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**A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LB 1114 AND LB 806 UPON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN BOARDS OF EDUCATION
AND THEIR RESPECTIVE SUPERINTENDENTS**

by

Jonathan K. Habben

A DISSERTATION

**Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education**

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Professor Frederick C. Wendel

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2000

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DISSERTATION TITLE

A Study of the Impact of LB 1114 and LB 806 Upon the Relationship

Between Boards of Education and their Respective Superintendents

BY

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**A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LB 1114 AND LB 806 UPON THE RELATIONSHIP
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AND THEIR RESPECTIVE SUPERINTENDENTS**

Jonathan K. Habben, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2000

Adviser: Frederick C. Wendel

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not two Nebraska statutes, Legislative Bill 1114 (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §77-3442, 1996) capping property tax levies and Legislative Bill 806 (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-1007, 1997) distributing state aid, had an effect upon the relationship between boards of education and their respective superintendents. The review of selected literature was focused on the quality and productivity of the relationship between a board of education and its superintendent and the importance of that relationship to the effectiveness and improvement of education in the district. The role of boards has been generalized to policy-making, while superintendents are said to be responsible for policy implementation and the overall operation of the district. The reality is that this distinction becomes simplistic given that real circumstances with real participants produce a range of human emotions to mix with both perceptions and facts.

The relationships between Nebraska boards of education and their respective superintendents, across all size classifications, were not damaged by the implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806. No significant differences were found between the perceptions of board members and superintendents in the control group and those in the treatment group about their relationship regarding the legislation. Few examples of deteriorating relationships pushed over the edge, early retirements taken, board members not running for re-election, and public outcry were voiced by board presidents and superintendents as

districts tried to handle consequences of the legislation. Respondents reported strong relationships based upon mutual respect, trust, courtesy, and communication, as well as reporting their relationships appeared strong enough to overcome disagreement. Uniting to face a common problem may have strengthened the relationship in some cases. At the same time, decreasing superintendent tenures resulting in increasing vacancies face smaller candidate pools in Nebraska, reflecting a national trend in districts of all sizes. Creating and maintaining the relationship between boards and their superintendents remains a concern.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The pursuit of the doctorate has been worthwhile; and there are many whose support made it possible. One does not make it through such an endeavor without the leadership and support of the teachers and professors who provided the opportunities for learning. My sincere thanks goes to the professional educators who have been a part of this professional, and yet very personal, journey. A "Thank you," goes to Newman Grove Public Schools' business manager Janet Williamson, principal David Rich, members of the NGPS Board of Education, and members of the NGPS staff who provided support and encouragement. Particular thanks goes to those who made possible the distance learning mediums that were such a large part of course delivery and general communication. Were it not for those visionaries, many would not have been able to become a part of this level of study. A special thanks is extended to my advisor, Dr. Fred Wendel, whom I first met in an NASSP Assessment Center program early in my administrative career. His thoughtful words have been excellent guidance, as has the support of my supervising committee members: Dr. Marilyn Grady, Dr. Ward Sybouts, Dr. Donald Uerling, Dr. Martha Bruckner, and Dr. Stan Vasa.

My parents always promoted education as being important and stressed that we always had the potential to do well, a foundation that I am forever thankful for and continue to pass on. Most importantly, I cannot put into adequate words how much I have appreciated the support of my wife, Kathy, and our three kids, Kyle, Kellen, and Jayna through the time and energy commitments in the pursuit of Masters, Specialist, and Doctoral degrees. Even beyond my wife's unwavering belief that I could do it, and should do it, everyone's understanding made the work and the absences tolerable; and the accomplishment humbly valued.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Context

During the 1996 Legislative Session, senators passed, and the governor signed, a package of Revenue Committee bills. Through these bills, the Legislature intended to cause significant changes in the operation, organization, and existence of local political subdivisions across Nebraska. The driving force for change was the call for property tax relief in both urban and rural sectors. Legislative Bill, or LB, 1114 (1996), the focal point of the legislative package, set property tax levy maximums for school districts, as well as all other local governments, to begin in fiscal year 1998-1999 (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §77-3442, 1996). These maximums, referred to as levy caps, reflected a growing concern among Nebraska property taxpayers that they were either the victims of local government overspending or a taxation system that was out of balance in terms of the sources of revenue support. The three attempts to put the property tax issue on the ballot at the general election in 1996 to gain a constitutional solution were an indicator of public pressure for property tax change. LB 1114 restricted school districts to a maximum tax levy request of \$1.10 per \$100 of real property valuation beginning in 1998-1999. This maximum levy request, or cap, excluded any amounts over \$1.10 approved in an election or in voter approved bond issues. LB 1114 also lowered the school district levy cap to \$1.00 per \$100 of real property valuation to begin in 2001-2002.

LB 299 (1996), considered a two-year phase-in toward LB 1114, accompanied LB 1114 in the Revenue Committee package (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-1025, 1996). LB 299 suspended the existing 3% to 5.5% budget expenditure growth lid for two years. LB 299 allowed local boards to exceed the lid by super-majority votes and provided for certain expenditures to be outside the lid. For some districts, LB 299 provided time; for others, it created an immediate need for expenditure reductions. The two-year life of LB 299 meant

the existing 3% to 5.5% lid would return automatically in combination with LB 1114 and any new state aid bill that might emerge from the 1997 Legislature.

The Legislature passed LB 806 (1997) during the 1997 Session, and the Governor signed it, to create a new basis for distributing state aid to school districts (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-1007, 1997). Previous equalization formulas, first in LB 1059 (1990) and subsequently in LB 1050 (1995), used district wealth in property valuation per student as the only equalizing factor. The Legislature's Education Committee developed a different equalization distribution plan that considered property valuation per student, English as a Second Language student count, free lunch subsidy count, and geographic remoteness as interrelated and weighted factors. This change shifted state aid significantly as districts became gainers and losers across school size and location. Members of rural districts, however, believed they were being pushed toward reorganization by the combination of LB 1114 and LB 806, shown through intense lobbying by statewide rural school district organizations against both bills, i.e., by the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, Nebraska School Finance Coalition, and Friends of Rural Education. All state educational organizations supported the subsequent addition of \$110 million from a 1997 state tax revenue surplus into the state aid package to bolster state aid by fully funding the new formula. The Legislature provided no guarantees of continued effort to replace lost property tax revenue funds with funds from state sources beyond 1998-99.

The combination of LB 1114 levy caps on property tax requests and changes in LB 806 of state aid distribution left school districts in changed circumstances in relation to net gains or losses in revenue (Office of School and Financial Services, Nebraska Department of Education, LB 806 Version 3.0 Executive Summary, May 5, 1997). The issue of state aid distribution has been a constant political debate since LB 1059 set the equalization concept of "needs minus resources equals state aid" in the 1990 Tax Equity and Education Opportunities Act, replacing the previous concept of foundation aid per student. School

officials have become conditioned to view state aid distribution as subject to disagreement and change as they have watched state aid fluctuate since 1990.

Members of local boards of education and their superintendents must act in the best interests of their students and patrons to implement changes brought by the financial opportunities or constraints within LB 1114 and LB 806. An educational program will flourish only when it is led by both an effective board and an effective executive who are able to work together cooperatively. McCarty and Ramsey (1971) alluded to the proposition that “the board-superintendent relationship can never be completely free of tension but it should be free of personal aggrandizement, demagoguery, and political grandstanding” (p. 218).

Board of education members and their superintendent must meet the expectations of their publics in regard to legislation in two ways. First, they must have basic knowledge of the political and economic context from which legislation developed. Second, they must understand their proactive and reactive roles in planning, deciding, and implementing. The nature of their discussions will reflect the varied economic, political, and social backgrounds that the respondents have as their frame of reference. Districts, communities, and participants may vary in acceptance to open exchanges of differing views and consensus-building. Tallerico (1989) concluded that “local educational governance is a dynamic social process of politically negotiated agenda-building. The process is neither random nor undemocratic, although clearly many important activities are subtle and unobservable to the public” (p. 226). The relationship between board members and their superintendent will be continually at issue and frequently tested, particularly in schools where discussions of significant reductions or district reorganization are occurring.

The situations require leadership from board members, particularly board presidents, and their superintendents to move the discussions forward toward appropriate actions to meet the needs of students within the opportunities or constraints of LB 1114 and

LB 806. Boards of Education and administrators must plan how to address ever-increasing sets of expectations from their various publics and audiences, local to international, while at the same time meeting the property tax limitations in LB 1114 combined with the state aid results of LB 806. Tallerico (1989) concluded in her study of superintendent-board of education relationships that “A general healthiness of the local educational governance system” existed in public schools (p. 228) . From the perspective of this study, the question emerges, “Has the net effect of LB 1114 and LB 806 affected that healthiness of the local educational governance system, or district leadership, in terms of the relationship between boards of education and their superintendents in school districts across Nebraska?”

Problem Statement

Modern school district governance is a joint effort between a board of education and the administrative team, headed by the district superintendent. A gap between the understandings, intentions, and agendas of both entities may develop at any time during the decision-making process. This may cause a negative perception of differences of opinion to occur in a relationship normally operating with little or no conflict. As James (1967) noted, ... “elements inherent in all school board-superintendent relationships render periodic conflict between the two roles almost inevitable and, indeed, perhaps desirable” (p. 6). James indicated that conflict may not be the problem facing the board and superintendent, but rather their perception and management of normal differences of opinion. The presence of crisis or opportunity may bring the superintendent and board members closer together for the tasks at hand if they become successful managers of differences of opinion. The link between those popularly elected and their chief executive officer is a critical element in the ability of the organization to function effectively toward the core mission of educating students.

Board members and superintendents may or may not be able to work together toward solutions to benefit students depending upon their success at working through varied political, economic, and social backgrounds. Decisions made by boards and their superintendents will guide the future of the district and its relationship with its publics. The study, as it is focused upon the relationship between boards of education and their superintendents in regard to the local impact of LB 1114 and LB 806, may help superintendents and board members better understand their roles in relation to each other while in the midst of difficult issues.

Purpose Statement

The researcher's purpose is to compare the perceptions of board of education presidents and their respective superintendents regarding the professional relationship between the board and its superintendent during local district planning and preparation for the management of their districts under legislatively imposed limitations, LB 1114 and LB 806, for the 1998-99 school year.

Research Questions

The research question is: Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of board of education presidents and their respective superintendents about the professional relationship between the board of education and its superintendent in Nebraska Class II, III, and VI school districts relative to state aid and available property tax revenue (control and treatment groups) as they prepared for the first year of implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806? The secondary question is: Is there a significant difference in that relationship between district size groups, using Nebraska School Activities Association classification groups A and B combined, C, and D?

List of Terms

Nebraska School Activities Association: The NSAA, as it is commonly referred to, is an organization created by school districts, maintaining voluntary membership, for the

purpose of organizing and regulating member school participation in chosen activities. As all public and non-public school districts are members, the NSAA is the single entity acting in this capacity for high school activities in Nebraska.

NSAA Classifications: Using 1998 classifications for boys and girls track: Class A -- the largest 32 high schools, both public and private; Class B -- the next largest 64 high schools, both public and private; Class C -- the next largest 96 high schools, both public and private; Class D -- the remaining 138 high schools, both public and private. The classification is from the total boy and girl enrollment certified by each district to the Nebraska Department of Education on the last Friday of September for classification for activities during the next school year. For this study, the population is all public schools in the six classifications re-grouped into Classes A and B, Class C, and Class D (Nebraska School Activities Association, 1998).

Nebraska Statutory Classifications (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-102, 1998): Each district in the following categories operates under a single school board: Class I includes any school district that maintains only elementary grades. Class II includes any school district embracing territory having a population of more than one thousand inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades. Class III includes any school district embracing territory having a population of more than one thousand and less than one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades. Class IV includes any school district embracing territory having a population of one hundred thousand or more with a city of the primary class within the territory of the district that maintains both elementary and high school grades (Lincoln Public Schools only.) Class V includes any school district embracing territory having a population of two hundred thousand or more with a city of the metropolitan class within the territory of the district that maintains both elementary grades and high school grades (Omaha Public Schools only.) Class VI includes any school district in this state that maintains only a 9-12

or 7-12 high school (Nebraska Statute §79-411). Class IV and V districts have multiple high schools and were excluded from this study.

Professional Relationship: For the purpose of this research, professional relationship means the relationship between board members as a group and their superintendent as they interact regarding educational issues during and between board of education meetings. Using the adjective “professional” determines that the relationship is based upon courtesy, trust, mutual support, and credibility toward carrying out the mission of the school district.

Board of Education member: Members are legal voters within the district and duly elected by a majority of those voting or appointed by the board of education to fill a vacancy to serve in the capacity of board of education member for their public school district within their district of residence (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-543, 1997).

Board of Education President: Annually, the board members elect one of their membership to serve as president of the board of education (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-519, 1997; §79-520, 1996; & §79-523, 1996). This person is generally considered the focal point of board organization and action. The president’s roles are managing board meetings, being the point of first contact with the superintendent, and being the intended visible leader of the board of education.

Superintendent: The superintendent is elected by a majority vote of board of education members to serve at their discretion as chief administrator of their district (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-594, 1997, and Nebraska Department of Education Rule 10 Accreditation and Approval).

Assumptions

Superintendents were chosen to respond because they serve their boards of education as chief executive officers (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-594, 1997). The board of education president was chosen to respond as the internally elected leader of the board. The

board president, as elected leader, is assumed to be the spokesman for the board of education and the district. All board members meet the same qualification test and hold the same rights and responsibilities within that voting entity as every other board member in the state of Nebraska (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-543, 1997). This is true of board presidents as well. The leadership team of board members, particularly board president, and their superintendent, is responsible for the operation of the district, through policy decisions regarding personnel, facilities, finance, and students (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-501, 1996; §79-525, 1996; & §79-526, 1997).

The discussions underlying the development of LB 1114 included references to the proposition that there were too many political subdivisions in the state, including too many school districts. This proposition received increasing attention by rural and urban property owners, who began to merge their concerns about property taxes. Concerns questioned the legitimacy of the ratio of property taxes to other taxes, as well as the overall rate of taxation paid to shoulder the burden of supporting local political subdivisions.

The issues surrounding property tax revenue to support schools are directly linked with state aid distribution as shown in the relationship between LB 1114 and LB 806. The number of districts with a net revenue decline, due to the combined estimated effects of LB 1114 and LB 806, had been projected to increase dramatically by estimates from the Office of School Finance and Reorganization Services (Nebraska Department of Education Version 3.0 Executive Summary). Crisis discussions between board members and their superintendent could have increased since the the 1996 Legislative Session, simply due to the political discourse surrounding the projected impact of LB 1114 and LB 806.

Delimitations

The study was confined to district planning from summer 1996 through summer 1998. The survey was administered after the 1998 Legislative Session had concluded in May, 1998. School officials knew of their state aid status from Nebraska Department of

Education as of December 1, 1997 (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-1022, 1997). They continued to assess the impact upon their districts through the budget planning before budget deadlines in September, 1998.

Participants in the survey were board presidents and superintendents. Board presidents were chosen as representative of their board of education members as a whole. As the internally elected leader, they are well-thought of, by at least the majority of board members, and expected to represent the board as a whole.

