referred to poor curriculum or lack of proper curriculum and were broad in scope rather than specific questions about a subject area or course. When questions were asked about the size of schools, the responses varied from class size to total school population.

Discipline

Discipline was identified as the number one problem nine out of ten years. Only in 1971 did it receive a lower ranking (third). There are similarities in the public's view of discipline as an issue within the ten-year period. The respondents perceived that the inability to control the actions of students was directly related to poor schools. The solution to improving the quality of schooling was to enforce stricter disciplinary codes, especially in the area of student dress. Parents as well as non-parents indicated that teachers had lost their authority over students, students had too much freedom, and students lacked respect for adults. This is evidenced by results of the 1969 poll when 49 percent of the respondents said discipline was not strict enough and schools should take a stronger stand on dress codes. The results of the poll indicated that much of the concern over discipline in 1969 related to student disorders on college campuses.

In 1970, 53 percent of the respondents said discipline was not strict enough and schools should do something to enforce stricter codes.

Neither parents nor non-parents had any solutions to this problem but 66 percent of the parents were in favor of spanking to help control discipline. There was little difference in the 1971 poll, as 48 percent of those polled continued to say that discipline was not strict enough. They believed teachers lacked the authority to keep order and that students had too much freedom. Public opinion also indicated that if schools and teachers would or could hold the interest of students they would have fewer problems. This is evidenced by the fact that 66 percent of the people interviewed agreed that the need for remedial courses to capture the interest of students far outweighed the use of punitive measurements to help control disciplinary problems.

Student rights began to become an issue at the national level in 1971. Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union championed the cause for student rights. At the same time, parents and school personnel began to feel frustration at the loss of control instead of viewing the student rights movement as a new way of interacting with students.

Gallup tried to ascertain from the public its definition of discipline in the 1973 poll. This was the only specific question asked regarding discipline in that poll. Some of the responses were: Discipline meant respect for teachers, teachers' respect for students, student self-control, obeying rules, respecting views of those in authority, and being considerate of others who wish to learn in a peaceful atmosphere.

The people who wrote the questions for discipline in the 1974 poll expressed concern about crime and stealing and the two questions dealing

with discipline concentrated on these two areas. The results were that the respondents viewed stealing in the schools as a problem (33 percent) and 50 percent expressed concern that gangs were a big problem.

In 1975, Gallup asked those polled if they would be interested in a special school which enforced stricter discipline, stricter dress codes and more emphasis on the three R's. Fifty-seven percent of the public said it would be interested. Forty-nine percent of the respondents believed elementary students were not working hard enough and 54 percent believed the same of high school students.

The quality of education would improve if schools would enforce stricter discipline was a response received from 50 percent of the respondents in the 1976 poll. Forty-seven percent of the respondents said they would be willing to serve on an advisory committee to help the schools with discipline and related problems. In 1977, the percentage citing discipline as the major problem was the highest found during the ten years reviewed (26 percent). In 1978, the tenth year of the poll, 25 percent of the respondents continued to report discipline as the leading problem of the public schools. Table 2 displays the ranking of discipline and the percentage of people, parents or non-parents, who considered it the number one problem for the years 1969 through 1978. Parents with children in private schools always rated discipline in the public schools as a greater problem than did parents of the public school children.

At no time did more than 26 percent of the national sample rate discipline as the number one problem. In 1971, 14 percent of the

TABLE 2

Ranking of Discipline as a Major Problem in Education from
1969 through 1978 and the Percentage of Respondents
Ranking It as the Number One Problem

Year	Rank	Percent of Total
1969	1	26
1970	1	18
1971	3	14
1972	1	23
1973	1	22
1974	1	23
1975	1	23
1976	1	22
1977	1	26
1978	1	25

respondents rated discipline as the major problem, placing it behind finance and integration. Even though the percentages throughout the ten-year period were far less than a simple majority of the respondents, the consistency with which it ranked first identifies discipline as the number one concern of the American people.

Integration

During the same ten-year period, 1969 through 1978, problems associated with the integration of schools were named often enough to place integration as the second major problem facing the local schools.

Parents of students in school believed integration was less of a problem than did non-parents. The attitude toward the concept of integration itself was less antagonistic than the attitude toward the manner by which it would be carried out, namely the busing of students to equalize black:white ratios in the public schools. It was the busing issue which precipitated school shutdowns and riots and set the tone for a new era in displeasure centered around schooling in America.²

The majority of those polled in 1971 said that integration had improved the quality of education for blacks but not for whites. However, they did believe integration had improved relations between both black and white students.

Table 3 illustrates the rank and percentage of those polled who said integration was the major problem; in 1971, integration was selected by 21 percent of the sample as the biggest problem. Since 1971, the percentage of respondents viewing integration as the major problem steadily declined, even though the ranking of the problem remained consistently high.

Finance

Financial support of the public schools has long been an issue with the public. From 1969 through 1978, budgets and bond issues have been voted down in increasing numbers. Opposition to voting for tax

²It is interesting to note that at the time of this writing (June 10, 1981) the House of Representatives passed legislation aimed at halting court-ordered busing of school children for desegregation purposes.

TABLE 3

Ranking of Integration as a Major Problem in Education from 1969 through 1978 and the Percentage of Respondents Ranking It as the Number One Problem

Year	Rank	Percent of Total
1969	5	13
1970	2	17
1971	2	21
1972	3	18
1973	2	18
1974	2	16
1975	2	15
1976	2	15
1977	2	13
1978	4	13

increases in the public schools, for any reason, has steadily increased. In 1970, the question of how to obtain financial support for schools was the most perplexing problem to the respondents. The majority wanted to transfer the burden of financial support from local real estate to state government. Price and wage controls established by the federal government, double-digit inflation and the inequities associated with the property tax began to take their toll on the attitudes of the public toward financial support of its schools.

During the period of time covered in this study, most of the public voiced the opinion that education was still the road to success, the pathway to a better life. But, at the same time, the public was becoming increasingly more frustrated with the news of low test scores, discipline problems and the continued requests by school boards for increased financial support. In 1971, the public wanted to cut the costs of education, but when asked which areas they were willing to cut (such as reducing the number of teachers by increasing class size, cutting all teachers' salaries by a set percentage, eliminating after school activities, establishing year-round schools, canceling subjects that did not have the minimum number of students registered, or reducing the number of administrative personnel), only two areas were agreed upon. Fifty-two percent of the national sample were in favor of canceling subjects which lacked student enrollment and 50 percent agreed on a cut-back of school administrators. Forty-seven percent of the people favored a year-round school. Thirty-nine percent of those polled favored making the parents responsible for getting their children to and from school, thus eliminating bus transportation.

From the results of this question, it was concluded that the people wanted to maintain quality personnel and materials. The quality of curriculum and teachers received strong support. While the respondents did not want the quality of education to suffer, nevertheless the majority of those polled were opposed to raising taxes and opposed to the voucher system. Throughout these ten years those who supported increased taxes for school spending were found to be better educated, younger,

white-collar workers and Caucasian.

In 1972, 56 percent of the public was against raising local taxes but 50 percent of them said they would favor increased taxes at the state level to reduce the local burden. These findings were consistent throughout the ten years of this study. People reported that they still wanted to maintain local control but wanted the financial burden placed at a higher level of government. From a review of the Gallup Polls it became evident that most of the public was displeased with the method of financing schools, the local property tax. Table 4 illustrates the attention given to finance as a major problem for 1969-1978.

Teachers

From 1969 through 1972, parents were in favor of their children becoming teachers. Seventy-five percent of those responding to the national survey indicated that they would like to have their children teach in the public schools. Forty-five percent of the public said it was acceptable for teachers to join unions but not to strike. Fifty-nine percent were opposed to the strike issue. However, as teacher organizations continued to gain more power and influence, the public began to question these organizations: were they established for the purpose of improving education or simply for the well-being of teachers? In 1976, 38 percent of those polled in the national survey indicated they believed unions had harmed public education while 27 percent perceived unions as making no difference in the quality of education. Only 22

TABLE 4

Ranking of Finance as a Major Problem in Education from
1969 through 1978 and the Percentage of Respondents
Ranking it as the Number One Problem

Year	Rank	Percent of Total
1969	4	14
1970	3	17
1971	1	23
1972	2	19
1973	3	16
1974	3	13
1975	3	14
1976	3	14
1977	3	12
1978	3	13

percent said unions had improved the quality of public school education.

A chronic concern of the public during the ten-year period investigated in this study was a desire for better teachers. This did not necessarily mean teachers who were better trained in their subject area but, rather, teachers who could communicate, understand, relate to,

inspire and motivate students.³ Table 5 illustrates the attention given to teachers by the public over the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978.

TABLE 5

Ranking of Teachers as a Major Problem in Education from
1969 through 1978 and the Percentage of Respondents
Ranking It as the Number One Problem

Year	Rank	Percent of Total
1969	3	17
1970	4	12
1971	7	6
1972	4	14
1973	4	13
1974	5	11
1975	4	11
1976	6	11
1977	4	11
1978	6	9

³ Respondents to the Gallup Poll defined "better" teachers as teachers who cared about their children and were willing to communicate, inspire and motivate them.

Dope and Drugs

In 1969, drug use by students was not mentioned as one of the biggest problems in the poll. In 1970, it was mentioned often enough to place it in sixth place on the major problem list with 11 percent viewing it as the major problem.

In 1971, the topic of drugs in the schools remained on the list and received attention by 12 percent of those polled, moving it up to fifth on the list. In 1972, drugs dropped to ninth place, but the results of the 1973 poll rocketed the problem back into fifth place as 10 percent of the respondents considered it the major problem. By 1974, use of drugs as a problem area had moved to fourth place. As the concern over this problem increased, the public began to see a need for programs for students explaining the effect of drugs. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated a need for programs for students on the effects of drugs.

From 1969 through 1974, only one specific question was asked regarding drugs. That question appeared in 1970 and asked parents if they believed marijuana and other drugs were a serious problem in their schools. Sixty-four percent of the respondents believed the problem of the use of drugs was serious. Two questions were asked in the 1975 poll concerning drugs and alcohol: Is the use of drugs a serious problem in the community? What about alcoholic drinks? Fifty-eight percent responded that drugs were a serious local problem and 55 percent said alcohol was a problem. The drug problem dropped two places in 1975 to sixth.

In 1978, the poll asked a number of questions about drugs. These questions were specifically about the use of marijuana, hard drugs and alcohol. The consensus of respondents was that drug use was serious enough in the schools to move it to the number two problem. As indicated in Table 6, the drug issue has received major attention nine out of ten years.

TABLE 6

Ranking of Dope and Drugs as a Major Problem in Education from
1969 through 1978 and the Percentage of Respondents
Ranking It as the Number One Problem

Year	Rank	Percent of Total
1969	-	-
1970	6	11
1971	5	12
1972	9	4
1973	5	10
1974	4	13
1975	6	9
1976	5	11
1977	6	7
1978	2	13

Class Size

Class size was viewed as a problem for the first time in the 1972 Gallup Poll. Beginning then, the optimum effective size of a high school was a question. In 1973, 57 percent of the public believed that high schools were becoming too large to manage. The public was convinced that smaller classes made a great deal of difference. They held the belief that student achievement was directly related to class size but in contrast the public did not believe that additional money spent on children made a significant difference in their achievement. In other words, the public was not willing to decrease class size by hiring additional staff.

Declining enrollment was included as an issue in 1976. The public said that schools should reduce expenditures as enrollment declined. The issue then became one of too few students and too much expense--class size viewed from a different perspective. By 1978, the issue of declining enrollment had evolved into a question of what to do about closing schools.

Facilities

In 1969, respondents to the Gallup Poll indicated that modern school facilities and equipment needed attention as indicated by its number two ranking; 22 percent perceived this area as the number one problem confronting education. As the cost of education steadily increased and the enrollment in the schools began to decline, the concern over the expenses of new facilities increased and the public began to question the added expense. This shift in attitude is evidenced by the

fact that in 1972, 53 percent of the public said new schools were more expensive than they needed to be and there were too many "fancy" things and too much equipment purchased, most of which they viewed as unnecessary. By 1975, only three percent of the public were concerned about a lack of facilities as a major problem. The facilities issue never made the list of major problems from 1976 through 1978.

Curriculum

Over the ten-year period "lack of proper curriculum" was cited repeatedly as one of the major problems in the schools. In contrast, beginning in 1972, Gallup asked the general public what was right with education and curriculum ranked second, in 1973 it ranked first, from 1974 through 1976, the question was not asked and in 1977 it once again ranked number one. While curriculum has been one of the general concerns over the period of this study it has also been highly regarded by the public. The public was schizophrenic in its perceptions of the curriculum as it simultaneously praised and condemned it.

In 1969 and 1970, parents wanted to know more about curriculum and innovations and opened the issue as to whether curriculum was reality related. Between 1971 and 1973, the public praised the curriculum of the schools but indicated an interest in national testing as a basis for comparing schools across the country. Beginning in 1973, parents expressed a desire for more career education and alternative schools for disinterested students. In 1974, parents questioned whether schools were interested enough to try innovations. Between 1975 and 1978, there was an increased demand for returning to the basics and that the minimum

requirements for graduation should be reading, writing, mathematics, and a salable skill.

Throughout the ten years investigated in this study concern over social promotion and an emphasis on testing to ensure student competency steadily increased. Demand for remedial education, alternative schools, and more adult education courses was evidenced. The area of curriculum was praised and criticized simultaneously. Concern was evidenced regarding teacher and student lack of interest. Perhaps the criticism of the curriculum was the delivery and reception of what was being taught and not the overall design or content of the curriculum.

Parents

Even though parental lack of interest was cited as one of the major problems confronting education from 1969 through 1978, parents have been supportive of the schools. This is evidenced by the fact that parents believed education was the road to a better life. The problem might have been due to the lack of adequate information about the schools and school programs. In 1974, poll results indicated that the public wanted information from schools which would help it make better judgments about its schools, especially the methods of teaching and the qualifications of teachers.

In 1976, the public viewed the decline in test scores as a result of a lack of parental concern and did not necessarily lay the blame on the curriculum. As a result, the public began to realize that education was a shared responsibility. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed said they favored courses which might help them help their

children. Perhaps the lack of parental interest was due to the minimal opportunities offered to parents by the schools which would enable them to become a part of the educational team.

School Boards

School boards have been perceived by the public as having done a good job and therefore have received a vote of confidence over the past ten years. The majority of the public, 59 percent, as reflected in the 1972 poll believed that boards work hard to improve education. In 1976, the public indicated that it wanted the boards to have more local control and retain final authority over curriculum matters, the hiring of teachers, budgets and the overall district operation. Even though the public consistently gave the school board high marks, Gallup conceded that the public either did not know or did not understand what a school board was supposed to do. The lack of information the public had regarding the function of the school board may have been the cause for the misunderstanding of the function. The high regard for boards of education stemmed from a question in the Gallup survey asking whether or not a person would serve on a school board if asked. More people answered yes to that question than did those in the negative.

Pupil Lack of Interest

For the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978, pupil lack of interest received enough attention to rank it in tenth place, in a tie with school board policies. This area received attention as a major problem for four of the ten years (1969, 1975, 1976 and 1978) but at no

time during these four years were specific questions asked about pupil lack of interest as such. Instead, concerns regarding this area were expressed in the curriculum and discipline categories. Public opinion indicated that parents as well as non-parents expressed a need for schools and teachers to hold the interest of students. If this task could be accomplished the respondents said a better disciplinary atmosphere would result.

In 1973, parents favored more career education and alternative schools for disinterested students; however, pupil lack of interest as a separate category did not receive enough attention to rank it in the list of the biggest problems.

A Summary of the Content of 3,301 Educational News Articles
Which Appeared in a Metropolitan Newspaper
for the Years 1969 through 1978

The metropolitan newspaper used in this study maintains a library which contains articles clipped from the newspaper on a daily basis. The articles are filed for future reference.

For the purpose of this study, all files for 1969 through 1978 which referred to education were reviewed. Each educational article was read, analyzed, recorded and placed under one of ten headings: (1) Discipline, (2) Integration, (3) Finance, (4) Teachers, (5) Dope and Drugs, (6) Size of School or Classes, (7) Facilities, (8) Curriculum, (9) Parent Lack of Interest, and (10) School Boards. The ten headings used to categorize newspaper articles were the same as those reported in the Gallup Poll as the biggest problems in education from 1969 through

1978. Any article that could not be placed in one of the ten areas was not used as a part of this study. As a result three hundred and eighty-six articles (less than 11 percent of the articles reviewed) were not included.

Two researchers were involved in the process of analyzing each education news article in the files of the metropolitan newspaper. Every article was read by at least one of the researchers. When the categorization of an article was questioned by one researcher, the other researcher read the article. The two researchers discussed the content of the article and jointly agreed on its placement. The content areas included in the ten categories are described in the paragraphs which follow.

Discipline. Accounts of school crime and vandalism, student dress codes, corporal punishment, lack of respect for parents and teachers, permissiveness, and school conduct were included in this category.

Integration. This category included educational news items about busing for the purpose of integration, community disorders surrounding desegregation, the courts' role in the integration process, and editorials which examined both sides of the issue of forced integration.

Budget and Finance. Reports of school budgets and bond issues were included in this category. Also included were articles on federal and state aid to schools, records of expenditures for education, school lunch costs, per pupil costs, and alternative ways of financing public education. In short, any problem encountered by schools involving the

financing of education was included under budget and finance.

Teachers. Political activity of teacher unions or associations including negotiations and contractual agreements, teacher preparation programs and supply and demand for teachers were included in this category.

Dope and Drugs. Use of drugs by students, the need for drug education programs and results of public opinion polls regarding drug usage as well as the topic of drug raids in schools comprised this category.

School Size or Class Size. This area included articles on school enrollment, pupil:teacher ratios, overcrowding conditions, optimum school size and reports of declining enrollment.

Facilities. Articles discussing construction, renovation and daily operation of school buildings were included within the category of facilities.

Curriculum. Curriculum included articles on any programs the schools offered. It also included school activities but news from the sports page were omitted. Results of curriculum studies, reports of declining test scores, and articles about censorship of materials, back to the basic movement and innovations in education were all included in the curriculum section. Articles which related to pupils' lack of interest in school also were placed in this category.

Parents. This category included information regarding parents' lack of interest as well as parental support for the schools.

School Boards. Activities of local and state school boards, school board associations, the reporting of procedures, campaigns and results of school board elections were included in this category.