More than half of the state's public school districts in 1996, 353 of 642, were K-6 or K-8 Class I districts. The balance, 289, were Class II through VI (University of Nebraska Lincoln, Department of Educational Administration, Bulletin 5, 1997 and Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-102, 1996). The study did not include Class V Omaha Public Schools and Class IV Lincoln Public Schools. Class I districts were not included because their district budgets are affiliated with at least one high school district, forming an affiliated, or common, levy. Affiliation meant all Class I district land must be joined with K-12 districts or Class VI (7-12 or 9-12) districts to form a system. Property tax requirements and state aid distributions were then determined for each system (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §79-1077, 1996). Each Class I continues to be governed by its elected board of education, but is part of a property taxing entity called a system. Of the funds that property taxes are levied to support (General, Property Tax Reimbursement, Hazardous Material Abatement and Handicapped Accessibility, Bond Interest and Redemption, and Special Building), only the Bond and Special Building funds are not included in the affiliated system levies. The Special Building Fund is specific to the district levying the property tax request and the Bond Interest and Redemption Fund is specific to one or more districts in a voter-approved bond issue. Beginning in 1998-1999, all funds, except the Bond Interest and Redemption Fund, were included within the LB 1114 property tax levy cap.

The responsibility for setting levies was assigned, in LB 1085 (1996), to Class II, III, IV, V, and Class VI boards of education, rather than to county clerks as was the previous practice (Nebr. Rev. Stat. §77-1601, 1996). LB 1085 was part of the 1996 Revenue Committee package of bills that included LB 1114 and LB 299. LB 806 added another limitation to Class I districts for 1998-1999 by restricting their budget authority to the average of the per pupil cost of Class I and the primary Class II, III, or VI affiliate. The primary affiliate is the Class II, III, or VI district having the larger percentage of the Class I property valuation. Class I districts must be at or below this average each year, as calculated by the Nebraska Department of Education, or decide to reorganize. The only exception Class I boards of education have is to approach K-12 affiliates to request permission to exceed the NDE computed average.

For the second research question, comparing perceptions across school sizes, NSAA classifications for 1998 track were used because all Nebraska high schools field track teams. Each classification is based upon the total enrollment count in grades 9-11 on the last Friday in September, 1996, which was used as the basis for NSAA track classification in 1997-1998. This particular classification was chosen because all public school districts in Nebraska are represented by the classified high schools. Classifications were combined for Class A and B (excluding Omaha and Lincoln Public Schools), Class C, and Class D so the population size within each group supports a reasonable sample size.

Limitations

The study is limited by the time frame of the survey. Changes may have occurred within LB 1114 and LB 806 during the 1998 Legislative Session, or later sessions, because the projected losses due to either or both laws affected schools of all sizes. An example of continued discussion within LB 1114 is a 1997 Interim Study considering LB 306, held over from the 1997 Session. LB 306 provided that the Special Building Fund property tax levy be exempted from the levy cap maximum. School districts and school

organizations continued to promote the exemption as a solution to funding the replacement of aging facilities while preserving the limited property tax levy for educational needs. A second example, regarding LB 806, was the promotion of income wealth as a factor in addition to property wealth within the state aid distribution formula. Many school officials believed there were better ways to assess ability to pay than using federal free lunch subsidy. Because LB 1114 and LB 806 were the result of political discourse, one must consider that either could change in future legislative sessions. For this reason, the survey was sent following the adjournment of the 1998 Legislature and the subsequent special session on education legislation.

The study was also limited to perceptions by board presidents and superintendents about their relationships during a two-year period. During that time, there may have been changes in superintendents, administrative team members, or board members, as well as in how the new laws affected districts. The possibility that a divided board or a strained board-superintendent relationship may have existed in a school district prior to any legislative pressures must be considered as well.

Significance of the Study

“The relationship between the board and the superintendent deserves intensive study ... because they are at the heart of any educational problem and its solution” (Gross & Mason, 1958, p. 2), and, “The critical nexus [for local educational policy-making] is the link between the board and the superintendent” (Cistone, 1982, p. 1641).

Through this study, the researcher reviewed literature focusing on the effect of a statewide political action upon the professional relationship between boards of education and superintendents. The survey data yielded information regarding individual perceptions by board presidents and superintendents regarding that relationship. The information and conclusions in this study will aid superintendents and board members in school district leadership roles by providing comparative information and recommendations about the

professional relationship issues facing superintendents and boards of education.

Understanding the critical nature of the relationship between superintendents and their respective board of education members and how major changes in funding education impact that relationship is important to maintaining the leadership relationship toward the benefit of students. Administrator education programs and statewide board and administrative organizations are potential forums for learning and teaching regarding statewide critical issues and district leadership.

The relationship issue remains current for several reasons. First, there is ongoing political discussion regarding revenue sources and funding mechanisms within public education, among taxpayers, and within the legislature. Second, education will continue as a political agenda item due to conflicting visions of quality, accessibility, and equity. Third, the issues are viewed from human perspectives as different as the geographic locations and school population sizes existing across Nebraska. Understanding how the relationship factor within the school district leadership team may be affected in the face of significant change may help board of education members and superintendents better weather the impact of state level political debate on their district, as well as statewide.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED REFERENCES

Introduction

“The school board-superintendent relationship is the leadership keystone for the school system” (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995, p. 163). This relationship is at the heart of achieving success on both local and national goals (Goodman, Fulbright, & Zimmerman, 1997). “United in a common mission, your school board and superintendent represent the single most powerful combination of local political will and sophisticated management know-how available for the benefit of the children” (Downey, 1998, p. 5). In turn, the board-superintendent relationship will have a direct effect on the quality of education received by the children and youth in a district’s schools (Rebore, 1984).

Good boards and good superintendents expect each other to be respectful and good at managing the school. The community will be able to see this quality relationship, or lack of it, and determine how it affects their children (Rebore, 1984). The success of an organization, and any organization according to Eadie (1994), depends on the human relationship between board and chief administrator. This relationship also provides the example to other members of the organization about working relationships. When problems are not handled within a trusting, honest relationship, the organization will struggle toward the achievement of its goals. As the relationship is strengthened, the potential for success and progress is enhanced. The team functions best as strong partners who work together toward the same vision (Richards, 1997). An effective team recognizes the importance of interdependence within its members and is a fundamental requisite for effective governance and leadership (Danzberger (1998).

In spite of the assertion that “the effectiveness of school boards is, in large measure, determined by the character of the board-superintendent relationship,” (Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on School Governance, 1992, p. 73) tension between the two

often exists. Inherently and inevitably, issues will provoke degrees of conflict in board-superintendent relationships (James, 1967). Both, as a governance team, face the same problems and pressures in their professional endeavors but do not always reach the same conclusions to resolving those problems and pressures (Knezevich, 1969).

“From the day the office of superintendent was created until today, there has been a strained relationship between the school board that makes policy and the superintendent who implements it” (Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, & Sybouts, 1996, p. 41). The relationship is under more stress as pressures for change increase. As increasing tensions result in a decline in the board-superintendent relationship, the productive operation of the district is compromised. Superintendents are well aware of the critical nature of the relationship and indicate the relationship is one of their most significant challenges. Boards are also well aware of the importance of the relationship (Norton et al., 1996).

Knezevich (1969) wrote that the American concept of local authority and control of schools by local boards was no less a cause of controversy in 1969 than it was a century earlier. As the corporate board concept developed, along with the complexity and size of districts, boards kept the legislative functions while delegating specialized administrative and executive functions to professional educators. The board, a reflection of its community, hires and protects its superintendent, who often comes from elsewhere. The board protects its superintendent as long as the superintendent is carrying out the board's wishes. While disagreement will occur, and even be healthy, both parties remain aware that the board has the authority to change superintendents as a solution to a disagreement. Johnson (1996) concluded that boards' expectations that superintendents should lead those with such authority was a unique, as well as challenging, responsibility for both parties. Wall (1991) wrote that given boards' authority to change superintendents, superintendents were well advised to make efforts to improve the relationship as it was beneficial to their professional status and the successful implementation of district goals. Sharp and Walter

(1997) agreed that the relationship was critical to the superintendent's job security as well as to the overall management and leadership of the district, but they believed the responsibility to make the relationship effective was mutual.

While the keys to an effective relationship appear simple, "the story, local or otherwise, remains intriguingly tangled" (Tallerico, 1989, p. 230).

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Education

Researchers on the subject of board-superintendent relations have studied boards from two viewpoints -- the policy-making function and what boards should not do. The first is a narrow view of what boards see themselves doing. The second is less than adequate because board members want to know what they should do and how to do it. Board members must represent community interests and at the same time work to govern their school district through policies they have adopted. Ideally, these two responsibilities coincide, but varied publics' demands can complicate decision making. Board members attempt to bridge the gap between representing all patrons, as trustees, and representing their own constituencies, as delegates. (Kowalski, 1999).

The role of a board of education is perceived to be the same, or similar, to a set of role expectations generic to all boards, although variations exist from state-to-state and between local districts. Board member's authority is limited to meeting as a board or committee in a meeting recognized by the entire board. They have the authority to select officers from among their membership and to create committees, including appointing non-board members, as well as determining how the superintendent is to work with committees. Their most important task is to set the direction for the school district. Goal setting is the activity that grows out of mission and beliefs and into strategic planning. Board members' responsibilities vary from the selection of a superintendent to the development of the budget and board policies. Rogers also indicated a serious need for boards to consider relationship issues with what is becoming a job with very short tenure.

Boards are the sole determiner of their superintendent's job status, as superintendents have contracts for limited terms, but no legal tenure. Every board, therefore, has a responsibility to plan its relationship with its superintendent (Rogers, 1992).

In the broadest sense, a board is responsible for everything that an organization does and does not do. Houle (1989) placed board responsibilities in eleven categories.

First, the board should keep the overall mission of the program clearly in focus and satisfy itself that the objectives of the particular parts of the work or units of the organization are in harmony with the mission.

Second, the board should approve and periodically revise long-range plans for the institution.

Third, the board should oversee the program of the institution to assure itself that objectives are being achieved in the best fashion possible.

Fourth, the board should select the executive and establish the conditions of his employment.

Fifth, the board should work closely and interactively with the executive and, through him, with the staff. The relationship with the executive should be as close as time permits and as informal and personal as the essential differences in role allow.

Sixth, the board should serve as arbiter in conflicts between staff members on appeal from the decision of the executive and in conflicts between the executive and the staff.

Seventh, the board should establish such broad policies governing the program as may be necessary to cover continuing or recurrent situations in which consistency of action is desirable.

Eighth, the board should assure itself that its basic legal and ethical responsibilities are fulfilled.

Ninth, the board must accept responsibility for securing and managing adequate financial resources.

Tenth, the board should assure itself that the organization or association is effectively integrated with its social environment as well as with the publics and institutions to which it is or should be related.

Eleventh, the board should continuously appraise itself and periodically devote time to analyzing both its own composition and its performance (Houle, 1989, pp. 89-94).

The perception of negative educational implications coming from role conflict was the rationale for the National School Boards Association and American Association of School Administrators' decision to develop jointly a set of role standards for boards and superintendents (Norton et al., 1996). As an attempt to clarify what boards and superintendents should be responsible for, a joint National School Boards Association/American Association of School Administrators' (1994) Statement on Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards and Superintendents was created. The associations itemized their list of board responsibilities (see Appendix F) that can be grouped under the following summary statements:

1. The board's primary role is to establish board policy, including the creation of a vision with a supporting structure and environment that is funded adequately and appropriately.

2. The board must choose a superintendent, equip the superintendent through the delegation of administrative responsibilities and authority, provide competitive compensation, support and work closely with the superintendent, and hold the superintendent accountable.

3. The board must establish standards and expectations of student achievement, promote the district's efforts on behalf of students to the public, and support all staff toward the benefit of students.

4. The board must provide for professional development opportunities for itself, the superintendent, professional staff, and classified employees.

Richards (1997) developed a list of board responsibilities for organizations to be used with broad application by school districts. As recognition that all boards and their organizations are not the same, he indicated that customizing within each category is to be expected. Noteworthy on his list is that boards have the key responsibility of adopting policy. This key responsibility reinforces the belief of those who work in and those who

study school districts that school boards are not much different from boards of other entities in that core responsibility. His list contained other responsibilities such as ensuring performance, providing leadership, selecting their own officers, following proper procedures, clarifying roles and responsibilities of subordinates, conducting effective meetings, and selecting/evaluating a chief executive officer (CEO).

Natale (1998) wrote that all of the functions of boards are represented by three generalizations: (a) determining goals, (b) identifying what the superintendent cannot do, and (c) monitoring accountability. Superintendents are then in the position of figuring out how to achieve the district goals within the boundaries of statutes, board policies, and fiscal responsibility. The three generalizations appear a simple delineation, yet boards and superintendents struggle over application in a context of live relationships and interactions.

Out of all of the lists of roles and responsibilities, “the single most important task of a school board is the selection of a superintendent of schools” (Rebore, 1984, p. 53). Houston (1998b) reaffirmed the same critical function. Rogers (1992) included the hiring of a superintendent as one of the critical functions of the board. Rebore (1984) wrote that three board responsibilities regarding the superintendent selection process become the basis for their relationship. First, the board selects a superintendent through a formal process. The first step toward selecting a superintendent is to create a selection committee made up of board members and non-board members. The selection process flows from this group, including whether or not to use outside consultants. The committee should limit the use of outside consultants to educating and advising the selection committee. The concern about ways that consultants skew the selection process toward favored candidates is minimized if a selection committee is involved in every step and does not delegate decisions it should be making. Second, the board creates a compensation plan that contains both rewards and incentives. The board’s contract with the superintendent should include the compensation package as well as identifying authority, responsibility, evaluation, and renegotiation

procedures. The contract is one of the most important ways the board communicates its expectations to the superintendent. Third, the board creates an evaluation process that ensures accountability of board and superintendent. Rogers (1992) clarified the purposes for evaluation as both formative and summative. It is formative in the sense of building the relationship, achieving goals, and enhancing specific skills. It is summative when a conclusion regarding contract extension is made.

Bird (1993) found in his study of the superintendent transition process in his suburban Nebraska school district that a board's role went beyond the selection of a superintendent. The board must play a critical role in the transition process in order for a new superintendent to understand the role and to enhance the probability of a successful relationship with the board. He identified responsibilities of the board in the transition process: (a) support the new superintendent publicly, (b) emphasize continuity within the system, (c) support the new superintendent to all staff, and (d) identify and resolve issues of potential division between the board and new superintendent. Further, individual board members should be working toward trust-building, resolving personal issues, and showing support for the new superintendent.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Superintendency

The roles and responsibilities of superintendents are whatever the board says they are. Yet, according to Tyack and Hansot (1982), "if there is any educational leader at the school district level charged with the task of inspiring and coordinating [district] renewal, it is the local superintendent" (p. 256). Bryant and Grady (1989) stated, "superintendents are critical players in the creation of orderly change and school district stability" (p. 34). The expectation becomes twofold. First, lead and manage the system toward stability. Second, lead and manage the processes and efforts toward school improvement and better governance. Johnson (1996) reported that superintendent vacancy notices leave the

impression “that only heroes need apply” (p. 6). Superintendents, then, are left to form their own perceptions and expectations in relation to those of the board that hires them.

Following a period of questioning the role of superintendents, an effort to stabilize the profession by emphasizing its professionalism was shown by the American Association of School Administrators Commission on Standards for the Superintendency in 1993. The commission established eight standards for superintendents as professional executives.

1) ... [skills in] executive leadership, vision, shaping school culture and climate, empowering others, and multicultural and ethnic understanding.

2) ... [skills in] developing procedures for working with the board; formulating district policy, standards, and regulations; and describing public school governance in our democratic society.

3) ... skills in articulating district vision and purpose to the community and media... responding to community feedback and building consensus to strengthen community support.

4) ... skills in gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making; framing and solving problems; and formulating solutions to problems... quality management to meet internal and external customer expectations and to allocate resources.

5) ... [skills in] designing curriculum and a strategic plan to enhance teaching and learning, ... , and describing the use of computers and other learning technologies.

6) ... [skills in gathering] knowledge and use of research findings on learning ... to maximize student achievement.