The results of the categorization of the 3,301 metropolitan newspaper articles are illustrated in Table 7. The number of articles appearing in each category are listed by year and totaled for the ten-year period (1969 through 1978). Each category is ranked for the ten-year period. The total number of educational articles analyzed each year is listed in the right hand column.

Articles included under the category of budget and finance constituted 22 percent of the total articles reviewed. Twenty-two percent of the articles reviewed throughout the ten years of this study discussed the subject of integration. Curriculum was the subject of 21 percent of all articles read. Eight percent of the articles were placed in the teacher category and seven percent in school boards.

Discipline, the problem identified as the biggest in the schools according to the Gallup Poll received attention in only five percent of the articles reviewed, ranking it in sixth place in coverage of educational news. Combined, the four remaining categories, school size, facilities, drug use and parents, received attention in five percent of the educational items found in the library of the metropolitan newspaper for the years 1969 through 1978.

Forty-three percent of all educational news articles reviewed appeared in three years, 1974, 1975 and 1976. Of the 1,575 articles recorded for the three-year span, 612 (39 percent) were articles discussing integration.

TABLE 7
A Summary of the Categorization of 3,301 Education News Articles Appearing in a
Metropolitan Newspaper for the Years 1969 through 1978

Year	Discipline	Integration	Budget and Finance	Teachers	Dope and Drugs	School Size and Class Size	Facilities	Curriculum	Parents	School Boards	Total**
1969	15	0	95	8	2	21	10	30	0	100	281
1970	4	2	47	6	4	0	14	35	1	18	131
1971	13	4	44	10	9	2	6	52	2	9	151
1972	21	3	87	4	5	1	9	42	0	38	210
1973	2	49	69	29	7	3	0	48	0	8	216
1974	21	145	114	42	2	13	2	97	0	33	469
1975	14	209	75	77	5	10	8	134	4	4	540
1976	27	258	81	38	5	9	1	112	5	30	566
1977	31	19	100	32	2	12	0	114	4	11	324
1978	29	106	101	55	1	8	1	99	0	13	413
Total for Ten Years	177	795	813	301	42	79	51	763	16	264	3,301
Percentage of Total Number of Articles***	.05	.22	.22	.08	.01	.02	.01	.21	.004	.07	
Rank for Ten-Year Period	6	2	1	4	9	7	8	3	10	5	

* The ten categories used in this summary are identical to the categories used to denote the ten biggest Problems facing education according to the Gallup Poll for 1969 through 1978.

** Does not include 386 education news articles which were not categorized in this study.

*** Based on all education news articles in the files of the metropolitan newspaper including 386 education news articles not categorized in this study.

For the ten-year period, the issue of financing the public schools was the subject of 813 articles found in the file. This issue received consistent attention throughout the ten-year span.

In the remainder of this section, the data and findings for each of the ten categories are reported.

Discipline

Summary of findings. Discipline was perceived as the biggest problem facing public education by respondents to the annual Gallup Poll for the ten years from 1969-1978. Yet news articles relating to students' lack of respect for authority, poor student conduct or permissiveness were uncommon.

Three areas--vandalism, corporal punishment and suspension of students--received the most attention in metropolitan newspaper articles for the ten-year period examined in this study. Reports of vandalism to school property were the most frequent of the 177 articles. Control of student behavior by use of physical punishment and removal of students from school were the next most frequently appearing news items. As reports of student suspension began to receive attention, articles about a student's right to due process of law became more common. While the practice of suspending students from school was questioned in the content of the articles, the use of corporal punishment was not.

Lack of discipline in the schools of the state was not assumed to be a problem, but vandalism to school property was viewed as a problem. Reports of school violence increased during the latter part of the ten-year period.

Findings. For 1969, there were fifteen articles in the educational files of the metropolitan newspaper about discipline. The majority of those articles reported vandalism and window breakage as the major problem and one article reported riots on college campuses. Max Rafferty, in a syndicated column, discussed permissiveness in the public schools and indicated he did not like the fact that students were "doing their own thing."

In 1970, the only mention of lack of discipline was reports of vandalism. Window breakage was once again the most discussed issue. One article cited a lawsuit brought by a parent against a school because of the expulsion of his child.

Whether or not corporal punishment should be permitted in schools was reviewed by the Nebraska Legislature in 1971, but the Unicameral refused to ban it. The Legislature viewed responsibility for discipline as a role of the parents. Several local education associations and parent teacher associations supported corporal punishment as did the state education association. The remainder of articles reported on occurrences of vandalism such as window breakage and stealing school equipment.

Vandalism and apprehension of teenagers for vandalism were the predominant news about discipline during 1972. Vandalism incidents were reported in three different areas of the state. Articles about lack of discipline in the schools centered upon an increase in student protests; as a result of this outspoken behavior, teachers perceived student discipline as a major problem. Practices of physical punishment

were questioned by students. One editorial stated that permissiveness, or letting students do as they please, was the major cause of the lack of discipline in the schools. A March 17, 1972 article indicated that a judge had ordered the reinstatement of two students who had been suspended because they had not been afforded due process. Other articles centered upon corporal punishment as a means of improving school discipline. One school system was conducting a \$4,000 study to determine what discipline was like in its schools.

In 1972, teachers, at their annual state convention, listed discipline as their chief concern. The topic of student rights was also an issue as the lack of due process continued to be reported in articles on lawsuits over suspension or expulsion of students.

Only two articles were found in 1973 regarding discipline. One article discussed dress codes and the other stated that school leaders in the state were finding that discipline woes were easing. They cited the following reasons: better teachers and improved ways of handling discipline problems.

Twenty-two articles about discipline appeared in 1974. The content of one article questioned whether suspension was simply a means of pushing students out of school; at about the same time the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was probing the data for what they described as "a push out link" for minority students. An article stated that a school board in Texas would allow the principal to paddle a student providing a witness was present. A report issued by the Children's Defense Fund was the topic of two articles about suspension used as a

means of getting rid of students rather than to change student behavior. The remaining seventeen articles reported incidents of vandalism.

Some discipline articles in 1975 mentioned increasing reports of violence in the classroom and the rising cost of vandalism. Other articles centered upon corporal punishment and lawsuits regarding corporal punishment. One article cited the fact that discipline in the Midlands was less of a problem than elsewhere in the country. Four of the fourteen articles were directly related to the results of the Gallup Poll and its report that discipline was the number one problem in the public schools. A Newhouse News Service article cited several studies which were being conducted to determine the extent of violence in the nation's schools.

In 1976, the United States Office of Education authorized the expenditure of large sums of money to fight crime in the schools. While articles on vandalism again received the most attention in the newspaper, several articles on expulsion rules and due process appeared. In 1976, an editorial appealing for improved discipline in schools appeared in the newspaper, noting that order in the classroom was necessary if learning were to occur. Numerous articles reported discussions about implications of and passage of Legislative Bill 503 (L.B. 503) providing due process for students.

During the ten-year period of this study the greatest number of articles on discipline (31) were printed in 1977. Vandalism in the schools was the subject of the majority of these articles.

A December 27, 1977 report of a survey of state school administrators conducted by the Nebraska Council for School Administrators concluded that discipline was not a major problem in Nebraska's schools. Several other articles that appeared on discipline supported this conclusion.

In contrast to what was being reported about Nebraska schools, national news articles reported that school violence was the greatest concern of teachers and students in large city schools as self-preservation rather than education became their primary task. One such report came from the minutes of a Senate subcommittee hearing. Another national report summarized a story about a student throwing acid on a fellow student. Of a less serious nature were two articles about a student swearing and a student walkout in a cafeteria. A newspaper editorial once again spoke out against student permissiveness.

Several articles reported that the Supreme Court ruled that students could be spanked. The consensus of these articles was that teachers would once again be in control if they could use corporal punishment. Two articles discussed spanking students and the psychological implications of this form of punishment. In October, an article reported that the Gallup Poll results showed discipline remaining as the top problem facing public schools.

In 1978, articles about discipline focused on practice of, and legal implications of suspension. Included in these reports of challenges to practices being used were discussions of alternatives. Several incidents of vandalism also were reported. Stories about

national concerns included four incidents of violence and the infiltration of the Klu Klux Klan in the schools.

Integration

Summary of findings. The desegregation of schools in America has been an issue since the Brown vs. Topeka decision in May of 1954, but the method to bring about a racial balance in the schools became a major problem for the public schools beginning in 1973. The United States Supreme Court upheld a decision to bus students for the purpose of integration. Violence, school closings and ultimately, the placing of one school, South Boston High School, in federal receivership were results of the busing issue. While the Federal Court judges were exercising decision-making powers about integration, legislative branches of the government were passive. By 1976, many of the larger school districts in the United States had experienced some type of disorder associated with court-ordered busing to accomplish integration.

Integration of the schools received more attention in the educational articles of the metropolitan newspaper than any other educational issue during 1975 and 1976, and for the ten-year period covered by this study integration was second only to school finance in total number of articles. It is interesting to note that during 1977, the year a large city in the state integrated its schools in a peaceful manner, nineteen articles about integration and its related problems were found in the education files. This number was down 238 articles from the previous year.

Findings. Integration of education was the topic of only ten articles appearing in the metropolitan newspaper from 1969 through 1972. In 1973, forty-two articles reported the problems of school segregation and plans for integrating the schools by means of busing students to equalize racial balance. The United States Supreme Court upheld busing as a legitimate means of integrating schools even though national organizations, e.g., the Parent Teachers Association, opposed the practice. The federal government awarded grants to the schools which agreed to integrate voluntarily while schools which remained segregated reported that federal education funds were being withheld.

Nationally syndicated writers began to draw attention to the fact that suburbs were excluded from court-ordered busing; for integration to be effective, they concluded, suburban, as well as city schools, should be racially balanced.

In September of 1973, racial violence erupted in Boston when the federal courts ordered the schools to integrate. School boards throughout America threatened to appeal the issue of busing to the United States Supreme Court.

One hundred and forty-five news articles on integration constituted the major content of the education news file for 1974. While the public was rejecting busing for the integration of schools, the courts maintained their pro-busing positions.

A May 13, 1974 column by James Kilpatrick, printed in the metropolitan newspaper, pointed to the impact of school desegregation on the people and institutions of the country. Kilpatrick stated that he believed the desegregation order was the most important decision of the

century and that it paved the way for a new structure of law in America.

Twenty-seven educational news articles spoke to the interruption of schooling in Boston due to forced busing to achieve integration. Some of the headlines read: "4,500 Bostonians Protest Busing Order," "Boston Is Saying, 'Nevah,'" and "Boston Is Braced as Busing Begins."

Other articles reported the United States Supreme Court's rejection of busing plans. Detroit's plan to bus students across suburban district boundaries was rejected by a 5-4 vote of the United States Supreme Court; the Court held that busing for integration must be planned within the boundaries of school districts.

Within the state, a senator introduced a legislative bill to equalize educational opportunities through busing. This bill was not passed. Instead, the Nebraska Legislature supported an amendment to the United States Constitution prohibiting school busing for the purpose of achieving racial balance.

The integration process in a number of states was reported in ninety-nine articles. Violence and disorder characterized integration plans in Boston and Charlotte, North Carolina, but the Tulsa, Oklahoma plan was viewed as a model of successful integration.

The violence accompanying Boston's school integration was headline news in early 1975, as riots and fights caused officials to close the Boston schools. A March 13 Washington Post Service article stated that twenty-one years after the Supreme Court outlawed segregation no proof existed as to the success of the integration movement.

In June of 1975, James Coleman changed his view of busing as a desirable means of integration of the schools. Coleman, an early advocate of court-ordered busing, expressed the opinion that it would have been better if the busing policy to force integration had never materialized. During the same month a syndicated column described housing patterns in America, not schooling, as the needed focus for integration efforts. Integrated facilities was the subject of still another article exploring methods to provide for the integration situation.

Articles about increased numbers of private academies appeared for the first time; one article reported that 3,000 "segregation academies" had been established in the South. "White flight" from urban suburb areas also received attention. In separate articles, two nationally syndicated columnists, Kilpatrick and Raspberry, described court-ordered integration of schools as a failure and strong anti-busing sentiments in America a threat to public peace. In contrast, however, results of the annual Gallup Poll on education reported that public acceptance of busing was growing. Some successful non-violent school openings had taken place in the fall of 1975 and one article equated the lack of violence with the public's acceptance of busing.

The metropolitan newspaper file on education news contained 209 articles on integration in 1975, more articles than the total for the preceding five years combined. Integration, and the violence and disorder associated with it, received more attention in the education news than any other topic.

Education news articles regarding integration were at a ten-year high in 1976, as 258 articles were found in the education files of the metropolitan newspaper. Some articles described leadership as the key to effective integration while others cited teachers as the determiners of the success of integration. Results of federal studies were inconclusive. Additional federal funds were sought by school districts as the costs of integrating schools increased. Attempted solutions for school integration, such as the magnet school concept, were the subject of some articles. (These schools were specialized schools which sought to achieve integration by appealing to a wide variety of students from across the district and at the same time eliminating the need for busing as a means of achieving a racial balance.)

Boston continued to be plagued with violence and disorder due to court-ordered integration and on August 18, 1976, a Federal Appeals Court placed South Boston High School in federal receivership. A new era in the integration battle had begun; if federal integration orders were not followed the federal government would replace the local school board as policy makers for the district.

Busing of students was a controversial issue at both the Democratic and Republican political conventions in 1976, and each party included a policy statement on integration in its platform.

In Nebraska, in the fall of 1976, the Omaha Public Schools began a new school year under a court order to desegregate. Busing was used to seek to balance the ratio between white and black students. Reports of white flight to the suburban schools appeared in the metropolitan

newspaper but no violence or disorder was reported. In fact, the Omaha plan received attention in the press because of its positive and peaceful debut.

In 1977, news of integration as an educational issue was reported in nineteen articles. Most of these articles either mentioned the peaceful integration plan in Omaha or the fact that federal funds were helping defray the costs of the Omaha plan. Other articles reported peaceful integration plans in Kansas City and Chicago.

By 1978, integration was back in the news but the number of articles was moderate (106) compared to 1975 and 1976.

Revoking the tax-exempt status of private schools which discriminated against minorities in their admission procedures became a reality. The Senate refused to limit the federal judges to order busing to achieve integration. Federal judges had wielded tremendous power over school districts since 1974. Federal courts, not Congress, had assumed responsibility for integrating the public schools in America; not in words but in actions, Congress remained aloof.

During the ten-year period (1969-1978), continued increases in federal funding to support integration, increased numbers of police working in schools to help alleviate racial tension and reported school closings due to integration were the major subjects of education news items appearing in the metropolitan newspaper. White flight from city school districts continued to boost enrollment in the suburbs. In 1975, a new Coleman study reporting that integrated schools did not change the social values of blacks or whites, nor did it improve the academic

performance of either race marked a possible starting point for changes in social and judicial views. The bottom line of Coleman's report was that integration had failed.

Budget and Finance

Summary of findings. Methods of financing the public schools received the majority of attention in articles about school budgets or finance during the ten years examined by this study. Articles about national vouchers, alternatives to the state property tax and discussion of federal and state aid to education were common.

Articles about bond issues and the need for financing school facility construction were common throughout the ten-year period as suburban school districts in the state continued to experience growth. Beginning in 1973, the rising cost of education was the subject of a majority of education finance articles, as inflation, mandated special education programs, court-ordered busing and school lunches required more money. Some schools in the nation were short of funds and were forced to close before the school term ended.

Spending limitations were removed from Nebraska budgets in 1969 but as the cost of education increased, "lids" on spending were the subject of several articles in 1977 and 1978.

Findings. News of financing the public schools constituted the major content of the educational news articles appearing in the metropolitan newspaper during 1969. Ninety-five (34 percent) of the 281 educational articles pertained to the financing of public schools by

local, state, and federal sources.

President Nixon contemplated cutbacks in federal aid to education. At the same time, however, a federal task force was organized to study allocation of federal dollars for improvement of the quality of education in large city schools. State issues included repeal of the eight percent lid on school budgets; local school district finance news concerned passage of bond issues and increases of annual budgets.

While Nixon questioned cash as a cure for educational problems, Congress granted a \$1.1 billion increase in the Health, Education and Welfare budget. The majority of this money was earmarked for educational programs for disadvantaged workers. A May 1969 article reported that the cost of education was predicted to quadruple in the next decade but James Allen, United States Commissioner of Education, in a July 9, 1969 article, assured the public increased costs would be absorbed at the federal level.

A January 27, 1970 news article reported that President Nixon vetoed a bill which would have placed over \$8 million in state school coffers. State aid to education was the subject of nine articles during 1970 with views of both proponents and opponents being reported. Local school bond issues were the subject of fourteen articles; most of these bond issues were suburban areas as increased enrollments overcrowded existing buildings. Increases in local school budgets were reported in twelve articles but few details about reasons for budget increases were provided. A number of articles described inflation as a major concern of state school leaders.

Local bond issues and budgets were the major subjects of the school finance news in 1971; twenty articles announcing school bond issues were reported. One article discussed the increased failure of passage of bond issues in the Midwest and examined the issue of whether or not local property tax was an appropriate method for financing public schools. The funding of state Title I reading programs was investigated by federal authorities, and questions about whether or not parochial school students legally could participate in programs funded by public monies were raised.

Seven articles discussed state aid to education. The State Department of Education requested an additional \$25 million and the legislature's budget committee voted to disregard it. One of the articles featured a review of a plan to make the state totally responsible for financing the public schools, but this bill never made it through committee. Another legislative bill authorized investment of idle funds by schools.

Opposition to the voucher system was the subject of an editorial appearing in the metropolitan newspaper. Another article reviewed proposed increases in federal expenditures to public schools; finance problems were a subject for debate at the state level. At the federal level the United States Office of Education (USOE) was reported to have allocated \$4.6 million for career education.

During 1972, the debate about state aid to education continued; a national report cited low expenditures by the state. The metropolitan newspaper supported the governor's plan to reduce school spending or at

least not to give "blank checks" to schools in the form of school aid. Six editorials admonished state legislators to go easy on the taxpayer. The newspaper also reported the governor's proposal to limit school expenditures.

One article reported that only 47 percent of 1,068 school construction issues in the United States had been approved by voters during the past year. In the same article the United States Commissioner of Education, Sidney Marland, stated that the taxing system, not building programs, was what was being "voted down." Eighteen articles about bond issues in the state were reported by the metropolitan newspaper. News articles relating to federal funding of education included a cutback in research funds and various proposed plans to finance education, including national vouchers.

Increasing costs of education and methods of financing education at the local, state and national levels received the most attention in school finance news during 1973. The United States Supreme Court ruled in March of 1973 that the property tax was a legal means of financing local education. Despite this ruling, opposition from editorial writers and nationally syndicated columnists was common.

For the first time during the period of this study, news of school closings due to lack of federal funding was reported. Two schools, one in South Dakota and the other in Massachusetts both primarily engaged in educating children of military families, closed early. Two editorials, one by James Kilpatrick, the other by William Buckley, opposed the voucher plan. Constitutional questions about whether or not the federal

government had the right to support private schools through federal aid were raised in numerous articles.

At the state level an article reported that four of ten schools would have difficulty living within their 1973-1974 budgets even though state aid had increased by \$20 million since the previous year. Rising costs due to inflation was cited as the main reason for this problem. Fifteen articles cited problems in continuing school lunch programs because of a lack of reimbursement. Finally, the House of Representatives voted to increase school lunch reimbursements and guidelines were approved by the federal government to provide free and reduced price lunches to the disadvantaged. The problem of energy consumption was the subject of one article concerning the State School Boards Association. Reduced travel and shortened schedules were suggested. Local bond issues were the subject of twenty-one articles during 1973.

During 1974, a new issue, financing the cost of school busing to achieve integration, was reported in eight articles found in the metropolitan newspaper files. A related topic was increased costs of busing due to adoption of new safety standards for school buses.

Local property taxes as a method of financing schools and costs of school lunch programs were national concerns in 1974. Public-supported tuition aid to private schools was favored by James Kilpatrick in a syndicated column. The day after the Kilpatrick article, the metropolitan newspaper published an editorial in opposition to public aid to private schools. Cost effectiveness of private and public schools was the subject of several articles. Also, per pupil

expenditures in other states were compared to Nebraska per pupil expenditures.

At the state level, state aid to education continued to be the primary topic reported in the newspaper. Thirty-seven articles which related to this issue appeared in the metropolitan newspaper files while twenty-one articles appeared on school bond issues. Federal grants to midwestern schools were mentioned in eleven articles.

Local, state and federal funding of schools was the issue most written about in the metropolitan newspaper in 1975. The property tax was opposed but all other plans to finance schools were not deemed feasible by lawmakers or the public. Special education funding also was an issue in Nebraska in 1975, as state funding was almost five million dollars less than funds required to fulfill the federal mandate. In 1975, the United States Supreme Court ruled that private schools could not receive public aid. A July 1975 article noted that local school budgets were rejected regularly on the east and west coasts.

Continued funding of school lunches remained an issue; at the same time Congress was debating how much federal money was to be allocated for the education of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. An editorial in the metropolitan newspaper expressed the opinion that more dollars did not guarantee better education. Although concerns about increased education costs were being expressed, certain special interest groups--special education, Indo-Chinese relief and gifted education--were obtaining the federal funds.

In 1976, financial support from state sources was a topic in the legislature as the State Board of Education asked for budget increases and a state senator introduced a bill to abolish the right of a local school board to levy a four mill tax for capital construction. Results of a poll indicated that Nebraska voters wanted more assistance from the state but another article reported that Nebraska ranked forty-seventh among the fifty states in state support to schools.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1976, reports from New Jersey, Ohio and Oregon indicated that schools in those states were closing due to the lack of funds. At approximately the same time the federal government announced plans to fund career education and safety education. President Ford also announced a plan to permit the states to decide how to expend federal monies, but this plan was never implemented.

Inequities of the property tax as the primary source for school financing, inflation, financing special education programs, bond issues (38 articles) and local school budgets were the subjects of state and local news articles. Reported budget increases for local school districts ranged from nine to 22 percent with inflation and increasing enrollment being given as reasons for these increases.

In 1977, news articles about bond elections for new construction dominated the education news file at the state level; fifty-one of the 100 articles for that year were about bond issues. Six articles reported increases in local school budgets and seven articles pertained to college grants in Nebraska.

State aid to education was the topic of twenty-seven articles found in the education file for 1977. The legislature suspended ("froze") state aid payments to school districts because of disagreement about interpretation of the formula for distribution of funds. Distribution of state aid funds was threatened by lawsuits; closed talks were conducted in the legislative chambers; and, the degree of confusion became so great, schools in Nebraska were directed to prepare two budgets, each reflecting a different method of calculating state aid. Finally, the Nebraska Attorney General was asked to give an interpretation of the state aid formula.

The question of establishing spending limitations ("lids") on local school districts emerged as an issue in August of 1977 when a retired telephone company executive proposed statutory tax limits for schools. Schools in Nebraska, with uncertain funding sources, borrowed money to continue to operate. Complicating already serious financial problems, special education programs, which were supposed to be 90 percent funded by the state, were reported to be short of funds because the state could not pay its share.

Federal aid to non-public schools continued to be debated at the federal level. Kilpatrick, in a syndicated column, supported the doctrine of equal protection (all school children regardless of the type of school they attend, public or non-public, were entitled to federal dollars for education).

A November 25, 1978 Newshouse News Service article stated that pressure from the public schools led to the question of whether

deductions for support of non-integrated private or parochial schools were legal; the answer to this question was negative. An affirmative answer to this question would have had major implications for private schools, but as George Will noted in a syndicated column would have also asked the question whether the government would regulate private schools.

In Nebraska, the state aid to education funding formula was challenged in a lawsuit. As a result, the legislature directed the State Department of Education to pay the six million dollars of "frozen" money to local school districts.

Spending limits were the topic of several articles as taxpayers complained about the rising cost of education. The Nebraska State School Boards Association mounted a campaign to correct inequities in school financing. Bond issues also received attention in 1978 as thirty-three articles reported plans for building programs.

Articles about rising costs of education were common on the local and national scene as energy costs became an evermore serious problem. School lunch price increases continued to be reported, and further complicating the high cost of special education was a new mandate requiring education of handicapped preschool children.

Teachers

Summary of findings. Prior to 1973, teacher oversupply, teacher accreditation standards, teacher accountability and incentive pay for teachers were topics in the newspaper. In 1973, teachers began to receive increased attention on a national basis as a result of increased numbers

of teacher strikes and walkouts. Headlines described teachers as being defiant and reports of teacher militancy were commonplace. Teachers formed picket lines, and on occasion, were jailed for striking.

The majority of news stories portrayed teachers as members of a powerful union. Teachers were no longer portrayed as public servants but rather as members of a unified body, with demands requiring attention by both school boards and the public.

Findings. In 1969, there was mention of teacher shortages in Iowa and a prediction in a Washington Post article that the number of teachers would be plentiful by 1975. Two articles discussed the need for better teachers, especially those teaching disadvantaged youth. The fact that Title I teachers were difficult to find was the subject of another article. The year was characterized by news of teacher shortages, predicted oversupply of teachers and a perceived need for better teachers. Eight articles directly relating to teachers were found in the education files of the metropolitan newspaper for the year.

In 1970, the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission established standards for the teaching profession and procedures for adjudicating violations of those standards. Other articles reported teacher salary requests, teacher accountability for the learning of students, and the United States Office of Education's suggestion of incentive pay for teachers interested in teaching in lower socioeconomic areas, i.e., combat pay.

Presidential cabinet status for education was supported by the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) in 1971. The national wage and price freeze was the topic of several articles. Teachers were urged to consult with legal authorities to ascertain whether a school board could freeze their wages. Federal grants awarded to teachers for teaching projects and a report of the number of teacher graduates were also featured. In March of 1971, Kilpatrick, in a nationally syndicated column, gave teachers a vote of confidence and encouraged parents to do the same. Kilpatrick stated a need for education to be brought into sharper focus so the public could understand more about it.

In 1972, the metropolitan newspaper's education files contained four articles about teachers. Two of the articles discussed the State Department of Education's plan to upgrade the quality of teaching by limiting emergency certificates and restricting the standards for the initial issuance of teaching certificates. A third article pointed to the fact that 10,135 teaching certificates were issued for the year. An Associated Press article mentioned the current and predicted oversupply of elementary school teachers and further stated that the oversupply would become a national problem.

In 1973, teachers received more press coverage than had been evidenced in the previous four years. Many articles pertained to teacher strikes and walkouts and were national in scope. In Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and Wisconsin, teacher walkouts and strikes symbolized unrest among teachers about poor wages. Headlines read: "Striking Teachers Defy Judge's Orders," "Defiant Teachers Called to

Court," "Detroit Student Sues Teachers for Strike." These articles emphasized one or both of two opinions: increased militancy by teachers and parent frustration about loss of school time for their sons and daughters. In early September an article, based on AFL-CIO data, reported 25,000 teachers across the nation were on strike. Twenty of the twenty-nine articles for 1973 addressed teacher strikes or teacher militancy.

In Nebraska news stories were about a number of topics including: teaching jobs were more difficult to find, the legislature's consideration of a bill to allow teachers open access to their employment files, unemployment benefits for pregnant teachers and the attained educational level of teachers in a local school district. No mention was made of unrest or militancy on the part of Nebraska teachers.

School district policies about the rights of pregnant teachers received mention in articles at both the state and national level during 1974. Three of forty-two articles pertained to teacher negotiations in the state. One article, issued by the Washington Post News Service mentioned violence in large city schools and the arming of teachers and principals.

Teacher strikes and walkouts continued to be reported from other states. Two articles mentioned teacher unions being fined for failure to honor back-to-work orders. Kansas City area parents asked the school superintendent and board to close their schools because substitute teachers were on duty due to the teachers' union strike and parents were frustrated over the poor quality of schooling. Headlines such as:

"Town Seethes with Bitterness Over Teachers' Strike," a story of the Hortonville, Wisconsin strike, expressed one common public viewpoint.

An editorial reported an oversupply of teachers; yet an article featuring the results of the Gallup Poll stated that one of every four college graduates wanted to become a teacher. Two articles mentioned censorship of teaching materials; one concerned the dismissal of a North Dakota teacher for using Slaughterhouse Five and the second reported an appeal by the National Education Association for a halt to censoring of teachers and textbooks. Reports of strikes, teacher militancy and parental or community frustration over closed schools received the majority of attention in the articles pertaining to teachers.

A record number of education articles regarding teachers appeared in the metropolitan newspaper in 1975. Of the seventy-seven articles in the file, sixty-three pertained to teacher strikes or teacher militancy and a headline on September 5 read, "Schools in Eleven States Walk Picket Line--One Million Children Out." A September 9, 1975 article reported that the nation's largest school system, New York City, went on strike. Eighty thousand teachers in the New York City Schools reportedly walked off their jobs. By September 11, a reported two and one-half million students were out of school when striking Chicago teachers joined their New York City counterparts. Teachers were asking for more money, better working conditions and lower class sizes. The problem was intensified by the need for fewer teachers due to declining enrollments and the oversupply of teachers on a national level. By November, most of the larger school systems were back to work, their strikes settled, but

others such as Colorado Springs were considering strikes.

Articles describing increased teacher militancy and incidents of violence surrounding strikes and school closings were characteristic of 1975. Mention of teacher firings or jailings due to their union activities were common. In a syndicated column, Chicago journalist Mike Royko was critical of parents for their inability to give their children a good start in life and put in a good word for striking teachers. This was the only article of this nature found in 1975.

On the local and state level articles reported the settlement of teacher negotiations and reports of 11 percent pay increases for the state's teachers in contrast to the national news articles. Teaching standards, tenure for the state's teachers and the competency of teachers and administrators were subjects of the other three articles.

The number of articles in the metropolitan newspaper about teachers declined sharply between 1975 and 1976. Only thirty-eight articles appeared on the subject in 1976. News articles reporting teacher surpluses, biases in teacher hiring practices, teacher competencies and performance levels, and teacher stress appeared with some regularity. One article in June reported that teachers' reading skills were low.

Striking teachers in Pittsburg were the subject of fourteen articles and two articles on a strike in Madison, Wisconsin received attention. Two articles in 1976 reported the United States Supreme Court decision stating that employees (teachers) have a right to be heard by their employers at meetings; more specifically, teachers have the right to be heard on matters relating to their working conditions. News

of strikes gave way to news of powerful national teacher organizations and articles questioning the quality of the nation's teachers.

By 1977, prospective teachers were reading about the oversupply of teachers and an editorial in the metropolitan newspaper warned college students to consider looking closely at the demand for teachers before making career choices.

Twenty-one of thirty education articles in 1977 reported teacher strikes across the nation. Malpractice in teaching was discussed in one August article while another article mentioned the National Education Association was monitoring the placement of teachers in special education classes to ensure that their qualifications matched job descriptions so lawsuits could be avoided.

Teacher strikes were in the education news again in 1978. Most of the fifty-five articles which appeared in the teacher category reported strikes in the Midwest and the East. Tactics of teacher unions in the state and nation received mention. A single article appeared on teacher stress. It reported that teachers suffer some of the same symptoms as soldiers who are in combat zones in times of war. Several miscellaneous articles reported teacher of the year winners in state contests and the shortage of agriculture teachers in South Dakota. A September 20, 1978 Associated Press article reported that voters had become frustrated by teacher demands for better pay and better working conditions.

The education news about teachers reported during the ten years from 1969 through 1978 was characterized by reports of increased teacher militancy and strikes. The majority of the 301 articles filed under the

heading "Teachers" reported unrest among the nation's teachers; in contrast, at the state level, there were few news articles on teacher militancy and none about walkouts.

Dope and Drugs

Summary of findings. Drug use, drug raids and drug education programs were the primary issues discussed in drug related articles. The ever increasing use of drugs by teenagers in the country received attention.

Findings. Reports of drugs or drug abuse by students were sparse as only two articles about the suspension of high school athletes convicted of drug possession were found in 1969.

In 1970, four articles discussed drugs; two focused upon marijuana usage in Nebraska schools, one was about a board policy statement on drug use and the other was a statement by a state Parent Teacher Association official concerning drug problems.

Nine articles about drugs were found for 1971. Increased drug use among students and the growing concern over the ineffectiveness of drug education programs were featured news. In April of 1971, the Nebraska Department of Education was directed by the State Board of Education to establish guidelines for drug education programs. State legislators criticized the efforts of schools in their attempts to address drug problems and in turn schools complained of the lack of funds to carry out drug education programs.

In 1972, four of five articles discussed a drug raid in a Nebraska

high school while the other mentioned a drug treatment program in the metropolitan area.

In 1973, drug and alcohol usage in the state and programs designed to teach about the effects of drugs were subjects of seven education news articles related to drugs.

The two articles on drugs in 1974 were national in scope and reported drug usage as a growing problem among students.

The failure of drug programs to halt the use of drugs was the topic of four of the five articles on drugs in 1975. The other article reported the results of a national poll which indicated 48 percent of the nation's high school youth had tried drugs.

The number of articles related to drugs remained at five in 1976, and the subject was the same; students were using drugs in increasing numbers and drug education programs were failures. One article cited increased heroin traffic in a mid-sized Nebraska town as well as heavy traffic in pills and marijuana.

In 1977, articles indicated that alcohol was an increasing concern in the junior high schools as other drug use in Nebraska was diminishing.

In 1978, the single article on drugs reported that ten percent of 17,000 high school students surveyed by the University of Michigan said they smoked marijuana on a daily basis.

School Size and Class Size

Summary of findings. The majority of articles at the state level focused on school consolidation and school district mergers, since Nebraska,

at that time, had the highest number of school districts of any state in the nation. Pupil:teacher ratio and the year-round school also received attention in the newspaper.

At the national level the issue of declining school enrollment was predominant as evidenced by the review of articles for each of the ten years. Class size and its effect on student achievement was continually debated in the newspaper.

Findings. The debate as to whether small or large classes provided children with the best atmosphere for learning was the topic of several articles found in the 1969 education files of the metropolitan newspaper. Students contended that smaller classes were more desirable and the National Education Association agreed. In a separate article the conclusions of a Title I study announced that class size was irrelevant as far as achievement was concerned.

Enrollment in Nebraska schools was reported to be at its peak and a statewide leveling off period was predicted for the school population. The Great Plains Study was the subject of fourteen of the twenty-one articles found in the education news file. The report recommended state school district reorganization and consolidation. The State Board of Education went on record opposed to a reorganization plan whereby school district boundaries would have been redrawn to include a minimum of 550 square miles and have a minimum enrollment of 1,400 pupils.

Between 1970 and 1973, six articles about class size or school size were found in the education news files. No articles appeared in 1970.

The articles for 1971, 1972 and 1973 reported declining enrollments in Nebraska schools due to a decline in live births. A 1973 education news article reported enrollments in Nebraska declined for the fourth consecutive year and the number of school districts had declined from 2,355 to 1,406 during the same period. As drastic as the decline may have appeared, Nebraska continued to have the most school districts of any state in the nation.

News of declining enrollments in the state and nation continued to make headlines in 1974. The decline was two percent nationally but Nebraska reported a drop of five percent. Private school enrollments increased and a suburban school in a metropolitan area of Nebraska reported the need to go on split shift schedules due to increased enrollment.

The majority of the thirteen articles on school size in 1974 reported on the issue of the year-round school. The advantages for taxpayers and teachers was the subject of most of the articles regarding year-round schooling. Secondary enrollment increases in the metropolitan areas of Nebraska helped bring attention to the various all-year plans. One school received a grant from the state to study the measure and another school had placed the issue before the voters for a decision.

Class size was an issue in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; parents threatened to remove their children from school if size of classes was not lowered.

By 1975, news of declining elementary enrollments and record high secondary school enrollments was commonplace. This year was one of peak enrollment for high school students while several articles reported a decline of 619,000 elementary students across the nation.

Articles on small pupil:teacher ratio in Nebraska schools and discussions of school district mergers were topics of discussion in 1976. The nation was experiencing a decline in enrollment but some schools were reporting overcrowding. In Jasper, Tennessee, parents threatened to remove their children from school for a year, if necessary, to protest the overcrowded conditions.

By 1977, the elementary decline had begun to affect the nation's high schools as secondary enrollments were down--the first time in twenty-five years. Kansas led the nation in the school population decreases between 1971 and 1975, and Nebraska ranked ninth for the same period of time. An editorial in the metropolitan newspaper commented that the nation no longer had to play "catch-up" with housing or school facilities because of the declining birth rate. In Nebraska, one major issue was the large number of school districts in the state and debates as to how these districts might be reorganized; however, these discussions did not lead to any action.

Declining enrollments were also the major topic in 1978; both public and non-public schools were affected by loss of pupils. Some private schools were forced to close and, nationally, kindergarten enrollment reported its first decline ever.

Facilities

Summary of findings. The construction of new buildings was the topic for the majority of articles in this category. Shortage of classroom space was discussed in 1969, but by the mid-1970's the issue was one of what to do with empty or under-utilized facilities.