7) ... skill in developing a staff evaluation and assessment and supervisory system ... skills in personnel selection, development, retention, and dismissal.

8) ... understanding and modeling of appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership ... multicultural and ethnic understanding ... coordination of agencies and services ... (Carter & Cunningham, 1997, p. 17)

Simply stated, boards should look for superintendent candidates who understand and advance the board’s vision through sound relationships and efforts (Brubaker & Austin, 1996). Natale (1998) reduced the description of the superintendent’s role to “run the district by figuring out how to achieve the board’s goals within the limitations set by the board” (p. 6). Those limitations include statutes, fiscal decisions, policies, and anything the

board will not allow. Carter and Cunningham (1997) advanced a similar focus: a superintendent's overall role is to assist the board in drafting board policy and then carrying it out. Because this role description is an oversimplification, local, state, and national organizations have attempted to create lists of roles and responsibilities, as well as evaluation criteria to go with them.

The joint effort of NSBA and AASA (1994) to delineate board and superintendent roles and responsibilities was an attempt to clarify and provide guidance to boards and superintendents toward a better working relationship. The resulting list of superintendent responsibilities (see Appendix G) can be grouped under the following summary statements:

1. The superintendent serves as the CEO, primary advisor and supporter to the board, and educational leader of the district.
2. The superintendent initiates policy development, planning processes, school improvement processes, and school-community relations processes, and is responsible for all employees of the district.
3. The superintendent carries out board policies, connects the district to board actions, connects the community with board actions, and administers the affairs of the district on a daily basis in accordance with board policy and board decisions.

The development of an annual budget is the single most identifiable set of tasks associated with the superintendency by boards, the public, and the profession itself. The superintendent develops the first draft and sets the tone for the discussion to follow, prior to the board approving a final budget. The budget reflects priorities and plans and is designed to implement the district's vision, resulting in the tax rate to the patrons. The superintendent cannot step aside and call it the board's budget in the face of public opposition to either budget items or taxes required. The superintendent is responsible for understanding the process and detail of budget development and is the architect of what the

budget contains. The budget is as much a representation of the superintendent as it is the board of education (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

As budget tasks have always been recognized as a prime responsibility for superintendents, a new set of tasks is appearing on the list of roles and responsibilities. The superintendent is always a lobbyist locally on behalf of the board and district; however, being a lobbyist to state government is becoming an integral part of the job description. The basis for this addition to the job description of an effective superintendent is the reality that when one legislative session is ending, the next one is already being planned. On-going lobbying at the state level must be recognized (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Johnson (1996) reinforced the increased importance of lobbying by finding no basis for the adage that the superintendency should be apolitical in order that educational decisions be confined within the context of professional education. Her two-year study contained 312 interviews of 12 district superintendents with varied experience and educational backgrounds from districts with diverse demographic characteristics. She found that superintendents were expected to be political as they worked through the competing interests of various groups at local and state levels. Negotiating, lobbying, and gaining support for worthy activities were given as superintendent responsibilities.

Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) wrote that the superintendent is the primary change agent in an effective school and must occasionally test the local paradigm. Acting as a change agent allows a superintendent to determine where boundaries are as well as what areas are open to change. Johnson (1996) wrote that the superintendent must be proactive as a manager to set the tone for leadership activities that include acting as a change agent. While formal authority goes with the position, boards hold superintendents responsible for exercising that authority toward district goals.

Superintendents must employ their personal inventory of talents, skills, experiences, strengths, and weaknesses with respect to local political circumstances. Local

political realities occur within the contexts of time, locale, and organizational structure. Each has an effect upon the roles and responsibilities as perceived by superintendents and expected by boards of education (Johnson, 1996). No matter the circumstance, as Leithwood and Musella (1991) pointed out, a CEO has to be prepared to deal with whatever responsibilities and problems exist within the job description. One assumes the entire position, as contracted, when hired. "The CEO can't opt out" (p. 330).

Problems in the Relationship

Tension is a normal and natural part of the board-superintendent relationship according to Shannon (1989) and Danzberger (1998). The choices board members and superintendents make about how to manage tension are the difference between ineffective and effective performance (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Role Clarification

In simplest form, roles are defined beyond state statutes as the board makes policy and the superintendent carries it out. From that point on, role clarification is a potential issue for boards and superintendents. On the one hand, most adults have been to school and believe their experiences provide them with an intuitive sense about what to do and how to do it relative to schools and students. On the other hand, education is a profession, with professional research, knowledge, and people. The lay, elected board hires the professional superintendent to lead and manage a professional institution. Differing interests and backgrounds between lay board members and professional superintendents produce a natural basis for disagreement. Election turnover and replacing superintendents contribute to less stability in how roles are defined (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Whether the ideal separation of roles promised by the corporate form of governance has ever been implemented completely has been subject to question. Boards tend to view such role division as important, but not more important than that of achieving their public and private interests. Superintendents believe adhering to established professional roles is

critical to the operation of the system toward educational goals. They believe theirs is the final responsibility even though the board has the final authority. This professional view underlies the professional education superintendents go through and solidifies a mind set about how governance should be accomplished (Bryant & Grady, 1992a).

Trotter and Downey (1989) concluded that number and complexity of issues reflecting the pressures for change in our modern society were increasing. Demands for accountability pressure boards to expect results and, at times, to become more involved in administrative decisions. While some critics perceive boards to be rubber-stamping rather than decision-making, the authors found that board members were running for re-election more often than before, resulting in experienced, stronger, and more active board members. Superintendents perceived that boards did not know how to stay within their role of governance and policy, yet appeared to be reacting to the change in board member characteristics by being less dogmatic about the lines of responsibility and authority regarding personnel, curriculum, finance, and governance/administration. Even so, superintendents were not giving up as much authority as some board members wanted. Trotter and Downey expressed concern about board-superintendent role definition in a changing environment. Their conclusion: "Just look at the horizon in education. Dark clouds definitely are gathering. There should be plenty of lightning to go around" (p. 25).

Tallerico (1989) identified two recurring themes regarding role definition: (a) different views of what decisions should be controlled by which party existed and (b) different views of who should be dominant and when existed. Wissler and Ortiz (1988) wrote that while state statutes define the superintendency as it exists within the legal organization of school districts, local boards define the position within the local school and community context. According to Tallerico, boards and superintendents enter into a role relationship sometimes clear, sometimes negotiated. When boards were able to choose superintendents that matched their behavioral expectations, a strong relationship was the

result. Tallerico concluded that because local boards often accepted the superintendent's definition of roles, local governance was healthy overall.

Kerr and Gade (1989) determined from their study of the perceptions of postsecondary presidents and board members about president and board member performance that the performance of a president depended on the conduct of the governing board more than personality and character of board members. The reverse was also true; board success depended upon the conduct of the president more than personality and character. Role clarification was still the major concern in this mutually dependent relationship. "Even at the postsecondary level, the dilemma that one person's policy is another person's administration is a constant reminder of the inherent tension that exists between administrator and board" (p. 95).

Houle (1989) stated that "both the board and the executive will be helped in their relationship with one another if each of them understands the need for the other to be capable and powerful" (p. 96). Houle suggested that when both are strong, the benefits are greater than in a checks and balances relationship. The relationship cannot be expected to be free of tension, particularly if both are strong and credible. Houle believed a mutual agreement must exist between board and superintendent to work through issues of role overlap and confusion. A board-superintendent relationship based on defined roles and a team effort to work through gray areas is built over time. Changing board members and executives too often makes the development of a productive and predictable relationship that much harder.

Wall (1991) found in his study of performance dimensions with 48 Nebraska superintendents and board presidents (38 respondents) in Class II and Class III K-12 districts that varying perceptions of board and superintendent roles were common. Superintendents viewed themselves as in charge of all implementation and expected to be involved from the beginning in policy development. Superintendents across all district sizes

believed their relationship with the board was the first priority, ahead of fiscal and personnel management. Board presidents ranked relationship second behind personnel management and ahead of fiscal management as to their views of what determined superintendent success. Wall concluded that because both parties ranked the relationship so high, particularly the superintendent, role clarification to strengthen the relationship was crucial.

Members of the Twentieth Century Task Force (1992) found in a nationwide study that a majority of responding school boards did not perceive themselves as making specific efforts to attain productive relationships with their superintendents. Boards also did not believe they made identifiable efforts to connect with their communities about educational issues. At the same time, boards in districts of all sizes were found to be concerned about state government intrusion, tensions with their superintendent over role delineation, and challenges to their general effectiveness by various publics in and outside the district.

The relationship between members of the board is also of concern. The interaction between board members with a tendency toward individual action and those with a desire for teamwork and group action leads to divisions beyond the normal disagreement over issues. The overall board-superintendent relationship becomes more contentious when board members differ on their role within the board and the board's role overall. This interaction becomes a larger factor affecting decision making in the relationship during a climate of change as new challenges arise that test the relationship (Rogers, 1992).

Ferguson and Nochelski (1996) found in their nationwide survey of 1,500 superintendents (28% return across 50 states and all types of districts) that a majority did not worry about boards overstepping roles. Of all respondents, 29% of the superintendents said they were concerned their respective boards might undermine them through micromanagement, while 59% said their boards did not infringe on their authority and did not express concern. Ferguson and Nochelski suggested the lack of concern is an indicator

that superintendents are beginning to compromise or negotiate some long-held beliefs about role boundaries.

Jones (1996) surveyed 45 superintendents nationwide as to their perceptions about whether or not their board presidents were carrying out generally accepted roles. This was a follow-up to Jones' 1991 survey of 1,036 board presidents nationwide about their perceptions of carrying out their roles. He found that superintendents felt board presidents were carrying out their roles as expected, similar to results from his 1991 study. Superintendents expected board presidents to run board meetings, keep discussion focused, keep order, appoint committees, keep meetings moving, promote consensus, keep communication open between board and superintendent, help board members focus on appropriate roles, and serve as board spokesperson. Jones found minor differences between his studies. Superintendents were more likely than board members to say their president did not serve as a rubber stamp and that their president controlled committee appointments. Board members were more likely than the superintendent to say their president served as board spokesperson, yet was not carrying out the role of board president fully enough. Jones concluded the slight differences did not provide a basis for determining whether or not the relationship was negatively affected.

Norton et al. (1996) believe role ambiguity occurs because superintendents come into the position with certain expectations based upon their professional training, while board members have little if any training other than what they receive from superintendents. Two major tasks are critical to overcoming role ambiguity: (a) participation in strategic planning and (b) participation in comprehensive policy development. While superintendents typically initiate and author most planning and policy initiatives, the board must be involved. Engaging collaboratively and formally in both of these tasks provides a positive basis for an effective relationship.

Kowalski (1999) concluded that patrons' expectations of board members translate into the types of role expectations board members have of their superintendents. First, patrons' expectations of board members contribute to the range of authority superintendents are allowed by boards. A board will not delegate authority to the superintendent that the public will not support. Second, communities expect their board members to take more active roles in regard to daily affairs. As a result, board members are less willing to accept clear definitions and boundaries to their role in relation to the superintendent.

Communication

Communication is a major source of role conflict. Board members often consider communication the critical issue when relationships deteriorate. Superintendents who do not spend enough time communicating with their board members are not providing the information appropriate to what their board members want. Board members expect to be informed by the superintendent and expect to be able to respond to the superintendent without guesswork or surprise (Norton et al., 1996).

Grady and Bryant (1991a) surveyed 275 Nebraska school board presidents in 1991 to determine if any had experienced a critical incident with superintendents. Of the 239 (87%) that responded, 68 (28%) said they had experienced such an incident and most responses, 25 (37%), were categorized as communications/human relations. Wall (1991) concluded from his study of Nebraska superintendents in 38 Class II and III K-12 districts that communication was crucial to maintaining the board-superintendent relationship that superintendents believed was so important.

Carter and Cunningham (1997) and Sharp and Walter (1997) wrote that perceptions are important. If a board perceives the job is not being done right for whatever reason, the superintendent is being evaluated negatively. Differences between the board's perception and the superintendent's perception become potential problems, as do different ideas and priorities. The superintendent has to communicate appropriate information to close gaps or

a negative perception becomes the basis for a lack of trust by board members of their superintendent. Pressure on boards and superintendents makes the issue of communication central to maintaining the relationship and governing effectively. The bridge across divisions is communication, and both board members and superintendents must keep open lines of communication.

Trust

Tallerico (1989) decided that if the perceptions board members and superintendents have about each other's character and trustworthiness were negative, those perceptions became the basis for disagreements between the parties. Because both parties have something to gain as well as lose, they coexist in a relationship in which roles can change between clear and negotiated in order to get things done. She indicated that when boards are able to choose superintendents that match their behavioral inclinations, a positive relationship with a sense of unity is fostered. As Tallerico noted, "these findings and conclusions can be interpreted to indicate a general healthiness of the local educational governance system", although she added that a "passive acceptance of the status quo" may contribute to the relationship as well (p. 229).

Rogers (1992) wrote that when boards intrude beyond policymaking roles, the reasons vary between seeking a comfort level relating to public perception, attempting to balance a superintendent's power, questioning clarity of direction, or trying to find or define a level of mutual trust within the relationship. "Trust is the interpersonal climate that permits legitimate internal controls to work" (p. 71).

Carter and Cunningham (1997) asserted that board trust is the basis for superintendents doing their work. Trust is built in both open and closed sessions of board meetings. The closed session is where confidential discussions occur, which puts participants in a position of being either trustworthy or not. The effective superintendent works at all times to build the climate of trust with the board, knowing that without it,

progress will not be made. Goodman and Fulbright (1998) found that superintendents were frustrated by board and individual member's micromanagement, while boards perceived superintendents as not communicating with nor helping the board enough. Houle (1989) cited the perception of cronyism as another problem that affected trust and credibility between board members, superintendent, and community. The combination of perceptions leads to a breakdown of trust. The feeling of not being trusted caused superintendents to back away from risk-taking efforts toward school improvement.

Gordon (1997) found, from the Beginning School Superintendent research, that relations with boards was an important concern for beginning superintendents. He identified a variety of problems new superintendents were not aware of until identified by their board members. The result was that trust and credibility with their board had sometimes eroded before new superintendents were aware of what was happening. Problems arose when superintendents were faced with accusations of having worked on an issue with less than the full board, making reassignment or non-renewal requests for long-standing staff that board members had supported, having raised board members' expectations but achieving less than expected, failing to communicate and inform board members adequately prior to meetings, failing to recognize which board members carried the most influence, failing to recognize internal and past loyalties, failing to identify problems, and thinking that everyone wanted it told straight. The damage done made new superintendents struggle with decisions that were made more difficult due to inadequate trust and credibility.

Respect

Bryant and Grady (1992b) found in their 1991 study of Nebraska school board presidents that board members viewed mutual respect as more important to the relationship than role definition. Board members wanted superintendents to be truthful, cooperative, and forthright, which together form the basis for a respectful relationship.

The relationship between a board and its superintendent is seldom simple and does not lend itself to clear definition. Superintendents are hired to lead and work with those who hired them, even if the board becomes divided. At the same time, the superintendent has to exercise positional authority to stop the board from acting beyond its role. Johnson (1996) noted that the common expectation was for superintendents to inform and advise but to stop short of coercion. Superintendents were expected to recognize that their board member needs were not identical and to listen and foster mutual respect. Superintendents must use a range of analytic, strategic, and interpersonal skills to work through the political demands of school boards, but never in a way as to show disrespect. A superintendent's political skills were valued by constituents within the context of constructive educational purpose, but not valued if perceived as manipulative or self-serving (Johnson, 1996).