Findings. In 1969, ten articles reported the building of new facilities in metropolitan areas of Nebraska. Enrollments in suburban areas were increasing and overcrowding was a concern. In 1970, the theme was the same as thirteen articles reported openings of new facilities in Nebraska; a single article discussed the "open space concept," i.e., buildings without inside walls.

Construction delays due to labor unrest and work-stoppages held up school openings in the metropolitan area in 1971 and the Legislature was asked to address this issue. The first public school in Nebraska to educate trainable mentally retarded children opened in Bellevue. The district and the federal government shared in the cost of this facility.

Shortages of classroom space resulted in the use of temporary structures and mobile homes for classrooms as reported in 1972. Seven of the nine articles in 1972 discussed new facility construction.

No articles relating to facilities were found in the education news file for 1973. The two reports of school facilities in 1974 featured the painting of an old one-room schoolhouse and the remodeling of another building.

In 1975, the discussion of school facilities centered on ideas for renting school space to businesses in California and improving the sanitary facilities in rural schools in Nebraska.

From 1976 through 1978, two articles about school facilities were found in the education news files. In 1976, a fire destroyed a trailer which was being used as a classroom and in 1978, a school remodeling project was discussed. No articles regarding school facilities were

found for 1977.

Curriculum

Summary of findings. As the cost of education increased, emphasis on curricular issues shifted from mini-courses to career education and competency testing. School programs were criticized when student scores on national tests declined. Citizens demanded a return to reading, writing and arithmetic to ensure student accomplishments of basic tasks.

Book burnings and censorship of educational materials were reported when schools provided instruction about values, morals and sex. The number of private schools in America increased as parent concerns about instruction in the public schools increased.

Findings. In 1969, the articles in the selected metropolitan newspaper about curriculum referred to national curriculum issues--sex education, competency testing, drug education, mini-courses, curriculum innovations, increased technology and increased emphasis on vocational education. Thirty articles about curriculum were published during 1969. The Nebraska State School Board delegated power for decisions about instruction in sex education to local boards of education. At the state level, debate about statewide testing of student performance occurred. The training and inservice of teachers for drug education programs were described in eight articles. High interest in mini-courses in humanities, politics and science were the topics included in six articles.

The need for new and innovative approaches to occupational education received attention in the press. In July of 1970, an article from

the Washington Post Service addressed the failures of education and urged schools to shift emphasis to newer purposes and new technology.

Fifty-two articles about curriculum were included in the metropolitan newspaper during 1971. A statewide project had as its aim the formulation of goals for Nebraska schools.

Increased pressure was placed on the State Board of Education urging them to test the aptitude of students in Nebraska. Educational television and the possibilities of its use to help students achieve a diploma was also a topic for one article. In 1971, the United States Office of Education reported that the nation's gifted students were being neglected in the public schools. Numerous articles appeared on innovative mini-courses such as scuba diving, filmmaking and yoga. Innovative programs in education in the United States received the attention of eight articles. At about the same time, however, a news release from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare reported that twenty-four million Americans over the age of sixteen had less than eight years of formal training and were classified as illiterate.

These articles reported on driver education in the state in 1971. The program was being criticized by federal examiners. Two metropolitan newspaper editorials criticized the public schools' driver education programs and urged the schools to improve the programs since a result of poor programs might be loss of highway funds.

Policies for provision of sex education in the schools were reviewed by the State Board of Education in 1972. The State Board affirmed its 1969 decision; sex education was held to be a local issue and not a state concern.

Several articles in the newspaper of 1972 reported that federal grants were available for career education, drug education and special education. In April of 1972, the Nebraska State Board of Education approved the distribution of monies to aid handicapped students. Federal and state monies were provided to aid educational programs for the culturally disadvantaged and the handicapped. A state sponsored school for migrant students at Alliance, Nebraska was approved by the United States Office of Education.

News of on-the-job training courses made the headlines in the newspaper in 1972 (a total of six articles). Drug education was reported to be at a standstill in the state due to a lack of funds.

For 1972, the metropolitan newspaper's library file contained forty-eight articles about curriculum. A constitutional question about prayer in the public schools was a national issue. Censorship of textbooks and library books and book burning were other issues of national concern.

Innovations in education continued to be a topic in the newspaper in 1973 as educational television and its positive effects on learning was the topic of five articles. Mini-courses were described in five articles. Several articles reported a suburban school district's attempt to implement a year-round school plan. In the nation, December of 1973 was the date of the first lawsuit against a school for malpractice due to lack of performance on the part of a student.

Educators were criticized in 1974 for a lack of emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic ("the three R's"). Kilpatrick, in a syndicated article, blasted educators for not paying enough attention to teaching the

free enterprise system. While some people were criticizing the schools for the lack of "the three R's," other special interest groups demanded parent education courses, global survival courses and more emphasis on the sciences. Declining college admission scores were blamed on the public schools.

Fifty-one of ninety-seven articles published in the selected metropolitan newspaper in 1974 were articles about the Kanawha County book dispute. The books in question in the Kanawha County, West Virginia Schools were viewed by some parents as being anti-religious, thereby destroying their values system. Incidents of violence occurring as a part of this dispute were reported in the newspaper. Six articles discussed book censorship in other parts of the country.

In a United Press International article reported in the metropolitan paper, the Commissioner of Education, Terrell Bell, urged publishers not to print materials which insulted the values of parents. In November of 1974, the National Education Association asked its state and local affiliates to report any groups attempting to protest books. Limited attention was given in 1974 to gifted education and handicapped students.

For the ten years from 1969 through 1978, a record number of curriculum articles, 134, were in the newspaper in 1975. The Kanawha County book dispute received continuous press coverage. Reports of declining test scores were headline news stories; educators blamed the tests and test experts claimed low test scores were due to a lack of skills on the part of students. An increase in the number of study programs was urged by the United States Office of Education (USOE). Articles continued to

appear in the newspaper condemning the schools for their failure to teach basic skills. The debate heightened when the USOE released a report which concluded that more than twenty-three million adults were functionally illiterate (one in every five Americans). Terrell Bell, in an United Press International article, called for minimum competency testing and a rethinking of what schools should teach.

On December 16, a syndicated column by Max Lerner appeared in the metropolitan newspaper and reported that the results of the 1975 Gallup Poll made it evident that a growing number of citizens believed education had taken a wrong turn. Numerous articles criticized the curriculum. "Modern" schools were compared to schools of old and did not receive passing grades.

Teaching about minorities (women, Chicanos, blacks) was urged. Articles cited various reasons as to why women's rights and minority rights should be taught. Career education and handicapped education continued to receive attention. Bilingual education was another issue which drew attention in the area of curriculum.

The majority of the 134 articles stored in the library of the metropolitan newspaper in 1975 identified weaknesses in the curriculum as perceived by the public. The issue of basic skills remained a priority at the state and national levels. The academic preparation of high school students was questioned in a February report. Lower test scores continued to receive attention and the blame was placed on the lack of basic skills. Several articles spoke to the issue of high school reform. The Gallup Poll reported that 65 percent of its respondents

avored competency tests in education. Minimum competency testing received attention at the local level.

In 1976, innovations such as open education, teacher aides and new teaching techniques were criticized and the claim was made that these innovations had little positive effect on education. School guidance programs were cited as failures because they were perceived as having little effect on students due to students' lack of information regarding careers. Concerns over materials and teaching methods were cited at the local level. Parents expressed concern over the teaching of critical thinking skills and a philosophy course for children entitled "Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery."

Gifted education continued to be discussed (eight articles) as did handicapped education. Head Start and preschool programs were defended and education for disadvantaged youth occupied the spotlight in curriculum articles.

The academic preparation of high school students was questioned in a February 1976 report; the purpose of special education, how the programs were operated and the methods of funding were also major concerns.

Book censorship was the main topic of curriculum articles in 1977. The National Council for Teachers of English insisted that students had a right to read some of the books that were being removed from library shelves. The teaching of the controversial courses was discussed at the state level. Sex education was a topic of continuing controversy.

The debate over students' lack of basic skills remained in the headlines in 1977. A guarantee of these skills was demanded by the public

and these demands received support in an editorial in the metropolitan newspaper. A state school board member openly criticized schools in Nebraska for not teaching enough reading, writing and arithmetic. In the midst of the articles identifying the decline of test scores, two editorials in the metropolitan newspaper reported that test scores in the state had increased. An editorial in the newspaper stated that "the tide was turning" and the trend in the schools was a "return to the basics." And, in a related article, it was reported that the State Department of Education had developed a competency test for students. In a second editorial the public was asked if it believed "they were getting their money's worth" since both test scores and enrollments were declining, yet the costs of education continued to increase.

Teaching creationism as opposed to teaching evolution, or perhaps the teaching of both, in the public schools was the focus of two national articles. The accreditation of private religious schools was discussed in several articles.

The question of the lack of basic skills and the need for competency testing to ensure minimum skills dominated much of the educational news reported in 1978. Kilpatrick, in a syndicated column, stated that children were being used as guinea pigs in the schools and the schools were not doing their job of educating students. In 1978, several United States Senators stated that the United States schools were a disgrace because they had not prepared students for everyday life.

Newly-established Christian schools were given attention in the press in 1978 because they were unable to meet state accreditation standards.

In one article it was estimated that 5,000 Christian fundamental schools existed in the nation and this number was growing at a rate of two per day. A number of articles expressed parental concern over the testing of students to ascertain their values and beliefs.

Sex education was both praised and criticized in articles which appeared in the metropolitan newspaper. Reports of book bannings and book burnings continued. This seemed to be symbolic of the new wave of controversy over books and educational films used in the nation's schools.

Innovations continued to be a topic in educational news. The metropolitan newspaper, in an editorial, stated that if schools sought parents' approval of innovations they would be permitted to innovate and at the same time receive parental support. The lack of parental support was a major problem of the schools. Another editorial cited the Rand study which indicated that additional money spent for special projects in the schools had little effect on improving education. Last, but not least, in 1978, a lawsuit was reported in the metropolitan newspaper challenging minimum competency tests as being racially biased.

Parents

Summary of findings. Parents were willing to become involved in their schools but were perceived by teachers as disinterested spectators.

Findings. The results of a summary of parents in a large Nebraska city in 1970 indicated that while 73 percent of them said they knew something or "a lot" about schools, 63 percent could not name the superintendent, and only seven percent knew how much education cost the taxpayer in that community.

Lack of interest by parents was addressed in sixteen articles during the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978, with thirteen of the articles appearing between 1975 and 1977. Some of these articles indicated that teachers considered apathy on the part of parents as a problem. In 1976, the results of the Gallup Poll reported that parent lack of interest contributed to the decline in test scores because parents were not supervising their children at home and were content to let the schools provide supervision. One 1976 article appealed to parents to become more interested in the education of their children.

In 1977, a poll by a local school district found that parents liked their schools and were willing to become involved in the educational process. A report from Alaska indicated that parents did not want the school asking questions about life at home: "It was not any of the school's business."

No articles were found in this category for the years 1969, 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1978.

School Boards

Summary of findings. News about the State School Board dominated the school board news over the ten-year period. Campaigns and elections of state and local school board members received attention on an annual basis. The results of various surveys on school boards and the public's perception of school board members received attention throughout the ten-year period. The issue of increased state aid and the methods by which schools were funded received constant attention from the State School Board, the Nebraska State School Boards Association and local boards

of education.

Findings. The Nebraska State Board of Education received the attention of education writers in 1969. Ninety of the one hundred articles on school boards found in the education news file reported the turmoil surrounding the dismissal of the State Commissioner of Education. Two separate articles reported on a local board and the State School Administrators organization supporting the commissioner and opposing the actions of the State School Board. The issue of election of state school board members by district was rejected by the Legislature. The open meeting law was endorsed by the metropolitan newspaper in an editorial. The Nebraska State School Boards Association endorsed a legislative bill which would permit the passage of school bond elections by a simple majority of the voters.

In 1970, the Nebraska State School Boards Association (NSSBA) encouraged citizens of the state to meet at the State Capitol to discuss immediate and long-range plans for public education. In two separate articles the NSSBA opposed the funneling of public money into non-public schools and the teacher negotiations act.

The metropolitan newspaper endorsed election of state school board members by district and it discussed positive and negative aspects of this issue in an October editorial.

A July 23, 1971 article reported that a sampling of Nebraska school board members showed that a knowledge of school law was their most useful skill but the skill for which they needed the most help. Budget planning,

teacher negotiations, information and board relations were also mentioned as areas where help was needed. The remaining articles continued to cover the debate about the election of state school board members by district.

News of campaigns for state school board hopefuls was the subject of eighteen articles in 1972, as the state held its first election by district. Local boards again were told by the state that they must decide upon issues of sex education at the local level. The State School Board approved the distribution of funds to help local districts finance education for the handicapped and a Jewish Community Center preschool. The NSSBA endorsed increased state and federal aid to schools and strengthened local control.

In 1973, a local school board's policy about the busing of students was the subject of two articles and a report from California mentioned an eighteen-year-old being elected to a local school board.

School board members were compared with other public officials in a 1974 survey of 74,000 high school students. Findings showed a lack of trust of all public officials. Milwaukee voters sought to recall their school board members because of the high cost of schooling. And, the New York Times News Service reported that there were too few women on boards of education in the United States. The majority of articles about school board news at the state and local level discussed support for increased state aid to education and reported results of local school board elections.

In February of 1975, the United States Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that school board members could be sued by students if board members acted officially in violating the constitutional rights of students. Other articles were about local board actions regarding budgets or policies.

In 1976, the campaigns and elections of state school board members received the most attention in the school boards category. Reorganization of schools and financial aid were several of the issues discussed by candidates. The NSSBA announced plans to work hard to improve the image of elementary and secondary education in the state and supported Nebraska's efforts in reading instruction. Results of local board elections were the subject of thirteen articles.

The need for school mergers in the state was a topic of discussion by state school board officials in 1977. The State Board debated the sex education issue as reports from several schools indicated they were receiving complaints about a film being shown in family living classes. For the fourth time in a decade, the State School Board maintained decisions about instruction in sex were to be made by local boards. In other actions, the State Board placed six schools on probation for not meeting accreditation standards.

School board members in the state received 62 percent approval from the public when a metropolitan newspaper poll asked how public officials were perceived in the handling of their responsibilities.

In 1978, the State School Board investigated the Nebraska Department of Education's use of public money to distribute information in its

newsletter opposing spending limitations being imposed on Nebraska schools. Accreditation of schools was one of the foci of the State Board. Local school boards were defended by the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA). The NSEA stated that school boards were doing a good job providing for the education of children. The methods by which schools were funded was the focus of NSSBA delegates as they met for their annual convention. State and local board elections were discussed in the majority of the education news articles found within this category.

A Summary of Actions of a Selected Board of Education
for the Years 1969 through 1978

The actions of School Board A as recorded in official minutes for the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978 were read, analyzed, recorded and placed in one of ten categories: (1) Discipline, (2) Integration, (3) Budget and Finance, (4) Teachers, (5) Dope and Drugs, (6) School Size and Class Size, (7) Facilities, (8) Curriculum, (9) Parents, and (10) School Boards. The ten headings used to categorize board actions were the same as those used to report the biggest problems in education from 1969 through 1978 as determined by the Gallup Poll. Board actions were divided into four categories: (1) Reports, (2) Discussions, (3) Announcements, and (4) Motions. The results of the categorization follow:

Discipline. Actions about vandalism, dress codes, student suspensions and student conduct were included in this category.

Integration. Any actions which involved board policies or

procedures related to the issue of integration of schools were listed in this category.

Budget and Finance. Actions about the local school budget, budget or treasurer's reports, school lunch costs, state aid to education, receipts or expenditures of federal funds and investments of idle funds were included in the budget and finance category.

Teachers. Recommendations for the employment or release of teaching staff, the salary negotiations process with the local education association, teacher evaluations, and labor disputes with teachers were included in this section.

Dope and Drugs. Use of drugs by students or concern about use of drugs by students were actions which received attention in this category. (Actions related to drug education programs were recorded in the curriculum category.)

School Size and Class Size. School enrollment reports, pupil: teacher ratios, size of classes and student transfers within the district were listed in this category.

Facilities. Actions which involved construction, renovation or remodeling of buildings or maintenance of buildings and grounds were filed in this category.

Curriculum. Any action related to academic or activities programs offered by the school district, reports of test scores, alternative educational programs and curriculum studies were placed in the curriculum section.

Parents. Parental involvement in board meetings or any action initiated by parents were included in this category.

School Boards. Actions taken by the local school board which related to its conduct or purpose were included in this section. Examples were announcements of state or national board association meetings, dates and times of local board committee meetings and local board election procedures.

In this study, 2,940 school board actions were recorded and categorized. The results of the categorization are illustrated in Table 8. The number of actions in each category are shown by year (right hand column) and in total for the ten years from 1969 through 1978. Actions of the board considered to be routine, such as the call to order, motions to adjourn or motions to approve minutes of prior meetings were not used as a part of this study. As a result, 575 routine actions reviewed in this study were not included.

The official written minutes of the board of education were brief and described the actions taken by the board. The intensity of a given issue, the time allotted for discussion of that issue and knowledge or information the board may have had at its disposal prior to the discussion of an issue were not ascertained from the written minutes.

Discipline

Summary of findings. Vandalism and discussions about methods to reduce vandalism were the major topics in the category of discipline. Student dress codes and procedures used in suspension of students

TABLE 8

A Summary of the Categorization of 2,940 School Board Actions Appearing in the Official School Board Minutes of a Selected Suburban School District (School Board A) for the Years 1969 through 1978*

Year	Discipline	Integration	Budget and Finance	Teachers	Dope and Drugs	School Size and Class Size	Facilities	Curriculum	Parents	School Boards	Total**
1969	3	0	136	52	0	7	24	18	2	22	264
1970	1	0	55	48	0	1	48	35	5	9	202
1971	0	0	49	59	0	4	51	36	11	14	224
1972	1	0	78	75	1	2	51	46	12	39	305
1973	0	1	90	68	0	5	45	40	11	41	301
1974	0	0	52	61	0	7	48	70	7	25	270
1975	2	0	78	60	0	7	61	65	9	32	314
1976	3	4	82	88	0	1	37	109	7	41	372
1977	0	0	68	63	0	4	46	118	7	22	328
1978	0	0	81	97	0	2	22	100	7	51	360
Total for the Ten Years	10	5	769	671	1	40	433	637	78	296	2,940
Percentage of Total Number of Board Actions***	.003	.001	.22	.19	.0003	.01	.12	.18	.02	.08	
Rank for the Ten-Year Period	8	9	1	2	10	7	4	3	6	5	

* The ten categories used in this summary are identical to the categories used to denote the ten biggest problems facing education according to the Gallup Poll for 1969 through 1978.

** Does not include 575 routine actions which were not categorized in this study.

*** Based on all actions of the board including 575 actions not categorized in this study.

received attention in 1976. Ten actions were recorded in the discipline category for the ten years included in this study.

Findings. In November of 1969, School Board A received a report from the high school principal about the student dress code. The board discussed the dress code but took no formal action. An act of vandalism which had occurred at an elementary school was discussed at the November 1969 meeting.

The theft of \$6,000 worth of equipment from a junior high school and damage done to the building as a result of the break-in was the subject of a report at the October 1970 board meeting. One discussion of vandalism was evidenced from a review of the October 1972 board minutes. In 1975 vandalism was the subject of one report and methods to control vandalism were discussed by the board.

A report on Legislative Bill 503 (L.B. 503), a bill proposed by the Legislature to ensure due process for students, and suspension procedures used by the district were presented to the board. The report was discussed during the October 1976 board meeting. There was no evidence in the minutes of School Board A which indicated action about discipline during 1971, 1973, 1974, 1977 or 1978.

Integration

Summary of findings. Discussion about court-ordered integration in a neighboring school district was recorded in the minutes of School Board A. In 1973 and 1976, the topic was either announced or discussed but was not included in written minutes during the other eight years of

this study.

Findings. In 1973, the possibility of court-ordered integration in a neighboring school district was discussed. In 1976, four actions about integration recorded in the minutes of School Board A were discussions of cooperation with a neighboring district in its efforts to carry out the court-ordered integration of its schools and opposition to a proposed legislative bill which would have merged District A and other suburban schools with the neighboring urban district for the purpose of integrating all area schools.

Budget and Finance

Summary of findings. Budget and finance items received the most attention from the board of School District A throughout the ten years of this study with 769 actions recorded in this category. The topic of how to finance the schools in an era of increasing costs and rising inflation coupled with declining enrollment was the issue which faced the school board. Mandated special education programs caused increases in the budget and the board appealed to the state for more funding in this area.

Findings. School District A received its first state aid payment in January of 1969. During the same year the budgeting and payroll system was computerized, a proposal to change the fiscal year for schools in the state from July 1-June 31 to September 1-August 31, thereby establishing a fourteen-month budget year, received attention, and bids

were accepted on the construction of a parking lot at the high school. Most of the 136 actions recorded in the board minutes were reports of budgeting procedures, approval of bills and discussion and approval of bids for educational equipment, materials, insurance and school lunch supplies.

In 1970, a proposal to hire a cleaning service to reduce custodial and maintenance costs prompted a unionization effort by the district's custodians. The board approved the purchase of land to build a central administrative building. School lunch costs increased and efforts to reduce costs were studied. The board of education accepted bids on short-term interest rates from local banks because it was necessary to borrow money.

The federal wage and price freeze affected budgets and salary negotiations in 1971. Student population had begun to level off but classroom space was necessary to accommodate the population increases from previous years as large elementary populations began to move into the secondary schools. The need for additional teachers and the financing of additions to school buildings continued to dominate the finance discussions. Increased state aid to schools to help offset local taxation increases was promoted by Board A.

In 1972, renovation of buildings continued and bids were accepted to air condition some school buildings. Tax funds were not available for distribution to schools in September and the district was forced to borrow \$2 million to meet expenses.

Change orders on the construction of the central administrative

office were approved and bids for furnishings were discussed during 1973. Over a two-year period, prior to 1973, the county had made an error in distribution of tax funds. District A had been credited with almost \$200,000 in tax receipts which should have been distributed to a neighboring school district. The county transferred the funds from District A's account and District A investigated the legal rights of a county to initiate action which ultimately diminished the district's treasury.

The local education association charged the board with violating the 1972-1973 negotiated agreement and asked for increased benefits from the board.

In 1974, the district formed a foundation for the purpose of collecting and distributing funds to be used in purchasing or leasing property or providing teacher inservice. The bidding process was updated, lunch price increases were suggested and energy conservation was studied in 1974. State aid to education was a topic discussed at several board meetings as the board of District A supported increased financial support from the state.

The board of School District A established an energy commission in 1975 to study methods of reducing energy costs. A tornado destroyed an elementary school in the spring of 1975 and bids were received for construction. As a result of the tornado, approximately \$100,000 of taxes were lost due to the destruction of taxable residential and business property. Because of inflation, the cost of replacing the elementary school was \$261,000 more than the insurance of the school district was

able to pay. The board pursued the improper distribution of special education funds from the state as money originally announced to be distributed was reduced and local schools were faced with making up differences. Attorneys for the district discussed the possibility of filing suit against the state for differences between "promised" funding and that which was actually distributed.

In January of 1976, the board received word from the State Department of Education officials that the state would not pay the difference between its proposed and actual special education funding. The board proceeded with legal action to recover the funds. Increased costs, declining enrollments, negotiations with professional and custodial staff and short-term borrowing were discussed throughout this year.

Cooperation with other school districts and education agencies for the purpose of sharing educational costs or programs continued to be studied by the board of School District A as enrollment continued to decline in 1977. Staff reductions were considered and reduction-in-force policies and early retirement incentives were adopted by the board. There was evidence in the minutes of the board that grant money was sought from federal sources in an effort to finance projects in the humanities and team teaching.

In 1978, Public Law 94-142, the law to equalize opportunity for handicapped citizens, was discussed and as a result, the need for elevators in some schools was made public. A new state law altered unemployment compensation benefits for school employees and potential costs to the district were set at \$150,000 more than anticipated.

Programmed budgeting, renovation of school buildings, energy conservation and disputes with the custodial union over the board's proposal to contract with a cleaning service, early retirement incentives and the cost of implementing a preschool program for handicapped children were discussed by the board in 1978.

Teachers

Summary of findings. New teachers were hired to meet the needs of an increased student population in 1969 and 1970. Negotiations with the local education association were uneventful during those years but as enrollments declined and inflation increased bargaining became more difficult. For several years the negotiations were settled by mutually agreed upon fact finding committees because the board and association negotiators could not reach agreement. During the last four years of this study reduction of staff became a common theme as enrollment declined.

Findings. In 1969, School District A investigated differentiated staffing, a method of paying teachers according to responsibilities they were assigned and the length of time for which they were contracted. The board voted in favor of a resolution to remove teachers from the list of public employees who could appeal to a public relations board (the Court of Industrial Relations) in cases arising from salary disputes.

The district was the first in the state to hire paraprofessionals to assist teachers in classroom settings. Salary negotiations with

teachers were settled in March and the re-election of staff was approved.

Teacher negotiations and the need for additional teachers were topics of board meetings in 1970 as both bargaining and hiring proceeded smoothly.

The approval for hiring additional teaching staff and the federal wage freeze were subjects of board action in 1971. In December, teachers appealed for retroactive pay due to the removal of the wage freeze and the board approved a method for distributing the funds.

In 1972, more new teachers were requested and approved as the district continued to try to maintain a teacher:pupil ratio which was consistent with its philosophy. The enrollment was increasing at the high school so most of the new teachers were hired for the secondary level. There were no salary disputes with teachers.

In November of 1973, the local education association filed a grievance against the board of education which cited violations of the negotiated agreement by not allowing all teachers with five years experience to participate in the health insurance program. Earlier in the year the paraprofessional staff requested the board to meet with them to discuss salary and working conditions. The board rejected the request.

The local education association asked to negotiate for paraprofessionals in 1974 but again, the board disapproved the request. Policies on sick leave, individualized instruction and selection and evaluation of teachers were approved by the board. Special education teachers and industrial arts teachers were in short supply. Substitute

teachers' salaries were increased in 1974.

Negotiations and approval of hiring new and replacement teachers were issues the board faced in 1975. The need for teachers to work with Vietnamese students was a new situation faced by the school district.

In June of 1976, the board and the teachers' association were unable to reach agreement on salary negotiations and an impasse was declared. The report of the fact finding committee was approved in September and salaries were increased. Staff development plans were discussed at a special meeting in November of 1976 as the district made plans to improve instruction through an improved inservice program. In December, a teacher filed a grievance against the district citing inconsistencies in the maternity leave policies. Increased teacher absenteeism was the subject of a report to the board in the December meeting.

By 1977, declining enrollments brought about the subject of staff reductions and early retirement incentive programs. A reduction-in-force policy was discussed by the board of education.

The board and local education association were unable to reach an agreeable salary settlement and an impasse was declared. The report of the fact finding team was accepted in December of 1978 and new salaries were approved. In November of 1978, the board adopted a reduction-in-force policy and gave approval for an early retirement incentive program.

Dope and Drugs

Summary of findings. The subject of drug use or abuse was not one which was approached as a particular topic in board meetings. This is not to say that the board avoided the subject. The discussion surrounding

drugs was recorded in the area of curriculum as the board and administration worked on programs to educate students about problems associated with drug usage. In 1972, a specific statement was made about the increasing use of drugs by students and a motion was approved to work on the problem through increased awareness via educational programs.

School Size and Class Size

Summary of findings. School District A reached its maximum enrollment in 1969 with almost ten thousand students in attendance. A decline in student population began in 1971 and continued through the period of this study.

Findings. Student enrollment in October of 1969 was reported to be 9,909 and new teachers were hired to meet the increase. By 1972 student enrollment had declined to 9,689. The decline was at the elementary level while the senior high school enrollment increased.

In 1973, a state legislator introduced a bill to merge District A with surrounding districts in order to create a large district which could accommodate integration procedures. The board opposed the merger stating that a school district of the size of the merged districts would be difficult to manage.

From 1974 until 1978, the district lost enrollment, teaching staff was reduced and building of new facilities ceased.

Facilities

Summary of findings. Construction of new facilities was completed in 1975, but remodeling and renovation of buildings received

continuous attention. From 1969 through 1973, the district added classrooms to accommodate an increased enrollment but from 1975 to 1978, they began to sell temporary classrooms and investigate methods for utilizing space which had become available.

Findings. District A approached its peak enrollment in 1969 and the need for facilities was real. An auditorium was added to the high school and expansion of the high school parking lot was the subject of board discussions and motions during that year.

Purchase of land for a central administrative office facility was completed in 1970. The former central office building and land were sold and plans for construction of the new facility were begun. The district was short of storage space and had to lease a warehouse. Rental fees for building use by community groups were set and the board rented space in a church for a large kindergarten class because room was not available in the neighborhood school.

In 1971, proposed construction of a central office facility received attention during board meetings and two schools added classroom space because of increased enrollment.

Facilities continued to be remodeled or added to in 1972 as three additions were completed, air conditioning was installed in one elementary school and a greenhouse was built at the high school. Most of the actions about facilities concentrated on approval of bids and change orders. Construction of the central office facility began in 1972.

Inclement weather delayed the completion of the central office

facility in the spring of 1973 and the deadline for occupancy was moved to August. Furnishings for the central office were discussed at several board meetings. One elementary school was remodeled and some temporary classrooms were sold as permanent facilities which had been constructed or remodeled adequately housed students. Even though enrollments at elementary schools were beginning to decline the number of students entering high school was increasing and an addition to the senior high school was approved.

Remodeling of an elementary school and construction of an asphalt track were approved by the board in 1974. Other facilities issues centered on energy conservation programs and construction of a creative playground.

In 1975, an architect was hired to design a special education facility. In May, a tornado destroyed an elementary school and the remainder of the year was spent on issues surrounding the reconstruction of that facility. A new fire alarm system was approved for the high school so the building could meet state fire codes.

From 1976 through 1978, the board devoted time to improvement of athletic facilities, sold temporary classrooms and began to study effects of declining enrollments on building use. In 1976, the board, through a separate foundation, purchased a service station for the purpose of using it as a training facility for vocational education students. Remodeling and maintenance of buildings and facilities replaced discussions of additions or new facilities as the decline in student population continued.

Curriculum

Summary of findings. The school board of District A was consistently involved with curriculum issues throughout the ten years of this study. The board and administration were committed to providing quality programs to students and remained committed even when they faced the issue of high costs and declining enrollments. The district experienced opposition to some of its programs in 1975, 1976 and 1977 as parents demanded more basics and less values-centered educational programs. Test scores remained high and the district met the highest accreditation standards set by the state as it consistently received an AA rating.

Findings. A reading program for educationally disadvantaged children and establishment of a center for early childhood education (preschool) were approved by the school board of District A in 1969. A North Central Association self-study was conducted to examine the curriculum offerings of the school and suggest improvements.

In 1970, the board heard progress reports on drug education programs and family life (sex education) programs. School District A was the first school district in the state to offer a K-12 drug education program. More teachers were hired to teach reading at the junior high schools as an expanded reading program was developed.

A system of flexible scheduling for students was introduced at the high school in 1971. The modular schedule allowed students access to a wider variety of coursework in a shorter time frame than traditional scheduling. An alternative high school program was established to meet

educational needs of students who had either lost interest in school or had to work during the day. Programs for exceptional children (gifted and special education) were in progress and the district received a federal grant which enabled it to provide a course in filmmaking.

An incident involving a parent who questioned the district's policy of grouping students by ability generated several reports on the procedure.

In 1972, school board members approved a new social studies program for elementary students, heard reports from school administrators about plans to extend the school year (an idea opposed by parents) and organization of the curriculum in such a way that subject matter could be taught in three week units of time. A controversy arose over the distribution of an "underground" newspaper at the high school and guidelines to control such incidents were adopted by the board.

A system of identifying and testing for minimum skills was discussed and finally approved by the board in 1973. In September the board heard a report that indicated it needed to schedule two meetings each month; one for business and the second for review and discussion of curriculum.

The requirement for physical education at the high school was reduced from two semesters to one in 1974. A policy which allowed the superintendent to waive graduation requirements for students in special situations and a policy which established minimum competencies for graduation were approved. One board meeting was held each month to discuss the curriculum offerings of the school system.

In 1975, the board adopted a new elementary math program, approved procedures for integrating special education students into regular classroom settings (mainstreaming), and heard reports about results of the district's testing program. Student scores in District A were above national norms on all tests administered. The program for gifted and talented students was discussed and procedures were approved for planning a program for Vietnamese children.

The vocational education program was the subject of several reports to the board in 1976 as administrators presented plans for improving career awareness for students. The district offered a job placement service for high school students and began programs in gun safety and the humanities.

Plans were formulated to begin the process of preparing for a North Central Association self-study. The purpose of this study was to examine the programs of the secondary schools and make suggestions for improvements.

The district received word that it was given the highest accreditation (AA) possible by the State Department of Education. District A had received AA accreditation for each of the years examined in this study.

There was opposition to a new philosophy program for children. Parents spoke against Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, a program used to teach critical thinking skills to elementary school students.

In August of 1977, after several months of discussion and complaints from parents, the board of District A voted to eliminate the

Harry Stottlemeier program. In other action, the board called for better articulation between elementary and secondary schools after a review of suggestions from the North Central self-study report. Work study and vocational programs received attention as the district worked with other school districts in cooperative efforts to provide specialized training in auto mechanics, culinary arts and barbering and hairstyling.

The alternative high school program received positive remarks from students and parents in 1978. A new science program for elementary school students was studied and a newly adopted pilot program in language arts received opposition from parents. Parents petitioned the board to remove the program from consideration because it conflicted with religious or moral values held by some parents.

The reading program, special education classes for preschool children and vocational education were discussed by the board in 1978.

Parents

Summary of findings. Parents in District A were involved in board meetings as each community club (parent:student organization) president reported on activities of the club at some time during the year. Parents indicated support for the school district; however, during the last four years included in this study parents began to speak against some of the programs and appealed to the board to examine the mission of the school district.

Findings. In 1969, a parent inquired as to why the district had not sent children to an opera when other districts in the area had.

Parents supported high school band trips to Ohio and student travel to Europe in 1970 and 1971. A parent questioned the district's policy on ability grouping in 1971 and several parents protested construction of the central office building. The district received high marks from parents in response to questions about how the school was serving their children. In 1972, parents voiced disapproval of the year-round school concept.

Beginning in 1974, some parents began to question the mission of the district and through the next four years led efforts to petition against programs which discussed values education. Throughout the ten-year period, actions by parents were found in the minutes of the board meetings and most of these reports or discussions were supportive of the school.

School Boards

Summary of findings. The school board actions for the ten years included in this study centered on the election of board members, replacing board members who left the board or announcements concerned with local, state or national board meetings.

Findings. In 1969, the board passed a resolution commending the State Education Commissioner who was under considerable pressure from the State Board of Education.

The board was consistent in its review and revision of district policy. Beginning in 1971, the board appointed a student advisory committee to serve one-year terms and to give the board advice from the

viewpoint of the student body. This practice continued throughout the term of this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between and among the annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education, educational news articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper and actions taken by selected suburban school boards as recorded in the minutes of the official board meetings for the ten years from 1969 through 1978.

Data collected for this study were used to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between and among the results of the Gallup Poll, reporting of education issues in a selected metropolitan newspaper and actions taken by selected suburban boards of education?

2. Did the education issues identified by Gallup Poll respondents receive the same intensity of treatment from selected suburban boards of education?

3. Did the education issues identified by Gallup Poll respondents receive the same intensity of treatment in a selected metropolitan newspaper?

4. Did the education issues reported by a selected metropolitan newspaper receive the same intensity of treatment from selected suburban

boards of education?

5. Are the rankings of education issues similar in the Gallup Poll, the selected metropolitan newspaper and the official minutes of selected suburban boards of education as evidenced by the frequency of appearance of that issue?

Findings from a Review of the Literature

A review of literature was conducted to gain a better understanding of public opinion polls, the role of newspapers in a democratic society and the methods by which school boards operate.

Public opinion polling in American began as long ago as 1774, when J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur gathered opinions from settlers about life on the frontier. In 1924, a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania newspaper conducted the first poll to gather the opinions of the public about presidential candidates. At the time of this study, ascertaining public opinion has become an accepted and commonplace practice in America. Numerous polling organizations gather public opinion about politics, economics, foreign policy and television programs on a daily basis. The results of these opinion polls, reported by various news media, are a powerful influence on citizens. However, some people have become weary of this technique and view it as an invasion of privacy, thus making it more difficult for pollsters to gather information. The validity of results of polls are frequently questioned.