Kowalski (1999) wrote that when identifying complaints each party had about the other, both parties reported lack of respect as an important relationship factor. Board members perceived lack of respect by superintendents for board members as a major problem, ranking it second behind lack of integrity. Superintendents had a similar complaint, calling lack of respect by board members a rejection of the superintendent's professional status. Superintendents indicated lack of respect by board members for superintendents was a major problem, ranking it behind board members pursuing single issues and personal gain. Kowalski believed another area of potential conflict over respect existed within social relationships between individual board members and the superintendent. A traditional view is to keep such relationships in check so that objectivity is maintained by all parties and personal disagreements do not become the basis for decisions. Kowalski asserted that if mutual respect is present, the professional relationship is not damaged by a social relationship. Whether professional or social, relationships must be monitored to know if they are promoting or inhibiting district governance.

Disagreement and Conflict

The likelihood of having any district be free of tension and conflict over time, given the nature of the board-superintendent relationship, is not high. At times, superintendents are beset with concerns about slowness of processes, boredom, compromising ethical beliefs, as well as feelings of loneliness, stress, and inadequacy. Even though these concerns and feelings are a natural human response to circumstances, they are subordinate to actual conflicts. Conflicts that erupt at the board-superintendent level spread and impact district employees and patrons. "The guiding principal for action, as one superintendent put it, 'I try to weigh my personal stake in it. Maybe learning that is part of the rites of passage from teacher, to department head, to principal, to superintendent'" (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985, p. 150).

Shannon (1989) and Gardner (1990) reminded boards and superintendents that without any training in conflict resolution, they are minus an important tool for resolving differences. Superintendents must foresee conflict and where it is headed to be effective. They may know their own people and own culture but do not always understand the people and institutions external to their districts. Tension can be productive if the parties are able to keep it from being divisive and destructive to the relationship. Further, as board members and superintendents attempt to gather public allies, conflicts spread.

McCurdy (1992) cited several internal factors in an AASA critical issues report as sources of conflict. Misunderstandings between superintendents and boards about their roles in the relationship as a source of conflict ranked ahead of other problems such as communication concerns, micromanaging, attempts at control by either party, interference with personnel, confidentiality, skill and competence, single-issue agendas by board members, and other areas of difficulty. The internal factors were:

1. Misunderstandings about roles.

2. Favoritism with individual board members.
3. Insufficient time communicating to board members.
4. Losing contact between meetings.
5. Not feeling involved in the thought process.
6. Overwhelming the board with information.
7. Domination by the superintendent, board, or individual members.
8. Interference by the board in management functions (micromanagement).
9. Growing independence of the board.
10. Single-issue, single-region, or single-interest members.
11. Leaking discussions from executive sessions.
12. Involvement in personnel matters.
13. Attempts to get favorable treatment for friends and relatives.
14. Lack of skill, knowledge, and experience.
15. Pursing political pressure, careers, and activism.
16. Board turnover.

Bryant and Grady (1990, 1992a, 1992b) surveyed 303 Nebraska superintendents in 1988, to find if any had experienced “what they might call ‘critical incidents’” (p. 20). One hundred twenty-five of the 176 superintendents reporting a critical incident agreed to participate in the study and provided interview responses in spring, 1989. Superintendents labeled most incidents they reported as having to defend against educationally unsound behaviors related to board members’ family and friends, personal agendas, hiring and firing, and role uncertainty. Superintendents described the situations as unethical because (a) board behaviors were educationally unsound, (b) rules and fairness were not followed, (c) behaviors were illegal, or (d) board gave little or no warning. The more superintendents viewed boards acting according to private interests, the more boards were judged as wrong, even unethical and immoral. Superintendents found themselves acting as the district

conscience and feeling as though their relationship with the board had been damaged personally and professionally. In superintendents' eyes, board members were wrong if they promoted private interests in contrast with the public mission. If board members did not allow the superintendent to be the final authority of a conflict involving the school, superintendents determined the system had been violated. Superintendents' perceptions of such a violation was the factor upon which they decided whether or not an incident was critical. The researchers concluded that superintendents perceived that rules and ethical behavior applied to everyone, including themselves, while board members felt their perception of individual circumstances warranted exceptions.

Bryant and Grady (1992b) found in their 1991 study of Nebraska board presidents that board members also attached unethical motives and actions to the superintendent but for different reasons. As conflict escalated, charges that the other side had gone beyond misguided to unethical behaviors escalated as well. While superintendents wanted board members to behave according to a set perception of roles and ethics, board members described their expectations of superintendents differently. Board members' views of ethical behavior were based upon whether the superintendent took advantage of a situation, not about whether roles had been violated. Openness and character were of greater importance to board members than role definition. Board members expected superintendents to communicate with the board, support the board to the community, respect board members, act as examples personally and professionally, and demonstrate competence in matters of finance and delegation. Board members expected superintendents to understand that sometimes roles were negotiated according to circumstances and conflict. Board members were more situational about role definition and therefore less critical about role conflict. Board members were concerned about both the board-superintendent relationship and the public image that the board-superintendent-community relationship was

sound. Both parties become guilty of failing to recognize when they need assistance to solve their problem as well as failing to understand the effect upon their relationship.

Members of the Twentieth Century Task Force (1992) and Rogers (1992) wrote that growth in board member activism provides a catalyst for disagreement. When board members change from, or oscillate between, lay trustee and board member activist, the relationship with superintendents, and among themselves, becomes strained.

“Most superintendents seem pretty clear in their perception of the major source of conflict with the school board: the attempt of school boards to micromanage and become inappropriately involved in administration rather than limiting their role to policy formation” (Norton et al., 1996, p. 35). The tendency to micromanage has become a serious obstacle to school improvement according to Norton et al. (1996) and Rebore (1984). While boards acknowledge the specialized education and training superintendents bring to their districts, boards cannot resist asserting their importance whether the issue is individual or district-wide. Superintendents who fight with boards over control must realize that board members are reflecting pressure from themselves and other members, interest groups, and the public to be more involved in decision-making. Superintendents’ perceptions that their roles are being infringed upon and board members’ perceptions that superintendents are too controlling are common. Resolving conflicts over who is in control and infringement issues is a major concern for superintendents.

Sharp and Walter (1997) identified four areas of potential conflict regarding the organization of board meetings: the selection and order of items for the agenda, the amount and kind of information in the board packet, meeting procedures, and the topics raised in closed sessions. First, superintendents have the responsibility for making and keeping the agenda current. Board members are involved in the agenda development process through their president. Second, the information packet is critical to development of agendas and to conducting meetings. The superintendent determines content and who receives various

parts of the packet. While all board members receive the same packet, different packets for the public should be made. If board members want more or less information, the board has the right to expect it from the superintendent. Third, meeting procedures belong to the board. The superintendent and board members should develop a consensus on board meeting organization so that conflict over procedure does not interfere with issues. The fact that meetings are held in public contributes to the level of tension when conflict occurs and makes a “no surprises” agreement between board and superintendent even more important. Last, the board president presides over the meetings, including closed sessions. The superintendent is included in closed sessions, unless they are devoted to compensation or evaluation of the superintendent. The superintendent also protects the board, as well as the public, by assuring that closed sessions are conducted within existing statutes.

Freeman, Underwood, and Fortune (1991) found, in their national study of perceptions of superintendents and board members about their roles, that board members and superintendents ranked characteristics of what makes effective board members differently, (see Table 1). Superintendents ranked “role clarification,” “ethical behavior,” and “staying focused” first through third. Board members reversed the order, ranking “staying focused” first and “role clarification” third. Superintendents ranked “using established evaluation procedures” and “having employees’ trust” fourth and fifth, while board members ranked them fifth and eighth, respectively.

Kowalski (1999) identified problems each party in the relationship attributed to the other, shown in Table 2. Common problems attributed to board members by superintendents were related to social and political issues that superintendents consider role violations based upon ethical, moral, social, and political expectations. Common problems attributed to superintendents by board members were personal assessments of the superintendent’s character. Board members know generally what superintendents do and make judgments about whether the procedures used and results obtained are acceptable.

Table 1

Characteristics of Effective Board Members as Ranked by Board Members and Superintendents

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Rank Order of Importance</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Board Members</u>
1. Maintaining focus, even amid criticism and controversy	1	3
2. Abiding by the board-established code of ethics	2	2
3. Clearly differentiating between policy making and administration	3	1
4. Encouraging citizen involvement and promoting school-community cooperation	4	6
5. Using established procedures to evaluate the superintendent	5	4
6. Communicating clearly and regularly with constituencies	6	8
7. Following policy regarding contact with the media	7	7
8. Having the trust of school district employees	8	5

Danzberger (1998), Kowalski (1999), and Arnez (1981) wrote that internal and external issues impact the relationship and become pressure for change. When board members and superintendents attempt controlling behaviors, ensuing problems damage the balance within the working relationship. School improvement efforts suffer in the damaged environment. Instead, the school environment should be improved by creating a board-superintendent relationship that is accepted by the community as an asset toward governance and decision-making. Developing the interpersonal skills based upon honesty and trust to provide a basis for such an exchange is a social responsibility of board

members and superintendents. Just as superintendents are ethically bound and professionally responsible for making recommendations and providing information, board members have an ethical responsibility to consider their superintendent’s recommendations.

Table 2

Common Problems Attributed to One Party by the Other

<u>Problems That Board Presidents Have From Superintendents’ View</u>	<u>Problems That Superintendents’ Have From Board Presidents’ View</u>
1. Pursuing single issues.	1. Lacking integrity.
2. Pursuing personal gain.	2. Lacking respect for board members.
3. Rejecting the professional status of the superintendent.	3. Failing to maintain confidentiality.
4. Pursuing personal power.	4. Subordinating rather than cooperating.
5. Failing to maintain confidentiality.	5. Failing to lead.
6. Causing factionalism.	6. Failing to manage.
7. Intruding into administration.	7. Failing to be accessible.
8. Lacking the skills to handle responsibilities	8. Failing to communicate.
	9. Failing to comply with ethical and moral standards.

Danzberger (1998) based her conclusions from the findings of three studies conducted by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) from 1985 through 1992 and her studies of school boards in urban and rural settings. She wrote that, in addition to criticizing boards for negative relationships with superintendents, patrons and educational critics have asserted additional weaknesses. Accusations of boards lacking vision, internal relationship skills, role understanding, member development skills, oversight skills, and self-evaluation skills were common. Boards that were reaction-driven or chose public relations tactics and rhetoric over discourse and action were viewed negatively. Danzberger

wrote that boards often perceived themselves with the same criticisms. They viewed themselves as unable to devote time to educational concerns in large part because they knew they were too often micromanaging. Board members knew they were not effectively defining roles and building sound relations with their superintendent and felt the public pressure to shift from public trustee to representing interest groups. In Danzberger's opinion, the effort to build and maintain a mutual relationship must be improved.

Evaluation

A superintendent should be evaluated across an entire year's performance. The evaluation process should recognize the performance standards that are the basis for the superintendent's work. Building district effectiveness through an effective valuation process is a responsibility of both board and superintendent, and a part of the total evaluation picture (Brubaker & Austin, 1996).

Shannon (1997), executive director of the National School Boards Association, listed a set of qualities gathered from his contacts with boards of education that boards hoped to find in superintendent candidates.

1. have a clear understanding about how students and adults learn and develop,
2. view public schools as student-centered,
3. work collegially with other educators,
4. have a clear understanding of how technology can improve education,
5. be able to build productive relationships with people,
6. understand statutory role of the board and how he needs to function in order to help the board carry out its duties,
7. recognize that education policy can come from other level and places than the school board,
8. build community relationships and understand how the existing ones operate,
9. build professional and staff relationships,
10. get decision-making to occur where issues occur,

11. build and manage budgets that reflect goals and priorities,
12. be in good health and energetic,
13. have passion for public education,
14. have high moral and ethical character,
15. have personal goals consistent with the mission of public schools,
16. have charisma,
17. have a warm, outgoing personality, mature sense of humor, and empathy for everyone who teaches others,
18. have intellectual curiosity,
19. be flexible, pragmatic, and aggressive in searching for how to overcome obstacles, and
20. reside in the community (Shannon, 1997, pp. 30-32).

Glass (1992) in his 1992 study (one in a series of AASA studies done at ten-year intervals on the superintendency) reported ten criteria used by boards to evaluate superintendents. The top five as a group consisted of issues related to working with the board: (a) general effectiveness, (b) board-superintendent relations, (c) management functions, (d) budget development and implementation, and (e) educational leadership/knowledge. The second group was made up of relations with others: (a) relations with the community, (b) relations with the staff, (c) personal characteristics, (d) personnel recruitment and supervision, and (e) relations with students. Glass highlighted general effectiveness and relations with the board as the critical categories, beyond technical skills, as reported by boards. Personal characteristics were low in the ranked order.

Superintendent evaluation becomes more stressful for superintendents if they perceive that boards are changing the operating rules. Boards, however, view differences as changing priorities between board and superintendent. The differences in perception become exaggerated and divisive. Mitchell (1994) found differences in superintendent and

board president perceptions about the purposes of superintendent evaluation in his study of 36 Wisconsin school districts, shown in Table 3. Superintendents believed the most important purpose of evaluation was to “help them work with the board,” with “identify the superintendent’s strengths and weaknesses” second, just the opposite of board presidents views. “Superintendent’s compensation” ranked third for superintendents, but twelfth for board presidents. Board presidents believed evaluation was a tool for them to help superintendents “work with other administrators,” ranked third, while for superintendents it ranked ninth. Superintendents felt evaluation was an appropriate tool for helping them “work on personnel matters,” ranked fourth. Board presidents saw less importance for evaluation to be used in this way, ranked eighth. Superintendents also felt evaluations were to be used for “determining their continued employment,” ranked sixth although it ranked thirteenth for board presidents. The combined purposes of “contract/compensation and retention” ranked higher for superintendents than for board presidents. Mitchell concluded “superintendents and board members often do not hear what the other is saying” (p. 33).

Mitchell (1994) also found differences, from the same Wisconsin study, in perspectives regarding criteria on which to base the evaluation, (see Table 4). “Administrative performance,” “positive tone in the district,” “knowledge of financial issues,” and “ability to attain district goals” were the top four for both groups, although “ability to attain district goals” ranked fourth for superintendents and first for board presidents. Superintendents emphasized “parent and teacher satisfaction,” ranked fifth and ninth respectively, and “administrative staff satisfaction,” ranked tenth. Board president’s responses regarding the same three were ranked eighth, twelfth, and seventh, respectively.

Informal evaluation of staff by parents, patrons, and board members is another source of relationship tension. While parents and patrons pass their evaluative comments and pressures about staff to board members, board members, in turn, feel as though they must pass the information, as well as their own perceptions, to the superintendent. The

superintendent has to discern the degree of pressure from board members to determine whether to act. At the same time, the superintendent knows that administrators evaluate staff, not board members, and that there are many professional and legal requirements for the process. Board members that apply pressure to the superintendent to act on personnel evaluations interfere with the professional responsibilities of administrators, creating uncertainty in superintendent relationships with board and staff (Norton et al., 1996).

Table 3

Superintendent's and Board President's Views of the Purposes of Evaluation

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Board Presidents</u>
Help the superintendent work with the board	1	2
Address the superintendent's strengths and weaknesses	2	1
Determine the superintendent's compensation	3	12
Help the superintendent work on personnel matters	4	8
Improve job-related behavior	5	4
Determine continued employment	6	13
Set expectations for future performance	7	5
Improve instruction	8	6
Help the superintendent work with administrators	9	3
Help the superintendent work with teachers	10	7
Help the superintendent work with parents	11	10
Help the superintendent work with the nonparent community	12	11
Help the superintendent work with business operators	13	14
Help on legal issues	14	9
Help the superintendent with media-related issues	15	15
Meet state requirements	16	17
Help the superintendent work with students	17	16

Chapman (1997) and the team who designed the Beginning Superintendent Study (BSS) in 1992 sought to develop a research base to help new superintendents increase their chances of success. Two studies were used for comparison: Glass's (1992) AASA study of over 1700 superintendents, including 107 first year superintendents, and the BSS study

of 18 first-year superintendents from districts with diverse demographic characteristics in 12 states. Chapman made several comparisons between the Glass and BSS studies regarding evaluation criteria. First, experienced superintendents believed general district management was their board's primary expectation, while first-year superintendents believed instructional leadership was their board's first priority. Second, experienced superintendents felt their boards were most interested in general management and human relations ahead of leadership, just the reverse of first-year superintendents. Third, beginning and experienced superintendents felt they were hired on the basis of their personal characteristics, but felt that was of minor importance in evaluations. Nearly one-half perceived that the board's evaluation did not mirror their job description and that retention was based upon the personal preferences of board members. Beginning and experienced superintendents believed general effectiveness was the board's first priority.

Table 4

Superintendent's and Board President's View on the Bases for Evaluation

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Board Presidents</u>
Administrator performance	1	2
Positive tone in the district	2	3
Knowledge of financial issues	3	4
Ability to attain district goals	4	1
Parent satisfaction	5	8
Knowledge of educational issues	6	5
Student academic performance	7	9
Teacher performance	8	6
Teacher satisfaction	9	12
Administrative staff satisfaction	10	7
Attainment of positive media coverage	11	11
Ability to avoid tax increases	12	10
Ability to avoid negative media coverage	13	14
Student satisfaction	14	13
Student extracurricular performance	15	15

Glass (1992) found in his AASA study that as district size decreased, there was less likelihood that superintendent evaluation was accomplished in formal processes. Norton et al. (1996) suggested that because the degree of formality in the evaluation process varied between districts, superintendents should strive for a formal evaluation process. Kowalski (1999) wrote that board or superintendent reluctance to discuss the relationship is an indicator of problems and affects any discussion about evaluation. Formal evaluation is effective only when both parties make a sincere effort to develop and implement a consistent process based upon appropriate standards and expectations.

Board Elections and Politics

When elections create changes in board membership, new members must be brought to an appropriate level of knowledge and perspective. If the district is changing superintendents at the same time, the mixture of newcomers increases the probability of less stability in governance, leadership, and management (Blumberg & Blumberg, 1985).

Board elections put new members in place that further change the dynamics of a relationship that changes anyway. Superintendents must teach new board members and learn how to work with them at the same time. The two tasks become inseparable (Johnson, 1996). As board members become sensitive to political constituents and elections, superintendents find boards more political and harder to read (Carter & Cunningham, 1997).

Sharp and Walter (1997) asserted that elections and competing interests are a source of potential conflict between superintendents and boards. Local boards faced with demands from local interest groups, as well as elections, expect superintendents to be a part of local politics as protector, advocate, and leader on behalf of the board. Superintendents who avoid local politics and elections come into conflict with boards expecting their superintendents to be sensitive to and support individual board member needs. Every election brings the possibility that superintendents will be working with board members

who did not hire them. New members bring different ideas and priorities that create division in a board-superintendent relationship that had been productive. Such divisions are based upon personal differences, control, or roles. Superintendents are faced with trying to keep differences with new board members at a professional level in a climate where the superintendent has been loyal to the previous board.

For several reasons, educators have come to recognize that reality demands attention to politics and elections. First, districts faced with limited funds are subject to both shortages and competition for resources as student needs are perceived to be increasing. Second, a general criticism of school outcomes has caused various public factions, including state and federal governments, to desire increased oversight. Third, districts with socially and economically diverse student populations are in an environment of competing interests as well as varied philosophies about how to serve children. And fourth, governing teams of boards and superintendents are included in the generalization that government is not serving the public well enough (Johnson, 1996).

Finance, Funding, and Legislation

Tyack and Hansot (1982) wrote that changing times increased the need for educators and board members to develop a greater sense of common purpose. The need to balance the narrowness of local decisions with the larger picture of goals and needs would be a challenge in any district. Boards and superintendents are expected to balance increased needs, declining enrollments, and restricted funding.

“Over the last several decades, superintendents have identified finance (or the lack thereof) as the number one problem they face. They are not alone in their perception; school boards also perceive inadequate financing as the leading problem facing the schools” (Norton et al., 1996, p. 26). School leaders are faced with growing demands and new state mandates, as well as increasing calls to use fewer dollars to accomplish the purposes of education. The pressure to engage in reform from the federal government, as well as state

government, increases as calls continue for more discipline, more learning, more technology, and more programs to address diversity. Add facilities and equipment to the list of costs and boards and superintendents feel pressure to do more while the public seems to want either lower taxes or increased accountability, or both. In this strained environment, strong relationships between boards and superintendents become a survival tool (Norton et. al., 1996). Carter and Cunningham (1997) also cited school funding and budgeting as a major issue. The debate within the board and between the board and superintendent over limited resources and increasing needs is a strain upon the relationship.

Zakariya (1998) concluded from the NASB Educational Vital Signs study that the changing view of concerns by board members from 1989 to 1998 must also be considered. Student achievement and finance/budget concerns rose to the top of the list in 1997-98 yet were not in the top ten concerns in 1987-88. Zakariya suggested this change of concern is an indicator that boards believed they can impact these issues in the face of recent pressures and gave up on other issues they felt were out of their control, such as government mandates and funding. Student achievement and school finance/budget are issues that focus on superintendents' leadership and management abilities which are viewed by boards as issues upon which they make a difference.

Tenure and Retention

Several researchers (Twentieth Century Task Force, 1992; Walter & Sharp, 1996; Carter and Cunningham, 1997; Glass 1992; Danzberger 1998) found the average tenure for superintendents across the nation to range from 2.5 years to 6.5 years depending upon the size of the district. Urban and very small schools had the shortest tenure, while tenure at schools between those extremes averaged higher. Members of The Twentieth Century Task Force (1992) asserted that the break in the board-superintendent relationship that seemed to occur so often in urban districts is indicative of what suburban and rural districts face in the

future. Board member election turnover and an increasing number of superintendent vacancies are indicators that the relationship is not stable over time.

Bryant and Grady (1989) questioned what was happening within the board-superintendent relationship based upon the fact that there were 50 superintendent changes in Nebraska prior to the 1987-88 school year, accounting for 15% of the total superintendencies in the state. The impetus for their studies was the fact that “there had been a history of concern over superintendent impermanence” (p. 34) in Nebraska, further supported by Ossian (1998b) in Table 7. In their 1987-1988 study of superintendents who had vacated positions during the previous two years in rural Nebraska districts, superintendent responses (causes of departure) were grouped into four categories: (a) personal reasons, (b) job or district characteristics, (c) problems with board, and (d) career ascendency. Under (b) were the factors of declining financial health of the district, while under (c) were the factors of relationship problems.

Grady and Bryant (1991a) found that of 75 critical incidents reported by board presidents in their 1991 study of Nebraska districts, resignation or termination resulted in 54% of the cases, with board presidents reporting mistrust as an outcome in the rest. The authors, as well as McKay and Grady (1994), found damaged relationships between boards and superintendents to be the principal cause of turmoil and turnover in Nebraska districts. McKay and Grady (1994) also found that too often superintendents caught in this cycle left the profession. In a survey of 50 superintendents who left the profession before retirement age, they found the top three reasons were based upon board-superintendent relations. Grady and Bryant, as well as McKay and Grady, viewed problems in relationships as the cause of a serious loss of human resources in both board membership and in the superintendency. Chance and Capps (1992) identified 41 rural (less than 600 students K-12) districts in Oklahoma that had experienced frequent superintendent turnover defined by having three or more superintendents in the five years preceding the study.

Board presidents from 25 districts agreed to participate in the study from which common reasons for the dismissal of superintendents in their district were sought. The reasons for the dismissal of the 30 (of 63) terminated or non-renewed superintendents found most common were financial mismanagement, financial malfeasance, communication issues, and marital infidelity. Kowalski (1999) found that in urban districts superintendent dismissal was most often caused by complex political issues such as unrealistic expectations for institutional and political change relative to the composition of the school board. Walter and Sharp (1996) found superintendents were aware that while they worked at the will of the board majority, election results could change board membership, allowing new agendas and new perceptions of roles to be introduced. Danzberger (1998) concluded from the IEL and other studies that the relationship problems in urban districts or districts undergoing rapid change occurred in suburban and small community districts as well. A “remarkable consistency” (p. 205) of board problems existed across all types of districts.

McAdams (1995) reported, from interviews of 33 Pennsylvania superintendents chosen by his educational administration program graduate students, the most frequent problems identified by superintendents as contributing to their lack of tenure were budgets, bargaining, and boards. The most critical, according to the superintendents, were the issues affecting relationships with the board. Eadie (1994) focused on building and maintaining a strong working partnership as key to the board-executive relationship. Threats to superintendent tenure occur when the partnership becomes threatened and progress is inhibited. According to Carter and Cunningham (1997), superintendents who are able to diffuse difficult board behavior are the superintendents who survive difficult issues.

The problem of keeping a superintendent over time becomes more difficult as boards find fewer candidates to fill the increasing number of vacancies (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Chapman (1997) wrote that with continued high rates of turnover, the same problems will likely be revisited with every new superintendent that comes into a

district, inhibiting long-range progress. Goodman and Fulbright (1997) referred to the districts that were replacing superintendents often as schools where the willingness to take risks toward school improvement was damaged by the lack of job security.

Ossian (1998a) has maintained an ongoing study of superintendent tenure in Nebraska for 20 years, as shown in Tables 5 and 6. His records showed a range of vacancies from 31 to 55 during the time frame. During the 1990s, vacancies ranged from a high of 51 in 1995 to a low of 37 for each of the following two years. The peak year for vacancies was 1979, with 55. The number of superintendents with 20 years of tenure or more peaked in 1990 at 28 but had declined to 16 in 1998.

Table 5

Nebraska Public School Superintendents: Annual Vacancies and 20 Year Tenure From 1979 - 1998

<u>Start of School Year</u>	<u>First Year Positions</u>	<u>20 Years or More - Same Post</u>
1979	55	11
1980	43	10
1981	37	11
1982	35	13
1983	32	13
1984	33	15
1985	51	17
1986	36	19
1987	43	25
1988	35	27
1989	41	25
1990	44	25
1991	40	28
1992	48	26
1993	40	24
1994	45	26
1995	51	22
1996	37	20
1997	37	18
1998	45	16
Average	41.4	19.6

(Ossian, 1998b)

Ossian (1999) observed that rural districts will face the most difficulty in securing superintendents in the future and that a shortage of qualified candidates increases the problem of filling vacancies for all districts. The general issues of population decline, low farm and livestock prices, pressure to reduce property taxes, corporate pressure to reduce sales and income taxes, a growing teacher shortage, early retirement incentives, shrinking enrollments, increasing numbers of adults without children in school, and the effects of LB 1114 and LB 806 capping property tax rates and distributing state aid were all contributors to the stress found in Nebraska districts, according to Ossian.

For the 1998-99 school year, nearly one-half of Nebraska superintendents had four or less years of tenure in the school in which they were contracted (see Table 8). Nearly two-thirds had less than seven years of tenure.

Table 6

1998-99. Nebraska Public School (Class II - V) Superintendent's Tenure in Position

Number of years tenure in same district = number with that tenure (cumulative)

1 yr. = 45 (45)	15 yr. = 3 (251)
2 yr. = 34 (79)	16 yr. = 5 (256)
3 yr. = 26 (105)	17 yr. = 3 (259)
4 yr. = 35 (140)	18 yr. = 2 (261)
5 yr. = 22 (162)	19 yr. = 5 (266)
6 yr. = 15 (177)	20 yr. = 2 (268)
7 yr. = 17 (194)	21 yr. = 2 (270)
8 yr. = 8 (202)	22 yr. = 2 (272)
9 yr. = 12 (214)	23 yr. = 1 (273)
10 yr. = 8 (222)	24 yr. = 3 (276)
11 yr. = 8 (230)	25 yr. = 1 (277)
12 yr. = 7 (237)	27 yr. = 3 (280)
13 yr. = 5 (242)	28 yr. = 2 (282)
14 yr. = 6 (248)	(Ossian, 1998b)

Ossian (1999) identified 41 districts with new superintendents in fall, 1999. The average tenure of superintendents in Nebraska districts for 1999 was 6.8 years, down from 7.5 in 1989. There were 294 superintendents serving 299 districts in fall, 1989. By 1999,

there were 266 Nebraska superintendents with a median tenure of 4.3 years serving 279 districts. Of those hired at Nebraska schools for 1999, 16 were inexperienced. He expressed concern, however, that the perception of opportunity is not translating into Education Specialist program participants, as all Nebraska universities and colleges reported lower numbers compared to years past. “There is unanimous agreement from school board officials and superintendent-search consultants that the superintendent candidate pool has shrunk dramatically in recent years” (p. 5).

Brubaker and Shelton (1995) offered an explanation for the shortage of candidates for superintendent vacancies. They “coined a term for what we think is happening across the United States. We call the phenomenon ‘the disposable leader syndrome’” (p. 16). Superintendents perceive that the degree and duration of authority within the position has eroded over several decades, contributing to feelings of frustration that cause superintendents to consider leaving the profession. Whether it be loss of authority, lack of respect, inadequate compensation, politics, pressure groups, pressure for change, job insecurity, problems with boards, issues of revenues vs. needs, or all of them together, the number of available candidates is decreasing.

Improving the Relationship

Recommendations for Superintendents

Shannon (1989), executive director of the National Association of School Boards, stated: “Reality Number One: The school board has the ultimate power. Reality Number Two: The superintendent is appointed to serve a specific term - not anointed to the position forever” (p. 26). Konnert and Augenstein (1995) predicted that a simple recommendation, remembering that they are employees, could keep most superintendents in their jobs. In spite of the years of preparation and experience that superintendents have accumulated, including experience in that very district, the board governs the district.

Incoming superintendents must be able to develop a commitment to the new district and to board members if they expect to succeed and stay in the position (Walter & Sharp, 1996). Houston (1994), executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, reminded superintendents that the professional “right” answer has to fit the particular district. Superintendents should recognize that once they accept a position, they are now working for a board whose majority is merely one over half. Psychologically, superintendents would be better positioned for the downside if they stayed prepared for the contract renewal vote to be negative. Job security and longevity are not to be expected in the profession (Sharp & Walter, 1997).

In response to questions asked of education leaders by The School Administrator based upon the Grady and Bryant study, Ken Miller, president of the Nebraska Association of School Boards, said “Real world is the key. Superintendents must work with board members from many different backgrounds and levels of education. Board members are usually strong-minded and opinionated. Superintendents should be able to accept constructive criticism. It goes with the job. Being a superintendent is no different than any other management position, in that you always have superiors to answer to and satisfy. Get to know your board members” (Grady & Bryant, 1991b, p. 21).

“The most important factor to team play is the development of effective working relations” (Knezevich, 1969, p. 228). Superintendents must approach the team concept with self-confidence (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). Brubaker and Coble’s (1995) recommendation to superintendents was to begin a relationship with the board by working in ways that reflect the expectations of both parties. Blumberg and Blumberg (1985) listed two basic recommendations to help superintendents deal with the board-superintendent relationship. First, regarding the relationship with the board, provide information, be honest, never divide the board, be clear about opinions, teach the board about who has what responsibilities and act upon those standards, and understand the pressures they are

under. Second, recognize that the better the superintendent does those things within the political context, the greater the credibility of the superintendent and the larger the sphere of influence. Keeping one's employment status as well as professional reputation are important. "The rule seems to be 'Fragile Relationship, Handle with Care'" (p. 85).