Polling of attitudes about education began in 1969 when George Gallup conducted a poll for educators. The Gallup Poll has become a

national benchmark for ascertaining the public's view of problems in education.

A review of the literature determined boards of education derived their legal authority from state constitutions and legislative statutes. The effectiveness of boards of education is dependent upon the nature of the community served by the board. Literature reviewed in this study identified four community types: (1) the dominated community (characterized by a power elite); (2) the factional community (characterized by at least two factions competing for control); (3) the pluralistic community (characterized by a variety of centers of influence); (4) the inert community (characterized by the status quo).

Two models in the review of literature applied to the governance of schools. In the democratic model the public elects the school board, the board sets the policy and employs administrators to implement the policy. The technological model contends that policy formation is too complex for school board members to understand; therefore, highly skilled managers should be hired to help formulate policy.

School boards have been thrust into the political arena as they face issues of collective bargaining, federally mandated curricula, court-ordered integration, increased cost and alternative methods of financing public schools.

Newspapers are sources of detailed information which may be saved for future reference. A review of the literature indicated that seventy-seven percent of the public read a daily newspaper. The function of the newspaper is to provide the reader with information about daily events

which occur all over the world--news about extraordinary events. When a social institution operates outside the parameters of normal expectation these extraordinary circumstances become news.

Progress in reporting education news was slow. The crises of Sputnik, integration of schools and declining test scores were circumstances which caused newspapers to focus on education.

Newspapers are owned by private individuals or corporations and are business enterprises operated for profit. Advertisers provide the dollars which allow continuation of their operations.

Findings from the Data

The findings of this study were based on a review and comparison of information from four sources: (1) the ten biggest problems facing education reported in the findings of the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-1978; (2) 3,301 education news articles filed in the library of a selected metropolitan newspaper for the years 1969 through 1978; (3) a summary of the actions of a selected suburban board of education as recorded in its board minutes for 1969 through 1978 (School Board A); and (4) data from a companion study which analyzed the actions of a selected suburban board of education from 1969 through 1978 (School Board B) (see Appendix A).

The ten biggest problems of education as reported by Gallup for the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978 were used as the basis for comparing data from all sources. The ten categories were: (1) discipline, (2) integration, (3) budget and finance, (4) teachers, (5) dope and drugs,

(6) school size and class size, (7) facilities, (8) curriculum, (9) parents, and (10) school boards.

Discipline

The findings of ten years of data from the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education indicated discipline was the biggest problem of education. Neither the minutes of two school boards nor the number of articles about discipline found in the education files of the metropolitan newspaper were in agreement with this finding. The minutes of School Board A yielded eight actions regarding discipline and School Board B's minutes recorded thirty-five actions about discipline for the ten years from 1969 through 1978. Discipline ranked eighth in the list of ten of the biggest problems addressed by both school boards. Of the 3,301 articles from the education files of the metropolitan newspaper, 177 related to discipline, ranking it sixth for the ten-year period reviewed in this study.

One reason for the lack of agreement may have been differences in definition among the four sources of data. Gallup Poll respondents stated that a lack of discipline was evident when teachers (or schools) lost their ability to control student behavior or when students did not respond to authority. Newspapers reported on: (1) incidents of vandalism to school property and (2) the rights of students to due process of law when they were considered for suspension or expulsion. Within school board minutes, reports about vandalism were present; in addition, actions were found establishing policies and procedures for suspension and

expulsion of students who committed infractions. Items about student dress and student dress codes were found in all four sources of data.

The comparative rankings of discipline as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 1.

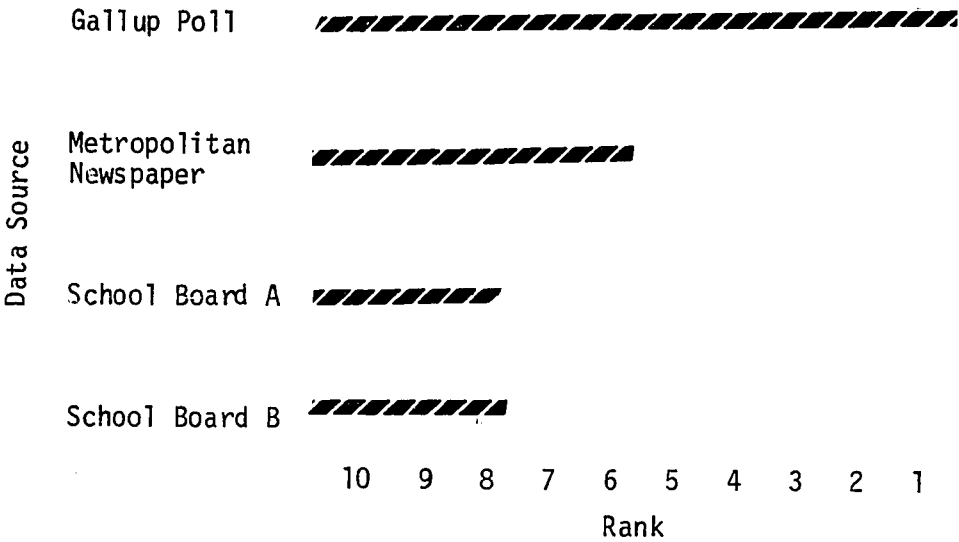


Figure 1
Discipline*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Integration

Integration was an issue which was seldom given attention by either of the two school boards used in this study. When the number of actions related to integration was compared to all other actions which received the attention of School Board A and School Board B, integration ranked ninth. Neither of the two school boards involved in this study were under a court order to desegregate their schools, although both took formal action pledging cooperation with a neighboring school district which was forced by the courts to integrate.

In contrast, the responses to questions asked in the Gallup Polls and the frequency of occurrence of articles about integration found in the education files of the metropolitan newspaper ranked integration as the second biggest problem facing education. Ironically, it was not the concept of integration but the method employed to carry it out (court-ordered busing) which caused turmoil and remained the primary factor in focusing the attention of the American public on this issue. Court-ordered busing for the purpose of achieving racial balance in the schools was the impetus which initiated disturbances that ultimately closed schools in many parts of the nation. The majority of the 795 articles about integration which were in the education file focused on the disorder and violence surrounding court-ordered busing.

The comparative rankings of integration as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 2.

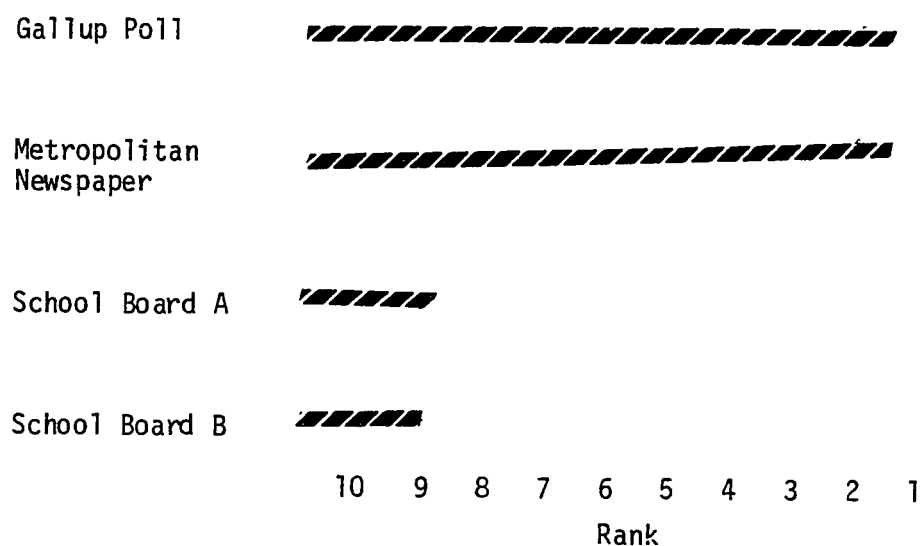


Figure 2
Integration*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Budget and Finance

For the ten years of this study the education files of the metropolitan newspaper contained 813 articles about the financing of education. School Board A considered more actions regarding school finance than any other issue receiving attention of the board. School finance ranked first in the considered actions of School Board A and third in the considered actions of School Board B. Both boards regarded the high cost of education and the inability to bring about effective financing alternatives as two items of concern within the category of finance. These

same two items were expressed as concerns of respondents to the Gallup Poll and this issue ranked third for the ten-year period. The four sources in this study did not rank the problem of finance at the same level but each of them considered it a serious problem. Data from each of the four sources indicated that the method of financing public schools (local property tax) needed to be changed. No evidence was found which indicated any agreement about alternative methods of financing such as the voucher system or increased federal aid.

The comparative rankings of budget and finance as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 3.

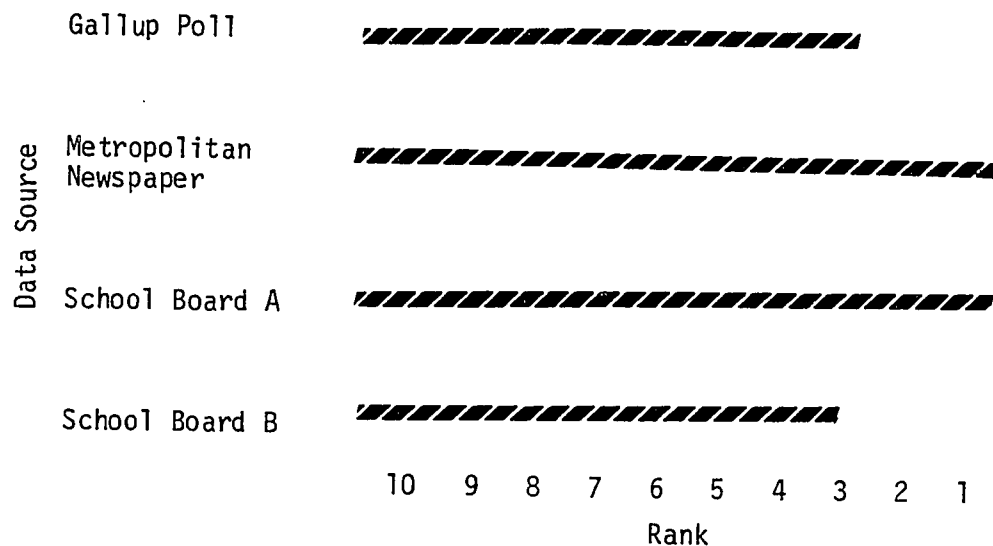


Figure 3

Budget and Finance*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Teachers

Boards of education consistently considered actions regarding teachers. Approval for hiring, transferring or terminating teachers and salary negotiations dominated the actions in this area. The minutes of both school boards contained enough information about teachers to rank this issue second among the top ten issues considered for action. There was no evidence which suggested concern over poor teaching or lack of proper preparation. Both boards encouraged and provided for continuing education opportunities for teachers.

The majority of newspaper accounts about teachers centered on teacher strikes, activities of teacher unions or a growing militancy among teachers as a group. Teacher strikes and walkouts led the list of articles followed by reports of teacher and board negotiating sessions. For the ten years covered in this study the metropolitan newspaper's education files contained enough articles to rank this category fourth among the ten areas investigated.

Respondents to the ten annual Gallup Polls consistently indicated a desire for better teachers and as teacher unions became more vocal, respondents' high regard for teachers began to diminish. The problem of attracting good teachers ranked fourth in the list of biggest problems in the Gallup Poll.

Evidence from all four sources indicated that teachers received more attention as the influence of teacher unions became stronger. The attention was not favorable. The image of the teacher as public servant was replaced by an image of the teacher as demonstrator, union member

and bargainer.

The comparative rankings of teachers as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 4.

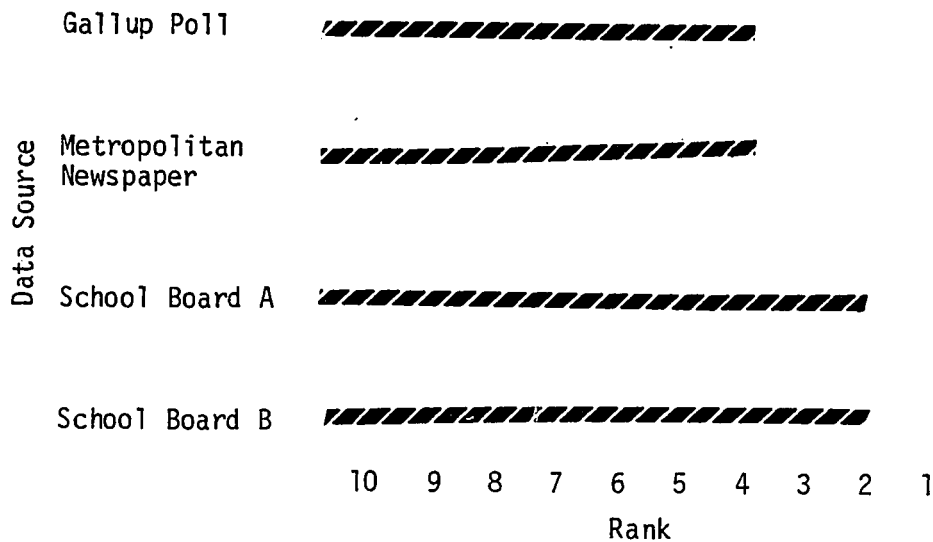


Figure 4

Teachers*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Dope and Drugs

The use of drugs by students received enough attention by Gallup Poll respondents to rank it fifth among the ten biggest problems over the ten-year period (1969 through 1978). Respondents perceived an increase in the use of drugs by students and as a result this issue increased its rank from sixth to second as the biggest problem in education. The newspaper and board reports contained little information on drugs or drug use. The issue ranked tenth in actions recorded in both sets of board minutes and ninth in total number of articles filed by the metropolitan newspaper.

The issue of drug usage was portrayed by newspaper articles as an increasing problem which verified the perceptions of Gallup Poll respondents.¹ The boards of education perceived drug usage by students as a problem and the issue was discussed in terms of the implementation of drug education programs. There was no recorded evidence in board minutes which indicated discussion regarding a concern of increased drug use in the schools.

The comparative rankings of dope and drugs as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 5.

¹ Polls and surveys reported an increase in drug usage but this phenomenon (drug usage) seemed to be a personal and private issue; one which few people were willing to discuss openly. While people were willing to assume that drug usage was increasing, it was impossible to gather meaningful statistics at the local level.

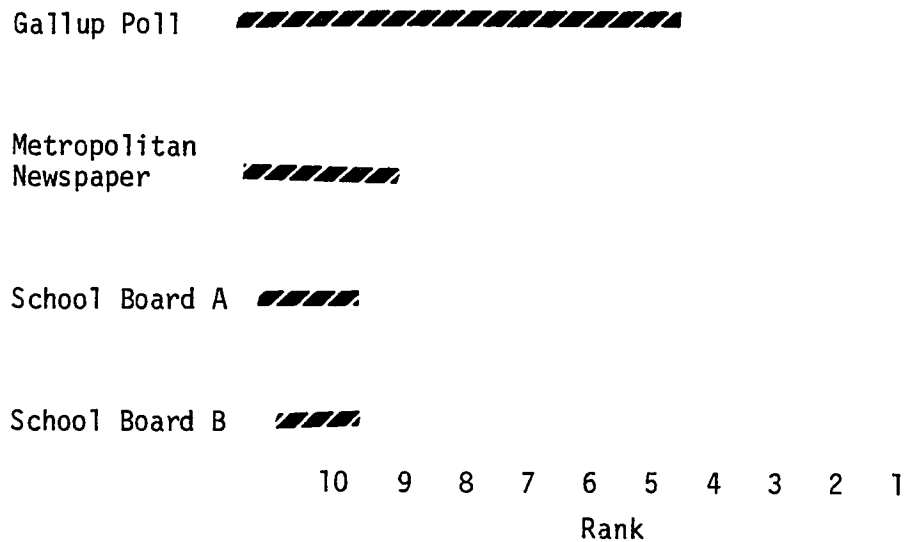


Figure 5
Dope and Drugs*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

School Size and Class Size

A review of the results of ten years of the Gallup Poll indicated that school size and class size became less of a problem as enrollment in the nation's schools declined. The issue of large classes and schools was identified as the fifth biggest problem in education in 1972 and dropped to seventh in 1978. School Board B discussed this issue often enough to give it a sixth place ranking and School Board A ranked it seventh. The topics discussed by both boards centered on pupil:teacher ratios and school size. As enrollment declined in both districts the

discussions changed to reduction in staff.

Debates over the ideal pupil:teacher ratio were reported in articles in the newspaper. Articles at the state level discussed the possibilities of school consolidation and declining enrollment was the topic at the national level. A total of seventy-nine newspaper articles were recorded over the ten-year period ranking it seventh in total articles.

The comparative rankings of school size and class size as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 6.

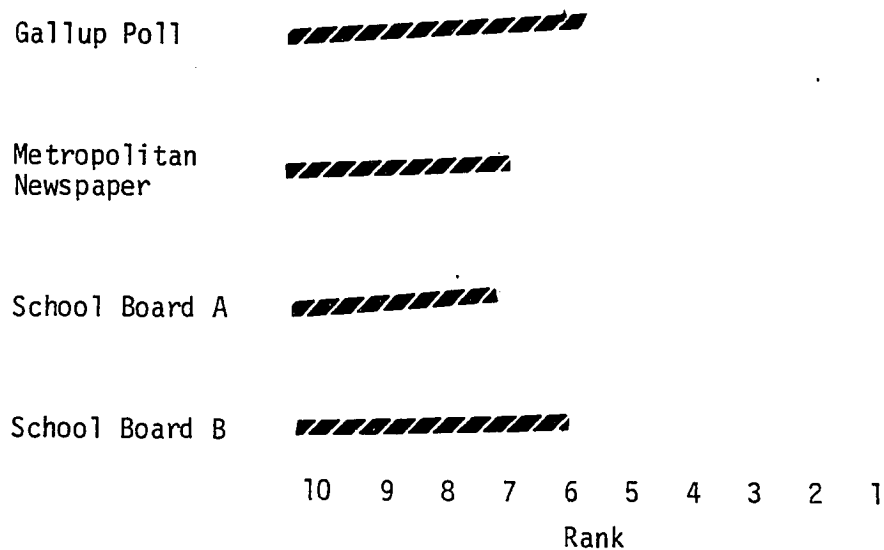


Figure 6

School Size and Class Size*

*The comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Facilities

Declining enrollments and the high cost of construction were two items which eased public concern over facilities. Respondents to the Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Education indicated that the concern over lack of facilities decreased as the problem moved from second place in 1969, to seventh place in 1975, and was not among the top ten biggest problems in 1976 through 1978.