To build a strong partnership, superintendents must find out what boards expect in terms of personal and professional traits. Superintendents must work with the board to clarify role expectations of each and demonstrate that they support and implement policy. Board members want to be perceived as independent thinkers, but they expect superintendents to be willing to stand with them. "There is the expectation that the superintendent should put the figurative noose around his/her neck and then adroitly work his/her way out of it. Every superintendent worth his salt must noose himself/herself occasionally. This is part of being a real leader" (p.161). Superintendents are expected to maintain confidentiality, answer questions and concerns, and carry out board wishes in a respectful manner. Superintendents must be aware that each member has a constituency and brings questions or concerns to the superintendent reflecting that constituency. They must expect to become involved with state governments on public policy regarding finance, curriculum, accountability and various other initiatives on behalf of their district and education as a whole (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995). Effective superintendents know they must think politically in relation to all issues and constituencies (Johnson, 1996).

Brubaker and Coble (1995) asserted that "Our research indicates that there is a frequent misunderstanding and lack of comprehension between the board and superintendent when the board has substantially less information about strategic issues than the superintendent does." (p. 36). Effective superintendents must spend time informing and teaching board members about their responsibilities and how to work as a leadership team. Teaching is necessary because board members act on a continuum between their own interests and agendas and that of the board as a whole. Board members need instruction on

issues and problems as well as how to respond and proceed (Konnert & Augenstein, 1995; Johnson, 1996). Brady (1998) and Kowalski (1999) wrote that by providing information and training for their boards and eliminating surprises, superintendents enhance the potential for a better and stronger working relationship, decreasing role confusion. The mutual respect and collaboration that results will overcome internal battles over control. Konnert & Augenstein (1995) added that reminding board members of statutory boundaries, providing explanations as necessary, teaching board members how to act as a team, and encouraging board member training through educational activities and conferences were also elements of supporting the board. Grady and Krumm (1998) reviewed types of board training provided at state levels. They found education law the most popular (32 states), with finance (25 states) second, and board-superintendent relationships (17 states) third. These were typical of the most common topics in all states.

Johnson (1996) believed superintendents must combine positional authority with relationship skills to build a network of support toward the district vision if they expect to have public support. As trust between constituents and superintendents grows, their relationship improves. This trust comes from the superintendent being able to communicate and demonstrate sound educational, professional and personal values and integrity, as well as making a commitment of time to the district. Johnson, from her studies in 1989-1992 and 1992-94, identified the most successful style of superintendent leadership as collaborative. Superintendents who believed board members, patrons, and parents should be involved in school improvement were the most successful in working toward school improvement. These leaders were good at adapting to changes in circumstance and keeping people involved in the process. Effective superintendents must identify their allies and adversaries and be able to build relationships across the varied groups.

Grady and Bryant (1991b) wrote that superintendents need opportunities to improve their skills in public relations, conflict resolution, and interpersonal relations.

Superintendents must develop the skill of recognizing difficult situations so that actions can be taken to prevent the situations from becoming critical incidents. Johnson (1996) also identified the ability to identify and respond in appropriate ways as an important attribute, in addition to personal characteristics, for superintendent effectiveness. Superintendents must get to know board members and gain insight into community background, expectations, and opinions to build skills necessary to lead the district (Johnson, 1996; Konnert & Augenstein, 1995).

Managerial skills are also critical to a superintendent's effectiveness. Beyond the technical expertise of budget, law, and personnel, the superintendent has to become adept at managing personnel and resources. Superintendents know the bureaucracy has to work and that their management must assure it will (Johnson, 1996).

Chapman (1997) concluded from the Glass study in 1992 and the BSS study that among all preparation for the superintendency, prior experience at the positions immediately beneath in the hierarchy was most important to a superintendent's early success. Where a central office existed, the experience was often in those positions. Where there was no central office, the experience was typically in building administration positions. Superintendents recognized the importance of gaining administrative experience before becoming superintendent. High visibility, a vision of educational improvement, and a collaborative approach to leading and managing were important to achieving success.

Goodman et al. (1997) based their conclusions on a combination of accumulated information from the National Advisory Committee on Public School District Governance and the results of a national study by a research team formed by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC). Interviews with more than 130 educators, parents, and other citizens across five states were conducted in the NESDEC study. Goodman and associates concluded that superintendents who were perceived to be more effective tended to (a) serve longer than average; (b) provide leadership, vision, and guidance to their board;

(c) be responsible for personnel matters; (d) be in charge of their district budget; (e) be good communicators; (f) be visible; and (g) foster a sense of teamwork with board members, principals, teachers, and other staff.

Effective superintendents must be intellectually and mentally prepared for the endeavor. They must rely on their imagination, their decisiveness, and their ability to self-evaluate and learn from mistakes. Being able to take risks, think clearly, exercise a sense of humor, find enjoyment and satisfaction, and find emotional consistency are important to the superintendent's view of whether or not the job is worth having (Brubaker & Austin, 1996). Kelly (1997) approached the mental preparation differently. Superintendents should recognize the difference between what is within their control and what is not.

Superintendents must apply sound human relations skills in every circumstance so their professional skills are valued and used by boards and patrons.

Shannon (1996) developed 13 ways, based upon his experiences of working with boards as executive director of NASB, that superintendents can use to enhance their relationship with the school board:

1. Work with the school board on the basis of a long-range and strategic plan; everything you propose to the board must be linked to that plan.
2. View education as an area of human endeavor in which reasonable opinion may differ.
3. Never equate success in administrative leadership with peace and tranquility.
4. Recognize that K-12 education is much broader than the instructional program alone and that schools should serve all the needs of children to enhance their learning opportunities.
5. Provide as much relevant information as possible to the school board in a form that is convenient and usable.
6. Be friendly to change, regardless of where new ideas are generated.
7. Work closely, openly, and evenhandedly with the entire school board.
8. Make the best use of the resources that school board members represent.

9. Use school board members -- who are elected officials -- as liaisons to local, state, and federal government.
10. Be objective and unemotional when you hear war stories from your fellow superintendents.
11. Encourage school board members to participate in training sessions.
12. Respect the American institution of representative governance in our political system of democracy, as epitomized by the local school board.
13. Treat the school board as the governance entity it is and its individual members as public officials deserving of respect. (p. 19)

Recommendations for Boards of Education

Houston (1994) wrote that boards have a collective wisdom to know their district. They focus the district by “1) seeing the big picture, 2) identifying problems and issues first, not solutions, 3) determining direction rather than method, 4) asking questions, 5) not making the superintendent a go-fer, 6) helping to buffer, 7) solving problems at the appropriate level, 8) being clear, and 9) choosing a good leader” (pp. 33-34).

Houle (1989) gathered responses from selected boards of appointed members and selected boards of elected members about the qualities exhibited by effective boards. The most often cited characteristics by members of both types of boards are listed below.

1. Every board member accepts every other board member with a due appreciation of strengths and a tolerance of quirks and weaknesses.
2. There is an easy familiarity of approach among the members of the board, with an awareness of one another's backgrounds and viewpoints.
3. Everyone concerned with decisions helps to make them.
4. The contribution of each person or group is recognized.
5. The board has a sense of being rooted in an important tradition and of providing continuity for a program that has been and continues to be important. Alternatively, the board is launched on a new and exciting mission, and its members are constantly challenged by the need to be innovative.
6. The attitude of the board is forward-looking and is based on confident expectations of growth and development in the program.

7. There is a clear definition of responsibilities so that each person knows what is expected of her.
8. The members of the board can communicate easily with one another.
9. There is a sense that the whole board is more important than any of its parts.
10. There is a capacity to resolve dissent and discord or, if it cannot be resolved, to keep it in perspective in terms of larger purposes.
11. There is acceptance of conformity to a code of behavior, usually involving courtesy, self-discipline, and responsibility.
12. There is an awareness of the fact that all boards contain clusters or pairs of people who tend to like or dislike one another, as well as some who may not be closely involved with others; but there is also a capacity to use these personal relationships as effectively as possible to achieve the larger purposes of the program.
13. There is an ability to recognize and use wisely the influence of individual board members that arises from their power, connections, wealth, social status, age, or ability.
14. In case of internal conflict, the group has the capacity to examine the situation objectively, identify the sources of difficulty, and remedy them.
15. The board has several magnetic and nonthreatening people who genuinely care about good feeling on the board and spontaneously foster it.
16. Most important of all, the board members share a clear understanding of an commitment to the mission of the agency. (p. 123)

Grady and Bryant (1989-90) wrote that board members often struggled with their roles, either to understand them or to separate them from other roles in their lives. They believed that board members must be educated further on their roles and responsibilities, particularly the policy-making role, and should be required to do so on an annual basis. School boards associations are a source of continuing education, but with membership in those associations being voluntary, not all board members are affected by their efforts. Instead, Grady and Bryant recommended that state departments of education be considered a better source for in-service programs for board members because all schools fall under the regulation of the department.

Schlechty (1990) believed boards create the conditions for leadership and put people into such positions to do the leading. The board is accountable for results but is focused on creating the appropriate environment to support those hired to lead. Boards must choose and support leaders who use collaborative methods toward achieving results that are consistent with community values.

Jones' (1992) found in his study of Nebraska school board members' personality types that more effective board members were introverts who showed a preference for concepts and ideas. Jones' study of 180 superintendents (107 responses), each with at least five years of experience, was followed with surveys of a board member in each of those 107 districts (84 returned). A majority of board members demonstrated a sensing personality, rather than intuitive, indicating they focused on actual occurrences. Effective board members also appeared to have a thinking personality profile, predicting logical results of actions. They also exhibited a judgmental personality, preferring to live in planned and ordered ways so they could regulate and control aspects of their lives. Knowing that board members as a whole will exhibit a variety of personality traits, and working toward understanding those profiles will help superintendents be better prepared (Jones, 1992).

Rogers (1992) recommended that boards consider three dynamics to become more effective. Board members must demonstrate a sense of unity, an attitude of political courage, and a belief that compromise and conflict resolution are always available to deal with the issues at hand. Effective boards must learn to manage controversy, rather than avoiding or stifling debate. To avoid discussion, silence debate, ignore the school attorney and superintendent, attack people in the opposition, engage in statements less than truthful, and act as though the public should not be involved will interfere with a board's ability to be most effective. Keane (1994) concluded that while all boards need to be principle-driven, circumstances can cause differences of opinion too difficult to overcome. In those

circumstances, all board members can do is vote their conscience. The minority side must be heard and the majority side must be able to explain its position. Board members have to be able to disagree within their discussion but must be able to support the final board decision.

Eadie (1994) recommended that boards become educated about the superintendent evaluation process so they proceed properly. He believed that boards struggle with the desire to evaluate or the fear that they do not know how to evaluate properly. Eadie made five recommendations to help boards become more educated about evaluation: (a) focus on what needs to be accomplished, (b) consider growth the purpose of any task, (c) be clear about board accountability, (d) develop a plan to be counted on over time, and (e) devote appropriate resources to the task.

Jones (1996) believed the selection of the board president is an important task in relation to the board's ability to accomplish its goals. Recommendations for board president effectiveness included following proper procedures, respecting members as equals, knowing appropriate roles for board and superintendent, being prepared and helping members be prepared, and requesting superintendent input on all issues. Jones summarized the advice for board presidents to "be wise enough to listen and strong enough to lead" (p. 19).

According to Cattanach (1996), three personal qualities of good board members make a difference. First, board members must be secure in their roles at home, work, and as a board member. Second, board members must be objective and act objectively so the public is assured of consistent treatment. Third, and most significant, the person must have a positive attitude toward the office, the school, personnel, students, other board members, and parents/patrons. Individual board members must be able to identify the collective board's vision and believe they have a part to play.

Goodman et al. (1997) identified six characteristics of effective boards from the NESDEC study. First, members deciding not to run for re-election help recruit sound candidates. Second, members educate themselves in prepare for meetings and roles. Third, members stay within their responsibilities and work as a team. Fourth, members recognize the role of board president and support it. Fifth, boards emphasize their responsibilities and relationships with the community and superintendent. And sixth, boards maintain a high level of trust with their superintendent. When boards are in trouble, the reasons come from disregarding agendas and chains of command, struggling over roles, micro-managing and nit-picking, inserting personal interests, and being unwilling to commit to improvement.

Chalker and Haynes (1997) studied a 30-year history to 1996 of school boards in New Brunswick, Canada. The provincial government had abolished school boards in 1996 after a history of local control had gradually changed from strong local leadership of good schools to a provincial controlled system that discouraged local input and responsibility. Chalker and Haynes believed this situation “should serve as a lesson and a warning to other boards in both Canada and the United States” (p. 26). The lack of qualified candidates and the declining appeal of school board service, according to Chalker and Haynes, seemed to be occurring at a time when strong leadership was needed the most. They offered the following list of items from their study to help boards improve:

1. Encourage everyone’s involvement to improve the school.
2. Build good relationships with the press and welcome their presence.
3. Make training for new board members available and expected.
4. Stay out of the daily affairs of the district unless the superintendent needs you.
5. Recruit candidates to run for the board who will benefit the district over time.
6. Gather information and consider the effects before firing the superintendent.
7. Deal with mistakes openly and honestly and move on.

Richards (1997) said the key to being an effective board is to have a firm understanding of what being effective as an individual and effective as a board means. Members of effective boards spend their time on right things rather than getting trapped spending time, energy, and resources dealing with issues that should be left to those in charge of the daily operation. Richards identified eleven characteristics of effective boards.

1. **Clear roles** – An effective board will know and be able to communicate its job, as well as be able to accept new members directly into the role.
2. **Leadership** - An effective board will exhibit leadership throughout the organization using appropriate channels.
3. **Governance** - An effective board will know and understand what it means to follow adopted, proper procedures.
4. **Policies** - An effective board will make policy development a first priority.
5. **People** - An effective board will respect people.
6. **Organization** - An effective board will see its role, yet educate itself as to the financial and organizational aspects of the district.
7. **Governance tasks** - An effective board will understand its roles and the tasks of governance, leaving the supervision of subordinates in proper hands.
8. **Quality focus** - An effective board will keep outcomes as the guiding light.
9. **Flexibility and change** - An effective board always will prepare itself to be a change agent when appropriate.
10. **Ethical standards** - An effective board will model and expect all others to act in accordance with the professional ethics of the organization.
11. **Success Celebrations** - An effective board will share the successes. (pp. 15-17)

Recommendations for the Board-Superintendent Team

Boards and their executives must create a working partnership to deal with day-to-day issues. Houle (1989) provided six descriptors to demonstrate the basis for the partnership. He believed using such descriptors created a more accurate basis for building the partnership than attempting to list specific roles to establish a relationship.

1. The board is corporate and acts only on the basis of group discussion and decision, often struggling to achieve consensus. The executive is individual and acts with the authority and integration of a single personality.

2. The board is continuous; the executive is temporary. This distinction is not always apparent, particularly when executives have had a long tenure and trustees a short one. While its members come and go, the board endures, and it has an obligation always to act in terms of a long-range perspective. The executive has the direct responsibilities of ultimate as well as immediate considerations, but he must always face the fact that he will not be present forever, whereas presumably the board will be.

3. The board is part-time. The executive is full-time. He is identified with the agency and typically earns his livelihood from it. His work is a central focus of his life. The board, though always in existence, can call upon only the part-time services of its members.

4. The board has, at most, only a minimal separate staff to support its work. The executive has a hierarchy of helpers.

5. The board has ultimate responsibility for the institution, subject to the requirements of external authority. The executive, who holds his office at the pleasure of the board, has more limited and immediate responsibility.