The board minutes of the two districts reported action on new construction, remodeling, renovation and repair. The total number of actions in the area of facilities ranked number one in District B and number four in District A. Both districts had experienced increased enrollments during the late 1960's through 1971, and as a result the boards were involved in building programs. Reports of new construction and renovation received attention in the newspaper. The majority of articles reported on construction of local school facilities but coverage of this topic was sparse as it ranked eighth in the total number of articles filed.

The comparative rankings of facilities as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 7.

Curriculum

Respondents to the Gallup Poll frequently cited the lack of proper curriculum as one of the biggest problems facing education. Concern over a lack of basic skills instruction (reading, writing and arithmetic) and poor test scores helped keep the curriculum issue in the spotlight. For

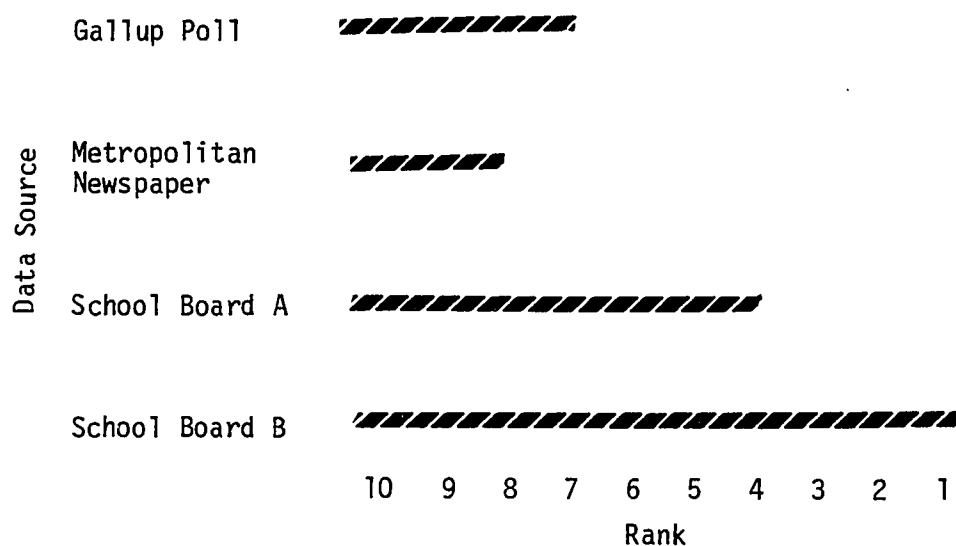


Figure 7

Facilities*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and the actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

the ten years reviewed in this study curriculum was ranked as the eighth biggest problem in education but the concern over the issue was growing.

The newspaper files contained 763 articles related to curriculum, ranking it third among the educational topics. The articles were about declining test scores, censorship of materials, sex education and basic skills. Local school programs were highlighted. A variety of local, state and national curriculum issues were reported.

Both school boards paid attention to the curriculum of their schools. Revisions to and improvement of the curriculum were the most

frequent actions receiving attention. In School District A enough actions were initiated to rank curriculum in third place and in School District B curriculum ranked fourth. The local boards were concerned with test scores, basic skills and a curriculum that would meet the needs of all students, the same issues discussed in the newspaper and the Gallup Poll. The only differences were that the boards acted positively to ensure quality while national sources indicated that the quality was diminishing.

The comparative rankings of curriculum as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 8.

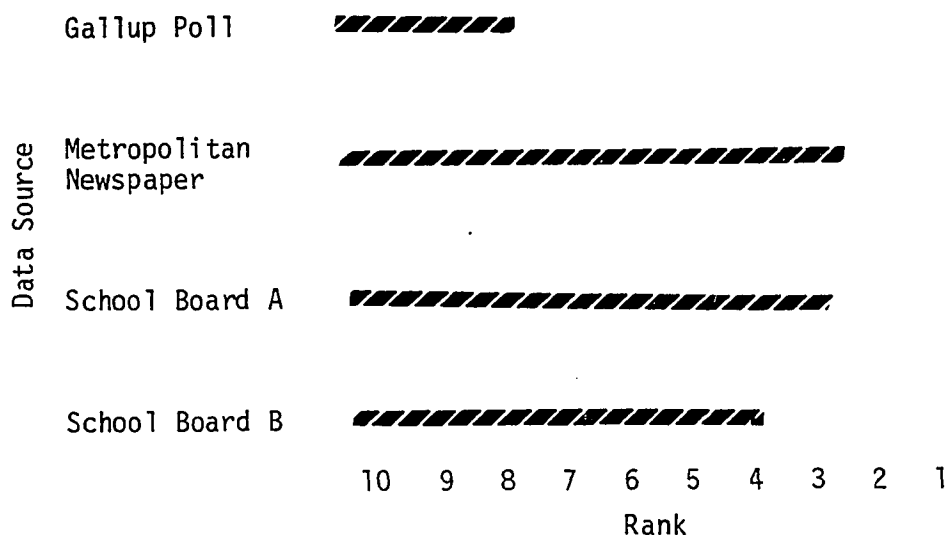


Figure 8

Curriculum*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban schools for the years 1969 through 1978.

Parents

The problem of parental lack of interest was the issue reported in the Gallup Poll and this issue ranked as the seventh biggest problem in education over the ten-year period. Responses in the poll indicated that parents were supportive of the schools but did not become actively involved. The newspaper articles about parents confirmed the results of the Gallup Poll; parents were supportive of their schools but teachers perceived parents as disinterested and apathetic.

Actions in the minutes of the two school boards did not reflect a lack of participation in the schools on the part of the parents. Parents in both districts were actively involved in board meetings as they expressed their viewpoints on a variety of issues. It was further evidenced in the board minutes that boards would appoint parent committees to help them accomplish various tasks. Board actions regarding parents ranked sixth in one district and seventh in the other in total actions.

The comparative rankings of parents as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources in this study are illustrated in Figure 9.

School Boards

Elections of school board members, school board functions (meetings and conventions) and school board policies were issues receiving attention often enough to rank this category fifth in the number of actions considered by both school districts. The newspaper reports about

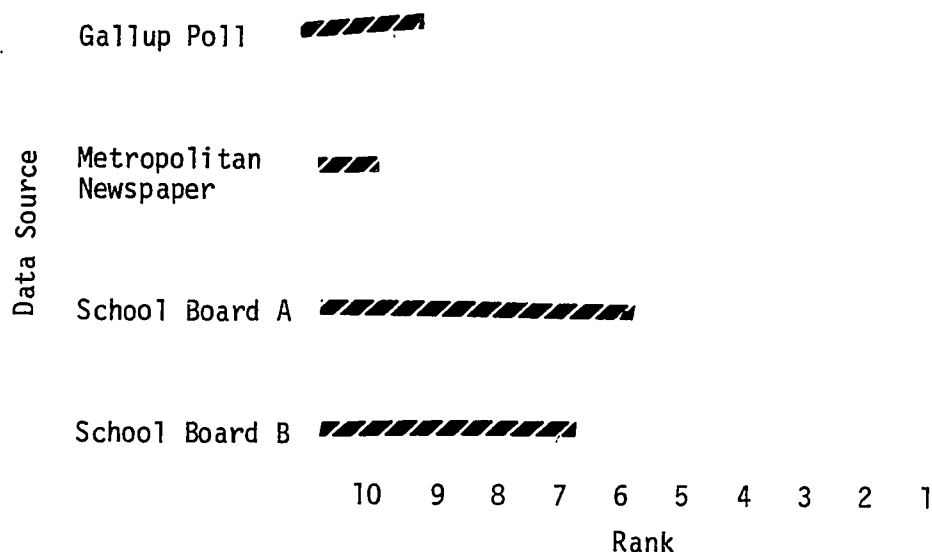


Figure 9

Parents*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

school boards emphasized elections, endorsements of legislative bills by the State School Boards Association and actions of the State Board of Education. Reports about the actions of the State Board of Education dominated the school board category, especially in 1969 when the State Board dismissed the Commission of Education. In the Gallup Poll school boards received high marks and were praised for the fine job they did. The only concern about school boards was that school board members were politically motivated. The data from the four sources were similar; election of school board members was a major item included in each source.

The comparative rankings of school boards as one of the ten biggest problems in education from each of the sources reviewed in this study are illustrated in Figure 10.

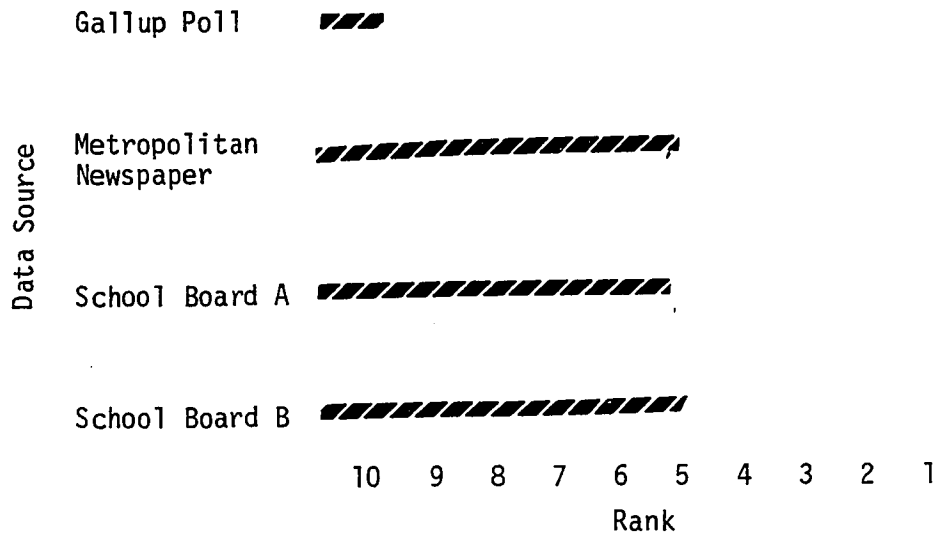


Figure 10
School Boards*

* A comparison of the composite of ten years of rank order as determined by the results of the Gallup Poll, the number of articles in a selected metropolitan newspaper, and actions of two selected suburban school boards for the years 1969 through 1978.

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and
Suggestions for Further Study

Conclusion A

There was no causal or predictive link between and among the actions of school boards, educational reports in newspapers and results of the Gallup Poll² (see Table 9). No evidence was found to indicate that newspaper articles on education or the results of the Gallup Poll caused boards of education to react in a specific way. One reason might be the lack of congruence in the definition of terms used to describe each category; e.g., respondents to the Gallup Poll interpreted poor discipline as lack of respect for authority, the newspaper reported about discipline in terms of vandalism and boards of education concentrated on procedures for handling discipline problems such as policies on dress code and suspension. Another reason might be that educational problems reported at the national level were not always perceived to be problems at the local level.

Implications. Since citizens gather information about schools from a variety of news sources they may tend to generalize that all problems reported exist in their local schools. School boards should

²Power rankings were determined by adding the respective ranks assigned in each of the four data sources for each category and dividing that total by the number of data sources, i.e., school finance received the following ranks in each of the four data sources: Gallup Poll--3, metropolitan newspaper--1, School Board A--1, School Board B--3. The total of all rankings was eight and when divided by the number of data sources (4) the power ranking of 2 resulted.

TABLE 9

Power Rankings of the Ten Biggest Problems in Education
for the Ten Years 1969 through 1978

	Gallup Poll Rank	Metropolitan News- paper Rank	School Board A Rank	School Board B Rank	Power Rank	Rank for the Ten Years by Power
Discipline	1	6	8	8	5.75	6
Integration	2	2	9	9	5.50	5
Budget and Finance	3	1	1	3	2.00	1
Teachers	4	4	2	2	3.00	2
Dope and Drugs	5	9	10	10	8.50	10
School Size and Class Size	6	7	7	6	6.50	8
Facilities	7	8	4	1	5.00	4
Curriculum	8	3	3	4	4.50	3
Parents	9	10	6	7	8.00	9
School Boards	10	5	5	5	6.25	7

keep patrons informed about the conditions of their local schools.

Recommendations. When schools boards and administrators study issues in education they should gather information from a variety of sources and compare and contrast this information with conditions at the local level. This method of investigation may help school boards, administrators and patrons understand that single sources of information may not accurately describe all conditions existing in education. This method may assist school board members and administrators to become more proactive (less defensive).

Conclusion B

The financing of public schools is the biggest problem facing education as evidenced by the attention it received from the four data sources used in this study. School finance when compared to the other nine categories received a power ranking of 2.0 (see Table 9). As the public faced increased costs due to inflation, high taxes and rising prices for energy, they appealed to school boards to reduce expenditures or find methods to shift the tax burden from local sources to the state or federal governments. The method of financing the public schools (local tax on property) was the issue; the public wanted quality education programs but they did not want their property taxes raised.

Implications. As inflation continues, the cost of education, even with declining enrollments, will rise and taxpayers will continue to insist on limitations of school spending. Further, school budgets will

be reduced since this level of government (the local school board) is the most responsive to people. Conditions which will result from reduced budgets will cause a reduction in the number of qualified teachers and reduced curricular offerings. The public will then demand more teachers and better programs but refuse to approve referendums for the additional monies needed to operate the schools. Teachers, faced with the same financial problem as school boards and other citizens may be forced to make career changes to more lucrative fields.

Recommendations. Educators should join forces and appeal to state legislators to change the methods of financing public schools. Individual education organizations such as the Nebraska Education Association, Nebraska State School Boards Association, Nebraska Council of School Administrators and Nebraska Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development should put aside problems unique to their organizations and join forces in an attempt to recommend and initiate viable alternatives for school financing.

Since budget reductions are inevitable, school boards should develop a list of budget priorities, make this list known to the public, and initiate reductions accordingly. When priorities are established in advance, boards may remain more objective in their decisions for reducing the budget and will be less likely to cater to special interest group pressure. A priority list may rally support of the public to maintain quality programs.

Conclusion C

Local boards of education respond to local needs, e.g., integration

of public schools received enough national attention to rank it second in the Gallup Polls and second in the number of articles reported in the metropolitan newspaper, yet neither of the suburban school boards in this study considered integration a problem for their districts. (Neither was under a court-order to integrate.)

Censorship of curricular materials received national attention as a result of the Kanawha County, West Virginia book dispute. The two suburban school districts were each using materials which contained the same, or at least similar, information as those in the West Virginia schools and censorship became an issue at the local level.

Implications. Local school board members and educators may be less defensive about education problems reported in the results of national polls or news media if a similar problem or circumstance does not exist in their district, but if the problem is known to exist at the local level, board members should be prepared to answer questions from district patrons.

Recommendations. Board members and school administrators should be aware of the problems facing education. It is recommended that school personnel maintain a file of news articles about national, state and local educational issues as reported by results of polls or by the news media. Since it is assumed that the public reads news about the same issues, the file will enable school personnel to formulate reports which speak to these issues.

Since local boards serve local needs they should establish methods to ascertain how their constituency views education in the school system. Formal or informal interviews, questionnaires or polls could be employed to collect the necessary information.

Conclusion D

Newspapers report the news, they do not create it. Newspaper reporters look for news about education--news which they believe will be of interest to their readers; typically what is "normal" is not news. The public has certain expectations of schools: good discipline, high performance from students on national tests and a safe environment with teachers who care about their children. When these expectations are not met: for example, student protests of dress codes, declining test scores due to lack of basic skills and teacher walkouts resulting from salary disputes, then education receives attention by the press.

Implications. Controversial issues are reported by the press. Since the clients of the schools come from a wide variety of backgrounds the potential for controversy in the schools is omnipresent. Therefore, school board members and administrators should be prepared to honestly and openly discuss controversial issues. When educational shortcomings are reported in the newspaper it is assumed to apply to all schools regardless of locales. For example, when national test scores decline it is assumed test scores have declined in all districts.

Recommendations. If a problem is disclosed at the local level, boards of education and administrators should not attempt to camouflage it. Adequate and accurate information should be provided to patrons and the news media. If the media or public believes the board is concealing a problem, the problem may gain more attention than it merits. "Cover ups" cause people to be suspicious.

Establish a good working relationship with the press. The news media does not need education or the news of education to survive but the schools could benefit from a positive relationship with the press.

Conclusion E

Public opinion vacillates. During political campaigns polling organizations interview citizens to ascertain their opinions about the candidates. Citizens change their minds as new information about the candidates is released to the news media. Public opinion is just opinion. It need not be based on fact or logic and is affected by a myriad of variables. Public opinion about education may vary from day to day depending on the respondents' economic status, employment situation, attained level of education, political viewpoint, religious affiliation or personal mood at the time a question is asked.

Implications. If public opinion about education waivers then annual polls about the quality of education may not be as good an indicator as polls at more frequent intervals such as once each quarter or once each month.

Recommendations. When the results of a public opinion poll on education are released, educators should be cognizant of external variables which existed at the time of the polling and consider these variables when looking at the results. If a poll is conducted to ascertain the public's view of increased financial support for education immediately after an economic report indicating double digit inflation, the chances are good that the report will have a negative effect on the opinion of the respondents.

School districts need to develop systematic methods for measuring public opinion. Objectives for an opinion poll should be determined and specific questions formulated to provide the board with information they seek. For example, if the board wishes to measure the response to a new foreign language program, questions should focus on that problem and not on broad curricular issues.

Conclusion F

Combinations of educational problems are more complex and therefore more difficult to resolve than single issue problems.

In 1957, the launching of a Russian satellite, Sputnik, caused severe criticism of science programs in the public schools. Scientists, as well as the public, demanded the immediate upgrading of science programs in the public schools. With the assistance of federal funds and the cooperation of school boards and administrators, science programs were improved and the concern had diminished within a five-year period.

In contrast, a combination of declining test scores, declining enrollment, inflation, teacher militancy and integration simultaneously

impacted education, between the years 1974 and 1977, and collectively created a serious problem for the public schools. The image of public education, during this period, was rapidly deteriorating.

Special interest groups rallied around single issues and may not have been aware of the complexity of the situations. An attempt on the part of the school board to resolve only a single issue led to increased criticism from other special interest groups. At the time of this writing no simple solutions to these problems seemed to be emerging.

Implications. When a combination of problems exists, the solution of one problem may increase or decrease the intensity of other problems; e.g., decreasing the school budget, when the majority of the budget is allocated for salaries, may increase teacher militancy. Increased teacher militancy may lead to a stronger bargaining stance and in turn increase teacher salaries. To increase teacher salaries, decreases might be necessary in other areas of the budget, such as a reduction of staff. A reduction in staff may lead to larger class sizes or reduced curricular offerings. The public will then demand smaller classes and more curricular offerings.