6. The board is typically made up of people who are nonexpert in the service performed by the program, although they often possess special knowledge in matters related to its work; they represent the broad community or constituency. The executive is usually a professional or is possessed of expert competence in a managerial role, representing the agency itself and the profession or activity with which its program is concerned. (pp. 87-88)

Members of the Twentieth Century Task Force (1992) and Gardner (1990)

recognized that roles for boards and superintendents became ambiguous depending upon issues and context. Boards and superintendents should analyze their conflicts, the demands they make of each other, and the demands made by the public upon them. They must collaboratively look for underlying causes, breakdowns in communication, conflicting perceptions, insensitive approaches, and alternative solutions. Training in techniques of consensus and compromise will provide everyone the opportunity to become a partner without losing face.

Blanchard et al. (1990) listed basic rules that boards and superintendents could use to strengthen their relationship. Correct situations that pit one team player against another.

Recognize the uniqueness of the leadership team and understand the state of development the group is in so that expectations are realistic. Begin with the concept that a team is smarter than its individual members. Develop the group alignment toward a common purpose or vision that helps keep the path illuminated. Develop the individual leadership that enables and facilitates the group along the path, as well as being prepared to provide what the group cannot provide for itself. Share control to encourage an empowered, self-directed team to exist. Manage and educate in the same role and be adaptable as to what is needed by others. Maintain the group by continually strengthening the relationship. Superintendents and boards can benefit from the admonition: "Empowerment is all about letting go so that others can get going" (p. 110).

Good leaders realize that within a group endeavor, gaining cooperation toward a cooperative goal is more effective than promoting competition. The public wants its leaders to be credible, have a sense of direction, portray an attractive image of the future, and act consistently with what they say. Leaders must recognize that the central issue in human relationships is trust and must develop a comfort level within groups by building trusting relationships. Leaders must also understand that perceptions of trust make a difference and that taking the initiative to build trust in spite of uncertainties is a leadership function. Trust within a group affects the willingness to participate and take risks and further determines individual satisfaction of participation. Trusting others causes others to believe one is trustworthy. Behaving in a trusting and trustworthy way becomes the determining factor within the relationship toward getting things done (Kouzes & Posner, 1991).

Avoiding critical incidents, or conflict in general, is a set of skills that superintendents and board members must gain better understanding of if they wish to create long-term relationships with each other. Bryant and Grady (1992a) divided their recommendations to help boards and superintendents improve the potential for stronger relationships into two categories, (a) assistance to boards and (b) changes in the educational

preparation for administrators. They suggested state legislatures needed to provide funding for training, as well as taking responsibility for providing training. Boards should also receive training in how to work through the issues of role delineation, role negotiation, communication, and interpersonal relations. In-service opportunities should be increased, diversified, and come from a wider variety of providers for a balanced perspective.

Board members must recognize that their CEO, or superintendent, cannot be everything to everybody, given the issues that arise and the tasks to be completed. They must be willing to accept reality, i.e., a little less in one area to gain a little more in another area. The board and superintendent should annually review their relationship, in terms of rules, targets, and commitments so that continual understanding is possible. They should include certain relationship principles such as: (a) openness and honesty with no hidden agendas; (b) no surprises for the board, hearing the good news and the bad; (c) need for the superintendent to have enough latitude to determine how to achieve agreed upon expectations; (d) need for the superintendent to take direction from the board as a whole and not from individuals; and (e) need for the superintendent to be the sole authority over staff. By agreeing on such principles, the parties avoid damaging discord and focus on policy development for the district. Superintendents must make a genuine commitment, as well, to encouraging a strong board and see themselves as builders, helpers, and a colleague of the board. By treating the board as the critical district resource, knowing each individual, and working with the board president, the superintendent is a partner in the creation of the positive relationship needed to make progress (Eadie, 1994).

Norton et al. (1996) reported that the board-superintendent relationship could be maintained and improved by (a) communicating regularly, (b) cooperating in the development of the meeting agenda, (c) analyzing board meetings, (d) allowing the board president to handle disputes between board members, (e) praising all board members publicly, (f) encouraging board members to be involved in learning designed for their

roles, (g) calling the president first when problems arise, (h) informing the president when going out of town, and (i) recognizing member service and treating every member equally.

Kazalunas (1996) provided a succinct comment about conflict occurring in the board-superintendent relationship, “At the risk of sounding sacrilegious, I submit that something else might be behind all of the discord between boards and their superintendents. That something is a failure to recognize that the superintendent works for the board, not the other way around. The superintendent has no power except that which the board delegates” (p. 40). Kazalunas said that while superintendents and board members joke about ineffective board members, the public wants to see a good relationship that stops the superintendency from being an expensive and disruptive revolving door. His recommendations to improve the potential for success in the relationship were: (a) define roles of superintendent and board, (b) keep each other informed, (c) show respect for the board, (d) educate all parties, and (e) support each other.

In the NASSP 1996 publication, Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution, two recommendations were made toward improving governance in school districts. First, boards should follow the business/industry model of corporate boards. The board should be responsible for adopting policies, goals, and accountability measures; approving the budget; and hiring/monitoring the superintendent who is to run daily operations. Second, superintendents should work collaboratively with their board to build the educational vision and educate the community about the needs of the school. In addition, the superintendent should implement shared leadership throughout the district.

Sharp and Walter (1997) wrote that superintendents tended to feel their problems were unique and often focused on the balance of power between the board and superintendent. One method of reducing differences is to have the board and superintendent place the issue into one of five categories of pre-determined responsibility: (a) superintendent authority, within policy; (b) superintendent authority, inform board of

action; (c) superintendent authority, with prior board approval; (d) superintendent input be requested, board authority; and (e) board authority. A discussion with the board about grouping issues helps clarify and focus each party on their roles.

Ross and Kowal (1994) defined working as a team as having three key concepts: (a) get everybody's roles clear, (b) determine the team vision, and (c) get the details right. As the team becomes more effective, the climate for risk-taking improves. Goodman et al. (1997) found several districts in the NESDEC study that were led by board-superintendent teams that "captured the magic of the teammanship" (p. 12) that was the result of positive relationships. The members of these teams made trust, respect, interdependence, communication, give and take, and celebration of results the basis for their teamwork.

Three goals were recommended upon which to focus the relationship:

1. Do what is necessary to provide effective and stable leadership among school boards and superintendents of schools,
2. ensure that there is a clear understanding and upholding of the respective roles and responsibilities of board members and superintendents, and
3. support a high degree of collaboration between each school board and its superintendent, who together must view themselves as the school district governance team for higher student achievement (p. 23).

The authors recommended six steps to help board members and superintendents achieve the three goals: "1) build a foundation for teamwork, 2) get the best and most capable team players, 3) ensure that team players know their roles and responsibilities, 4) get into team training, 5) adopt team strategies, 6) and convince others to support the team" (p. 24).

Goodman et al. (1997) recommended strategies toward effective boardsmanship. Boards should focus their attention on candidates that are student-centered and recruit those candidates to run in board elections. A student-centered focus should be the basis for selecting superintendent candidates to be considered for hiring. All participants should go through orientation sessions regarding roles and responsibilities. The board-superintendent relationship should be attended to and maintained. Boards must establish a long-term vision

and maintain focus in that direction including holding the superintendent accountable for budget development and administration, personnel matters, and student achievement. Superintendents must provide leadership that helps the board president and the board be effective toward their vision, as well as function as a visible leader to the community and keep student achievement at the forefront. Boards should function as a committee of the whole whenever possible, using special meetings and committees sparingly.

Whether a lay board is appointed or elected, Richards (1997) noted five key steps toward successful board-staff relationships. First, recruit a good chief staff officer. Select a strong person to align with a strong board. This selection is the make-or-break decision for the organization. Second, define the expectations. This includes policy, job expectations, and rules of the relationship. Third, do an annual performance review from the perspective of the board having one and only one employee to make the organization work. Fourth, communicate effectively from the beginning to gain commitment from everyone. And last, demonstrate to all employees the model of operation expected.

Vaarhola (1998) emphasized that the concept of professional development for superintendents must be supported by boards. He said that the educational environment and the expectations of those in charge of that environment are being affected by changes in society. Therefore, professional development for the superintendent has to become of high concern for boards as they must view their superintendent in a broader sense than local administrator. The board and superintendent should plan together as to what is needed to keep the superintendent effective in relation to district goals.

Goodman and Fulbright (1998) developed guidelines for leadership teams based upon the conclusions in the NESDEC study that they had helped formulate. The list included leaving daily administration to administrators, avoiding personal agendas, staying within accepted roles, addressing issues directly, keeping the vision and commitment in

focus, being involved in state legislation, building trust, improving communication and getting the best people into a teamwork relationship based upon clear roles and strategies.

Eadie (1998) recommended using board-superintendent retreats to deal with three potential traps. First, many boards fall victim to a traditional, passive-reactive model of operation. Boards believe they are supposed to contain the administration, while superintendents believe they are supposed to keep boards within defined roles. A second problem is the lack of practical knowledge about how to be a board member and how to work through the determination of roles and responsibilities between board and superintendent. Training for board members often is based upon lists of what to do and what not to do. Third, some superintendents still hold to the belief that if boards are not to intrude on their turf, they should not move into the board's realm either. The result is a lack of guidance, support, and leadership that an effective board needs. Risk-free discussion, if managed well, provides the forum to bring everyone in the relationship closer to a cooperative set of goals.

Goodman and Zimmerman (2000) developed team recommendations upon the premise of the NESDEC that "school districts cannot effectively raise student achievement without strong leadership and teamwork from the school board and superintendent. ...effective school board-superintendent leadership, based on teamwork, communication, and trust, is key to quality education..." (p. iv). Their recommendations for the board-superintendent team responsibilities were: (a) having as top priority teamwork and advocacy for high achievement and healthy development, (b) providing educational leadership to the community in collaboration with employees and patrons, (c) creating linkages with state and community organizations to support healthy development and high achievement, (d) setting district goals that connect with the community vision, (e) approving the budget developed by the superintendent, (f) ensuring the existence of safe

and adequate facilities, (g) providing resources to all staff, (h) evaluating team efforts based upon students, and (I) overseeing negotiations with all staff.

Within the team effort, the board reserves for itself selecting and evaluating the superintendent, maintaining fiscal autonomy to appropriate local funds to support the budget, delegating day-to-day operations to the superintendent, evaluating board efforts in relation to the team, and advocating for staff and students in goals and policies. In turn, the superintendent must act as the CEO to the board, recommend all policies and budgets, provide information as the board requests, provide the leadership to ensure team initiatives are carried out, oversee the entire educational program, and take responsibility for all personnel matters (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000).

Summary

Houston (1998a) wrote, “An African proverb states, When the elephants fight, the grass gets trampled” (p. 7). He believed that adults battling over agendas results in trampled futures for children. Houston said that patrons expect education decision-making to occur in a civil environment, with a businesslike approach. In other words, boards and superintendents must work together toward the same goals.

The board-superintendent relationship continues to be labeled a critical element in the operation of a school district and the key to school improvement efforts. Researchers have found that the variety of problems that occur in the relationship change with their local context but can be categorized as lack of communication, respect, trust, ability to resolve disagreement and conflict, role clarification, and stability in both the superintendency and board membership. Researchers question whether or not either boards or superintendents are putting enough emphasis on building and maintaining a strong relationship to withstand difficult times and critical incidents.

Superintendents are reminded that they are hired as leaders and managers, but they are still the board’s chief employees. They must find the resources to help their boards

become educated to the tasks at hand as well as to help members become functioning team members. Superintendents must provide the background so that board members understand the role of the superintendent and work to enhance the role toward effective management, leadership, and school improvement. The professional training for superintendents should reflect the need to work with boards to solve questions of role ambiguity.

Boards of education are reminded that a revolving-door superintendency will inhibit a district's effectiveness and make replacing a superintendent more difficult. Boards must hire a superintendent who is compatible with board desires and district needs and then support that person in the job and community. While board members are elected to be the governance team of the district, they must also realize the limitations of their knowledge about everything that goes on in schools. Boards must be advocates of their district and their superintendent as they form a leadership team that functions for the best interests of students and community.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of board of education presidents and their respective superintendents regarding the professional relationship between the board and its superintendent during local district planning and preparation for the management of their districts under legislatively imposed limitations, LB 1114 and LB 806, for the 1998-99 school year. The "Review of Selected References" was focused upon the relationship between boards of education and their superintendents in regard to the effect incidents and issues had upon that relationship. Methods of reaction by boards and superintendents, as well as recommendations for improving the status of the relationship were also included.

A quantitative design was chosen to gather information about three variables, classification (A/B, C, D), position (superintendent and board president), and treatment and control groups (with and without regard to LB 1114 and LB 806). The use of the quantitative design enabled all Class II, III, and VI school districts to be included in the population. The design allowed for the survey questionnaire to be sent, followed up, and scored in a reasonably efficient and cost-effective manner.

Research Questions

The research question is: Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of board of education presidents and their respective superintendents about the professional relationship between their board of education and its superintendent in Nebraska Class II, III, and VI school districts relative to state aid and available property tax revenue as they prepared for the first year of implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806? The secondary question is: Is there a significant difference in that relationship between district size groups,

using Nebraska School Activities Association classification groups A and B combined, C, and D?

Population and Sample

For the purpose of this study, the population included all Class II, Class III, and Class VI public school districts (Nebraska Statute 79-102). The population was separated into Nebraska School Activities Association classifications used for track classifications in 1997-1998 and grouped as follows, Class A and B, Class C, and Class D. The number of districts in each class is: Class A (14 districts, excluding the Omaha and Lincoln districts) and Class B (55 districts) combined for Class A and B (69 districts), Class C (84 districts), and Class D (128 districts) (NSAA Bulletin, 1998). Sample size was 50% of the districts from each group: Class A/B, 36 districts; Class C, 42 districts; and Class D, 64 districts. These sample totals were divided in half to create a sample control group and a sample treatment group. A single stratified random sample, using calculated random numbers, was drawn from alphabetized classification lists for each group. Districts were assigned to control and treatment groups using an alternating selection procedure (see Appendix A).

The first sample group received the version of the questionnaire without reference to time and legislation to establish a control group for comparison. The second sample group received the same questionnaire, with the addition of references to LB 1114 and LB 806 in each item. While all school districts were affected by LB 1114 and LB 806 in one way or another, the research focus was to determine if significant differences existed in the perceptions of board presidents and superintendents about their board-superintendent relationship between treatment groups in regard to LB 1114 and LB 806 and control groups without regard to LB 1114 and LB 806 across classifications based upon school enrollment.

Class I (K-6 and K-8), Class IV (Lincoln), and Class V (Omaha) districts, home schools, and non-public schools were not included in the study. All Class II (K-12), Class III (K-12), and Class IV (7-12 and 9-12) public school districts were included in the population. The districts in the population may or may not have received state aid through LB 806 due to their equalization status, but all were subject to LB 1114 property tax limitations.

Participation in the Study

Participation in the piloting process and in the survey was voluntary. Because each district in the sample was named and the persons serving as superintendent and board of education presidents were named in public records and were listed in a variety of education resources, respondents were not guaranteed anonymity. The confidentiality of each district, superintendent, and board of education president was protected by the researcher. To protect confidentiality, board presidents and superintendents were provided self-addressed, stamped envelopes to return responses. Primary and secondary researcher identities were disclosed. Because the researcher was a practicing superintendent in a district that was included in the population, there was the potential for bias. Attempts were made to minimize this possibility by using only appropriate and acceptable methodologies. Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures and Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center assistance were followed.