Recommendations. The school board and administration must provide the public with an awareness of the complexity of all the combination of variables which affect educational decisions.

Conclusion G

The nature of the operational patterns of boards of education is determined by the social power of the community.

Implications. A particular type of school board is likely to search for an administrator who has the administrative style and the operational skills which are attuned with its method of operation. An inert school board is likely to select a superintendent who makes the decisions, whereas a dominated school board will select a superintendent who carries out policy.

Recommendations. School administrators need to be aware of the type of school board they are working for and the nature of the social power which exists in the community.

School boards need to be aware of how they operate so they can hire administrators who will be helpful and productive.

Suggestions for Further Study

If a similar study is attempted it is suggested that the researcher become familiar with the manner in which school board minutes are recorded. Written board minutes do not reflect the intensity of discussion, the length of time an issue was discussed, or, in some cases, which member(s) of the board was involved in the discussion. It is suggested that audiotape recordings of the proceedings be used whenever possible to obtain the flavor or intensity of an issue.

Other researchers may want to investigate the editorial policies of a newspaper to try to determine the posture of that particular

newspaper about education. Editorials and nationally syndicated columns could serve as good resources for this type of study.

The methods used to gather public opinion in school districts would provide researchers with useful information about a school district's utilization of polling methods to determine opinions, needs or problems in the district.

Many school administrators provide board members with support material to explain the issues faced by the district in curriculum, financial planning and other areas. A suggestion for further study is to investigate the volume and type of information the board receives from the administration to assist it in voting on educational issues.

It is important for educators to understand if and how national economic issues, foreign policy and other societal issues impact schools or schooling. A future study might examine single societal issues reported in the newspaper in an attempt to determine if there is any relationship between that issue and school programs or actions of school boards; e.g., the relationship of inflation to school activities programs.

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APPENDIX A
Companion Study

A Summary of Actions of a Selected Board of Education
for the Years 1969 through 1978

The actions of School Board B as recorded in official minutes for the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978 were read, analyzed, recorded and placed in one of ten categories: (1) Discipline, (2) Integration, (3) Budget and Finance, (4) Teachers, (5) Dope and Drugs, (6) School Size and Class Size, (7) Facilities, (8) Curriculum, (9) Parents, and (10) School Boards. The ten headings used to categorize board actions were the same as those used to report the biggest problems in education from 1969 through 1978 as determined by the Gallup Poll. Board actions were divided into four categories: (1) Reports, (2) Discussions, (3) Announcements, and (4) Motions. The results of the categorization follow:

Discipline. Actions about vandalism, dress codes, student suspensions and student conduct were included in this category.

Integration. Any actions which involved board policies or procedures related to the issue of integration of schools were listed in this category.

Budget and Finance. Actions about the local school budget, budget or treasurer's reports, expenditures, school lunch costs, state aid to education, receipts or expenditures of federal funds and investments of idle funds were included in the budget and finance category.

Teachers. Recommendations for the employment or release of teaching staff, the salary negotiations process with the local education association, teacher evaluations, and labor disputes with teachers were

included in this section.

Dope and drugs. Use of drugs by students or concern about use of drugs by students were actions which received attention in this category. (Actions related to drug education programs were recorded in the curriculum category.)

School Size and Class Size. School enrollment reports, pupil: teacher ratios, size of classes and student transfers within the district were listed in this category.

Facilities. Actions which involved construction, renovation or remodeling of buildings or maintenance of buildings and grounds were filed in this category.

Curriculum. Any action related to academic or activities programs offered by the school district, reports of test scores, alternative educational programs and curriculum studies were placed in the curriculum section.

Parents. Parental involvement in board meetings or any action initiated by parents were included in this category.

School Boards. Actions taken by the local school board which related to its conduct or purpose were included in this section. Examples were announcements of state or national board association meetings, dates and times of local board committee meetings and local board election procedures.

In this study 3,631 school board actions were recorded and categorized. The results of the categorization are illustrated in Table 8. The number of actions in each category are shown by year (right hand

TABLE 8

A Summary of the Categorization of 3,631 School Board Actions Appearing in the Official School Board Minutes of a Selected Suburban School District (School Board B) for the Years 1969 through 1978*

Year	Discipline	Integration	Budget and Finance	Teachers	Dope and Drugs	School Size and Class Size	Facilities	Curriculum	Parents	School Boards	Total**
1969	2	0	55	46	0	2	98	10	0	22	235
1970	14	0	103	59	2	4	75	23	8	11	299
1971	3	0	80	82	2	10	134	35	11	28	385
1972	1	0	109	128	2	5	121	51	4	45	466
1973	1	0	85	58	0	20	113	64	12	23	376
1974	0	7	95	101	0	13	132	95	0	23	466
1975	0	0	70	94	1	11	138	67	1	21	403
1976	5	4	43	81	0	1	78	45	0	8	265
1977	6	0	62	72	0	17	94	68	3	15	337
1978	3	0	68	99	0	1	106	63	0	59	399
Total for Ten Years	35	11	770	820	7	84	1,089	521	39	255	3,631
Percentage of Total Number of Board Actions***	.008	.002	.17	.18	.001	.02	.25	.12	.009	.06	
Rank for the Ten-Year Period	8	9	3	2	10	6	1	4	7	5	

*The ten categories used in this summary are identical to the categories used to denote the ten biggest problems facing education according to the Gallup Poll for 1969 through 1978.

**Does not include 793 routine actions which were not used in this study.

***Based on all actions of the board including 793 actions not categorized.

column) and in total for the ten years from 1969 through 1978. Actions of the board considered to be routine, such as the call to order, motions to adjourn or motions to approve minutes of prior meetings were not used as a part of this study. As a result, 793 routine actions reviewed in this study were not included.

The official written minutes of the board of education were brief and described the actions taken by the board. The intensity of a given issue, the time allotted for discussion of that issue and knowledge or information the board may have had at its disposal prior to the discussion of an issue were not ascertained from the written minutes.

Discipline

Summary of findings. School board minutes did not reflect discipline as a major issue of School Board B for the years 1969 through 1978. Reports and discussions of vandalism were evidenced in approximately one-third of the recorded actions in this category. Deliberation and discussion regarding student dress codes and student smoking received attention from the board of education.

Findings. In the category of discipline, thirty-five actions were recorded in the minutes for School Board B during the ten-year period from 1969 through 1978. From 1969 through 1972, twenty actions were recorded and each of them focused on student dress code. Discussions and motions for proposed changes in the dress code dominated these actions; three motions ended in deadlocks.

The problem of student smoking was the issue in 1973 and in 1976 it appeared again in the minutes; a recommendation to revise the policy regarding suspension of students for this violation was reviewed. The concern about student vandalism was expressed in 1976 and a board member requested periodic updates on the amount and type of vandalism in the district. The nine actions recorded in 1977 and 1978 reflected such reports.

Integration

Summary of findings. Integration became a topic of discussion in School District B when a neighboring school district was ordered to integrate. The board of education went on record opposing a proposed legislative bill which would include District B in the integration process. Discussions and actions were evidenced in the minutes which indicated the board's desire to prevent students from transferring from another district to avoid the integration process.

Findings. All but two of the actions recorded under the topic of integration were discussions. The discussions were a result of court-ordered busing in a neighboring school district and a proposed legislative bill that would include surrounding districts in the integration plan and ultimately bus students across district lines. In 1974, School Board B passed a motion expressing their opposition to the proposed bill. The minutes indicated future meeting dates with other suburban districts' boards for the sole purpose of discussion regarding the proposed legislative bill.

In 1976, the board's concern about integration focused on the issue of student transfer. Several discussions transpired about how to prevent student transfers into District B for the sole purpose of avoiding racial integration. In January of 1976, a motion was passed which stated non-residents shall not be admitted to District B if it were determined that the motive of said student or parent was to avoid integration.

Budget and Finance

Summary of findings. School bond issues, bids for furniture and equipment and formulation of the yearly budget were the main topics recorded in actions in the category of budget and finance. Financing the school lunch program received occasional attention. As inflation began to take its toll the board asked the administration to tighten the budget. Lid bills and the financing of special education were problems facing the board and financing the schools received increased attention.

Findings. Actions recorded under the heading of budget and finance ranked third among all actions taken by the board of education from 1969 through 1978. Twenty-one percent of all actions (770) were recorded under the budget and finance category.

In 1969, the board discussed the use of computers in the book-keeping department. School lunch policies and free lunches for poverty students received attention in 1969 and in 1972, the board of education voted to increase the price of school lunches. Bond elections and the issuance of bonds were evidenced each year from 1969 through 1974.

Numerous actions were recorded regarding bids for furniture, equipment and new facilities. The need for new facilities had peaked by 1974 and less attention was given to bonds and bids from 1974 through 1978.

The problems and concerns of funding mandated special education received attention in 1975 and apprehension was expressed over the lack of state funding for special education. Actions of budget preparation and budget hearings were recorded on a yearly basis. In 1976, the board of education asked the administration to reduce the proposed budget by a considerable amount. Discussions, debates and motions were recorded in 1978 on the topic of spending limitations ("lid" bills). The increased cost for energy became a concern of the board in 1978, and energy management systems received consideration.

Teachers

Summary of findings. From 1969 through 1974, School Board B hired many additional teachers as the enrollment continued to increase. The growth had peaked by 1976, and a reduction-in-force (RIF) policy was adopted by the board in 1976 as the need for reduction of teachers was a possibility. Recorded actions as a result of teacher negotiations were evidenced in the minutes each year. The local education association remained active and their interactions with the board included a lawsuit and discussions and exchange of ideas on dress code, a salary freeze, a filed grievance and various school policies.

Findings. The majority of actions taken by the board in the category of teachers was motions on elections, resignations and teacher

transfers. Executive sessions were called to discuss progress of teacher negotiations.

In 1969, the superintendent of schools proposed to the board a new system to screen prospective candidates for teaching positions. The superintendent indicated that this new system would help building principals select the "best" teacher available, and consequently it received board approval. The interviewing process was eliminated by the board in 1971. Teachers attended board meetings in 1970 and expressed their opposition to a teacher dress code. Numerous discussions took place about a dress code, and no action was taken on this issue until 1971, the year the board adopted a faculty dress code.

Staff needs for the district were discussed annually as pupil: teachers ratios and class loads were reviewed by the board. In 1971, a teacher filed a lawsuit against the board of education for back pay, and this issue received mention in the minutes for several years until it was finally resolved by the courts. The wage-price freeze was an issue of the local education association in 1971. Teachers addressed the board, on behalf of their teachers association, and suggested that teachers' salaries should not be affected by the wage freeze. The board froze all teachers' salaries and the issue then became one of the status of salaries when the freeze was lifted. The local education association remained visible in 1972 as they filed a grievance on behalf of a school nurse. The issue was on whether the school nurse could be required to wear a uniform.

In 1973, the board approved the plans and necessary expenditures for implementation of teacher effectiveness training, a program which was purported to improve teacher performance. A reduction of teaching staff, due to enrollment decline, became a reality in 1976. A RIF policy was drafted and the board of education involved the local education association in this process. In 1976, a question arose regarding the job performance of the superintendent. A statement of support for the superintendent was signed by the majority of the teachers. The actions recorded in 1977 and 1978 centered upon teacher elections, resignations and negotiations.

Dope and Drugs

Summary of findings. Concern about drugs and the lack of an adequate drug education program were the main issues reflected in the seven actions recorded under dope and drugs. Status reports of drug education programs were placed in the category of curriculum.

In 1971, the district conducted an awareness program for teachers on the harmful effect and misuse of drugs. In 1972, several board members inquired about the amount of drugs used by students in the district. The board suggested administrators meet with parents and discuss the possibility of a district-wide drug education program. The board of education assigned the responsibility of drug education to the assistant superintendent for curriculum.

School Size and Class Size

Summary of findings. Building size and pupil: teacher ratio were the two main issues in the category of school size and class size as evidenced in the eighty-four recorded actions. Consistent pupil:teacher ratio and continued operation of all building sites were priorities of the board.

Findings. Actions recorded in the category of school size and class size centered on pupil: teacher ratio and building enrollment totals in the district. In 1969, School Board B anticipated an increase in enrollment and predicted the need for additional facilities. As various elementary buildings became overloaded with students, the board re-established boundary lines for attendance purposes and equalized enrollments. In 1973, the high school administration implemented a split shift schedule in an attempt to accommodate overcrowded conditions. Immediate plans were made for an addition for the high school. In 1974, the board was confronted with the problem of a rapid decline of enrollment in one elementary school and discussion of closing that school resulted in boundary line changes and the redistribution of students. As a result of that action all buildings remained operative.

Pupil: teacher ratios were discussed by the board throughout the ten-year period. The tendency was to equalize ratios throughout the district and an effort was made to keep the ratios consistent for each grade. Any action denoting a transfer of a student from one building to another (as a result of parental request) was recorded in this category.

Facilities

Summary of findings. New building construction, renovations, and special building projects dominated the actions recorded in the board of education minutes for 1969 through 1978. Lawsuits regarding faculty construction demanded attention on the part of the board of education. The board was involved in projects which spanned from million dollar additions to placement of no parking signs.

Findings. Thirty percent of the recorded actions in School District B's board minutes were placed under the category of facilities. For 1969 through 1978, this category received the greatest number of recorded actions (1,089), which ranked it number one. In the first five years, 1969 through 1973, School Board B was confronted with increased enrollment and as a consequence built three elementary buildings and two additions to secondary schools. The building projects constituted many of the actions recorded in the minutes. Architects' reports and change orders were reported frequently in board minutes.

In 1970, several meetings were held which debated the issue of gas versus all electric energy. A problem with the high school swimming pool resulted in a lawsuit filed against the architect. In 1971, the board of education opposed a proposed asphalt plant to be built adjacent to one of the elementary buildings.

The board adopted a policy in 1972 which outlined the process patrons needed to use if they were interesting in using a school facility, such as a gymnasium. Discussion of administrative office spaced shared with the city was discussed in 1972. The board was plagued with a high

school roof that leaked and this problem eventually led to a lawsuit which received an incredible amount of attention over a three-year period. Union strikes were a problem and injunctions were filed in the courts to attempt to halt work stoppages.

The energy crisis was a reality and the board spent time on plans for energy conservation. In 1975, a tornado ripped through the district causing damage to two schools which resulted in various actions for repair and replacement of facilities. Routine problems of buildings and grounds were topics of discussion and were evidenced in most of the minutes.

From 1969 through 1978, the board of education was responsible for new tennis courts, renovation of one school, three new elementary schools, additions to two secondary schools, new fire alarm and security systems, and monitoring the day-to-day operations of buildings and grounds. These were but a few of the projects mentioned in board minutes as the list is too numerous to repeat.

Curriculum

Summary of findings. The majority of actions (63 percent) recorded in the minutes under the category of curriculum consisted of reports. These reports included test score results, new curriculum offerings in the district, and status reports of existing programs. The board approved a variety of new courses or programs, including education of the gifted and career education. New teaching methods were reported to the board and a middle school team teaching plan received board approval.

The board of education upgraded graduation requirements twice over the ten-year span.

Findings. The category of curriculum received 521 recorded actions over the period 1969 through 1978 and 333 of the actions were reports. Curriculum received approximately 14 percent of all actions and placed fourth among the ten categories. Throughout the ten years, 1969 through 1978, reports were made on a regular basis related to various programs used in the district, curriculum studies and curriculum adoptions.

Sex education was a curriculum issue in 1971, and the board appointed a citizens' committee to work with administrators to develop a course in sex education. Year-round school was discussed in 1971 and received additional attention in 1972. A plan to develop curriculum guides in all areas was approved by the board in 1972 and in the same year outdoor education became a part of the district's curriculum. A school district self-evaluation was conducted in 1972, which used the Phi Delta Kappa model for evaluation.

Reports and discussions in 1973 involved such areas as gifted and special education, open schools versus traditional schools and career education. Career education continued to receive attention in 1974, and additional monies were allocated by the board for this program.

Curriculum guides were revised by the staff and approved by the board of education in 1975. The board requested a unified grading system for all elementary schools. Approval was given to an elementary

guidance program, a district strings program and a student exchange program. Changes in graduation requirements received attention from the board and approval was given which increased the total number of hours for graduation. A team teaching approach at the junior high level was presented to the board and this concept met with board approval. Achievement test results were reported to the board of education for the first time in 1975. Title IX received attention and the need for new programs for Indo-Chinese children was recognized by the board.

In 1976, discussion took place in several meetings which focused on an elementary philosophy program, Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, which was being piloted in the district. In January of 1977, a motion was passed to terminate the pilot study. High school requirements were reviewed again in 1977. The minimum number of hours needed for graduation was increased and a new required course entitled "Consumer Skills" was added. Career education received the attention of the board in 1978 and the possible use of cable television in the schools was discussed.

Parents

Summary of findings. Lack of parental participation was not evidenced in School District B. Board minutes reflected that parents were not hesitant to address the board of education and express their concerns about various issues. Curriculum issues dominated the majority of dialogue and topics varied. Sex education, moral education, open schools, and philosophy for children all received the attention of parents.

Findings. Parental involvement was visible throughout the ten years of recorded actions of the board of education. Parents addressed the board on a variety of issues. In 1969, a group of patrons expressed their displeasure over the fact that the board had hired architects from outside the state. In 1971, a group of parents asked the board to report to them on the lack of progress of a new elementary building promised to them. Sex education was the issue in 1971, and both support and opposition for a program were evidenced from parental comments. The issues of open concept schools and moral education were parental concerns at three meetings. Parents expressed their fear and skepticism about open schools and objected to courses which bordered the area of sensitivity training. A group of parents addressed the board and protested the high school production of "Jesus Christ Superstar." Year-round school was a concern of parents. Parental concern about the use of students as safety patrols was voiced. Parental objection over a philosophy course entitled, Harry Stottlemeier's Discover, was the topic at four board meetings. Some parents addressed the board and demanded the program be eliminated while others spoke in support of the program.

School Boards

Summary of findings. Policy review and revision and school board reorganization were the two main areas observed in actions in this category.

Findings. The actions of school board elections and board reorganization were recorded annually in the minutes. Revision of

policies and review of present policies were found in the minutes throughout the ten-year period. Liability insurance for board members was discussed in 1972, and action was taken to provide such insurance. Occasional reports from board members were given which described highlights of a convention or conference which they attended. In 1978, the board of education decided to invite a student representative to sit on the board as a non-voting representative.