Instrument and Scoring

The questionnaire survey method was chosen as the most efficient way to contact the large sample located across Nebraska. The researcher designed the cover letter (see Appendix B) and questionnaire (see Appendices C-1 through C-5) after reviewing professional literature regarding board of education and superintendent relationships. The researcher participated in legislative discussions regarding the development, the politics, and the impact of LB 1114 and LB 806 with senators, patrons, and school officials.

The questionnaires were identical except for the specific mention of LB 1114 and LB 806. The control group of school districts received the set of questions for their superintendent and board president that made no mention of the legislation as a factor. The treatment group of school districts received the identical questions for superintendent and board president, except that each question referred to the specific legislation as the primary factor. Each superintendent, from both groups, also received a survey request for demographic information about its current status in relation to the legislation.

The decision to use a five-point scale was made by the researcher to allow for two levels of agreement and disagreement, as well as to allow those who had no opinion to choose "neutral." The range of scores ranked from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Responses from superintendents on the demographic questionnaire were to illustrate whether or not the sample represented varied financial circumstances. All respondents were allowed to make written comments in a specific section of the questionnaire. The comments were included in Chapter 4 as direct quotes from each person by position, classification, and group

Respondents who chose not to complete the questionnaire were requested to check "NO" at the beginning of the questionnaire and return it. These were not scored, although they were included in the sample rates of return.

Validation

Methods were used to minimize the four types of error. Coverage error was eliminated by using a list frame of all Nebraska Class II, III, and VI public school districts that made up the population. Sampling error was minimized through stratified random number selection, guaranteeing all members of the population an equal opportunity for selection. Measurement error was the most difficult to determine and was subject to the development of the mail survey and written questionnaire with closed-ended questions using ordered choices. Non-response error was addressed through a check-off opportunity

at the beginning of each questionnaire and a fax follow-up, also allowing a check-off opportunity.

Validity was further addressed through the elimination of “double-barrel” questions and by keeping the questions limited to what is considered within the common range of issues that respondents would work with in the course of their educational roles. Questions were closed-ended with ordered choices. Skip questions were only used twice. The researcher estimated that the questionnaire could be completed within fifteen minutes. A non-participation check-off was included on the survey for those respondents who chose not to complete the survey. Instrument content involved responses only in regard to board president and superintendent perceptions about the impact of LB 1114 and LB 806 upon their relationship.

Instruments returned were categorized according to position, control and treatment groups, and classification groups. Because stratified random selection of schools in alphabetical order within their class was used, there is no assurance that an equal number of districts affected positively or negatively was chosen for either the control or treatment groups, nor that random selection resulted in respondents that reflected a cross section of the district population range within NSAA classifications.

Piloting the Instrument

The instrument was piloted in several ways. The instrument and subsequent drafts were reviewed by the researcher’s doctoral supervisory committee members. Drafts of the instrument were also reviewed by two University of Nebraska - Lincoln faculty who teach research and evaluation courses outside the Educational Administration Department, by the executive directors of the Nebraska Association of School Boards and Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and by a former Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association Legislative Committee Chair and school superintendent.

Members of the Nebraska Evaluation and Research (NEAR) Center were consulted regarding the construction of the survey questionnaire and subsequent data analysis.

The Educational Administration Unit Review Committee Representative for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was consulted as to the acceptability of the cover letter and questionnaire in regard to the intended research.

Pilot reviewers and consultants reacted via e-mail, telephone, mail, and direct conversation. Their concerns were noted and revisions were made to improve the focus and readability of the instrument.

Data Collection

The survey packet was mailed directly to each superintendent by name in each sample district. The mailing was completed on June 28 and had a return request of July 28. The assumption was that the superintendent would either deliver the instrument packet at the regular monthly meeting, which must occur no later than the third Monday of the month, issue a reminder to complete the questionnaire at the meeting, or check to see if the board president's response had been sent. The packet was mailed to superintendents only to reinforce the chance that board presidents would receive the material directly from their superintendent with encouragement to complete it in a timely fashion.

In districts where a superintendent change had taken place and was already known to the researcher, the mailing was to "Superintendent." These districts were not removed from the random sample even though a new superintendent would have little or no history with new employers. Consideration had been given to mailing the packet prior to the June monthly meetings, however, a special session regarding state aid funding had been called by the governor. The researcher determined that sending the questionnaire after all legislative activity had concluded was more important than attempting to reach the few schools in the sample that had replaced superintendents prior to their change.

The packet included a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a return envelope for superintendent and the same set of materials for the board president. Color codes were used to distinguish between NSAA classification groups and to distinguish one position from the other. Numerical codes insured that a district's superintendent and board president questionnaires could be paired.

Due to less than satisfactory return rates in some classifications, the researcher developed and sent a follow-up request, via fax, to each superintendent in each district from which questionnaires had not been received by one or both respondents (see Appendix D). This follow-up included a request for response and an offer to re-send the packet, as well as the opportunity to decline. The respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaire(s), or to return the follow-up requesting new materials or declining to complete the instrument. Rates of return increased slightly. The researcher determined that additional follow-up attempts would not improve the return enough to warrant the additional investment.

The rates of return varied between positions, across district size classifications, and between control and treatment groups (see Appendix E). The highest rate of return was from Class A and B superintendents at 88.9%, including both control and treatment groups. The highest rate of return for board presidents was also from Class A and B at 72.2%. The highest rate of return from districts in which both superintendent and board president responded was in Class A and B at 71.2%. Class D had the lowest rates of return in all but one sub-group (treatment, superintendents); however, due to the size of the population (128 of 284 districts were Class D) and subsequent 50% sample (64 districts), Class D had the most returns in every category except two (control, board presidents and control, both returned) and two that were the same (control, board presidents and treatment, board presidents). Class C showed the highest rate of return in only one sub-group (treatment, board presidents).

The rates of return for all superintendents was 71.8% and for all board presidents was 58.5%, irrespective of class or assigned group. Responses from both superintendent and board president from the same district brought a 56.3% return rate.

Data Analysis

The dependent variable was the perception of the relationship by board presidents and superintendents. The independent variable for the first research question was the difference in perceptions within the total population between the positions, board presidents and their superintendents, and between the two groups, control and treatment. The independent variable for the second research question was the same difference in perception, but between each of the three classification groups and between the control and treatment groups within those classifications. The board president's responses from a single district were considered representative of the board membership.

The SPSS statistical analysis package was used through representatives of the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. The researcher retrieved and categorized the data from questionnaires and transferred it by disk to the representatives, who developed the statistical programs for Cochran's and Levene's Tests of homogeneity of variance and the factorial ANOVA tests that were used. The first tests were factorial ANOVA using an independent measures design, determined to be appropriate to the three variables of the research question because scores were available from all respondents in each group and each class. Testing was run for one-way, two-way, and three-way interactions regarding the main effects of position, group, and classification for all questions combined.

The second set of tests were run as a mixed group factorial ANOVA, using a repeated measures/matched subjects design. This design was chosen to decrease the difference between independent subjects due to factors outside the research, i.e., differences in personality, age, gender, economic status, etc. The effect would be to

concentrate the analysis on the effect of the treatment, LB 1114 and LB 806, rather than on other differences. Superintendents and board presidents from the same district were combined as matched pairs to reflect both being affected by similar influences in their school roles. The analysis would still test for significant differences between positions (within-subjects effects), as well as between groups and classes (between-subjects effects), but again for all questions combined.

The final set of factorial ANOVA tests was run to determine if significant differences existed between the differences within the control group superintendents and board presidents and the differences within the treatment group superintendents and board presidents regarding each of the 12 questions. The 3-factor mixed model ANOVA was selected to combine testing for differences within subject (by position as matched pairs) and between subjects (by class and by group) regarding each of the 12 questions asked of both superintendents and board presidents. The ANOVA tested for differences within positions (a) regardless of class and group, (b) by group and regardless of class, (c) by class and regardless of group, and (d) by group and class.

Information from the demographic section of the questionnaire sent to all superintendents was also compiled and organized without reference to group and class as well as with reference to group and class. This array provided the basis for having used a cross-section of districts in the sample population according to financial circumstances in both control and treatment groups. Positive, negative, and neutral written comments made by respondents on Question 13 were also categorized.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The first section of data is General Information: Superintendents. Responses from superintendents to items 1-7 (see Appendix C), shown on Tables 7-13, demonstrate that sample population responses reflect a cross-section of financial circumstances relative to LB 1114 and LB 806. Whether districts were in the control group or treatment group, all districts were subject to legislation.

Results for items 1-12 (see Tables 14-36) are reported in the second section Results: Board Presidents and Superintendents. The control group was asked each question with no reference to LB 1114 and LB 806. The treatment group was asked each question relative to LB 1114 and LB 806. For each question, a mean, standard deviation, minimum to maximum response range, and number of respondents is listed. The responses were calculated according to a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), except for Question 5 which was reverse coded. There are two tables for each question. The first table is Descriptive Statistics: mean, standard deviation, and number of respondents for superintendent and board presidents in each class by group. The second table is the result of ANOVA tests resulting in the F ratio and standard deviation, $\alpha = .001$. The tests were within-subjects (position) with and without regard to group and class.

The third section, Comments: Superintendents and Board Presidents, is a compilation of written responses to item 13. Respondents were asked to include anecdotal comments regarding the board-superintendent relationship in their own school districts.

Introduction: General Information from Superintendents

Descriptive information requested from all superintendents regardless of group and class in relation LB 1114 and LB 806 provided a basis for the assumption that the sample

population was representative of circumstances that districts faced. Responses to Items 1-7 provided the basis for such an assumption to be made, an important issue given the variety of circumstances possible.

Item 1: 1997-1998 Property Tax Levies

In terms of cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation, no district had local property tax levies below .90 nor above 1.71 (see Table 7). Twenty-seven responses (30.4% of all respondents) were from districts whose levies were already at or under the 1.10 levy cap. Sixty-two districts (69.7% of all respondents) were at 1.11 or above, a position in which reduction processes to achieve the 1.10 levy maximum would have to be applied. Of the 62 over the 1.10 levy, 21 (33.9%) were Class A/B, 15 (24.2%) were Class C, and 26 (41.9%) were Class D. LB 1114 was an issue for 62 (69.6%) of the responding districts. Thirty-two of 40 Control Superintendents (80%) reported their districts were over 1.10, as compared to 30 of 49 Treatment Superintendents (61.2%).

Table 7

1997-1998 Property Tax Levies by Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	<.90	0.90- 1.10	1.11- 1.30	1.31- 1.50	1.51- 1.70	>1.71	Totals
CS Class A/B	0	1	8	4	0	0	13
TS Class A/B	0	6	6	3	0	0	15
CS Class C	0	5	2	4	0	0	11
TS Class C	0	5	3	6	0	0	14
CS Class D	0	2	7	6	1	0	16
TS Class D	0	8	5	6	1	0	20
Totals (n = 89)	0	27	31	29	2	0	89

Item 2: State Aid Change for 1998-1999 Relative to 1997-1998

Fifty-seven of the respondents, 64%, were in districts that would receive larger amounts of state aid in the first year of LB 806 than in the previous year under LB 1059,

(see Table 8). Thirty-two respondents, or 36%, indicated they would receive less under LB 806. Of Class A/B districts, 27 of 28 or 96.4%, would receive increases, while one would receive less. Of Class C districts, 21 of 26 or 80.8%, would receive increases, while five or 19.2%, would receive less. Of Class D districts, nine of 35 or 25.7%, would receive increases, while 26 or 74.3%, would receive less. Twenty-eight of 41 Control Group Superintendents, 68.3%, reported their districts would receive increases, as did 29 of 48 Treatment Group Superintendents, 60.4%. Decreases were reported by 13 or 31.7% of the Control Group Superintendents, and 19 or 39.6% of the Treatment Group Superintendents.

Table 8

State Aid Change for 1998-1999 Relative to 1997-1998 by Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	Increased 20% or more	Increased 10%- 19%	Increased 9% or less	Decreased 9% or less	Decreased 10%- 19%	Decreased 20% or more	Totals
CS Class A/B	8	2	2	0	1	0	13
TS Class A/B	13	2	0	0	0	0	15
CS Class C	4	0	6	1	0	1	12
TS Class C	6	3	2	3	0	0	14
CS Class D	3	0	3	7	2	1	16
TS Class D	1	2	0	2	7	7	19
Totals (n = 89)	35	9	13	13	10	9	89

Item 3: Net District Revenue Gain or Loss From 1997-1998 to 1998-1999

Forty-three districts received net gains, while 43 districts suffered net losses (see Table 9). Net gains were reported for 24 of 27 (88.9%) Class A/B districts, 14 of 25 (56%) Class C districts, and five of 34 (14.7%) Class D districts (see Table 9). Net losses

were projected for three of 27 (11.1%) Class A/B districts, 11 of 25 (44%) Class C districts, and 29 of 34 (85.3%) Class D districts. While districts in Class C were divided 14 to 11 between net gain and net loss, Class A/B and Class D were reversed in projected net gain and loss. Of the 39 Control Group Superintendents, 19 (48.7%) reported net gains, while 20 reported net losses. Treatment Group Superintendents (total 47) were divided 24 (51.1%) reporting net gains and 23 (48.9%) reporting net losses.

Table 9

Net District Revenue Gain or Loss From 1997-1998 to 1998-1999 Relative to Superintendents in Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	Increased 20% or more	Increased 10%-19%	Increased 9% or less	Decreased 9% or less	Decreased 10%-19%	Decreased 20% or more	Totals
CS Class A/B	5	0	5	1	2	0	13
TS Class A/B	6	5	3	0	0	0	14
CS Class C	3	0	4	2	1	1	11
TS Class C	3	1	3	4	3	0	14
CS Class D	1	1	0	5	5	3	15
TS Class D	0	1	2	4	6	6	19
Totals (n = 86)	18	8	17	16	17	10	86

Item 4: Elections to Exceed the Levy Cap

Superintendents reported 18 (20% of 90 districts) districts holding elections, with five of thirteen (38.5%) districts passing an override (see Table 10). Seventy-two (80%) districts had not held, or planned to hold, elections to override. Eighteen superintendents reported holding elections, but only 13 reported passage or failure. Of Class A/B superintendents, three of 28 or 10.7% reported override elections, while 25 or 89.3% reported not planning or holding override elections. In Class C, four of 26 (15.4%)

superintendents reported holding or planning override elections and 21 (80.8%) reported not planning or holding override elections. Of Class D superintendents, 11 of 36 (30.6%) planned to hold or had held elections, while 25 (69.4%) had neither held nor planned elections. Nine of 41 Control Group Superintendents (22%) reported planning or holding elections, as did nine of 49 Treatment Group Superintendents (18.4%). Three superintendents reported the years of override authority approved by their voters, one for two years and two for three years.

Table 10

Election Results to Override Levy Limits by Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	Held Election	Election Passed	Election Failed	No Election	Totals
CS Class A/B	1	0	1	12	13
TS Class A/B	2	0	2	13	15
CS Class C	3	1	1	9	12
TS Class C	1	0	1	13	14
CS Class D	5	3	2	11	16
TS Class D	6	1	1	14	20
Totals (n = 90)	18	5	8	72	90

Item 5: Discussions About Reorganization and Feasibility Studies Requested

Thirty-four of 90 superintendents (38%) reported their district had some degree of discussion, or were planning discussions, regarding reorganization with other districts (see Table 11). Of the 34 districts having had or planning to have discussions, 11 (32.4%) requested feasibility studies. Feasibility studies were reported in 11 of 34 districts (32.4%) that had held discussions. Seventeen of 41 Control Group Superintendents (41.5%) and 17

of 49 Treatment Group Superintendents (34.7%) reported their districts planned discussions

Table 11

Discussions About Reorganization and Feasibility Studies by Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	Held Discussions	No Discussions	Totals	Feasibility Study	No Study
CS Class A/B	4	9	13	1	3
TS Class A/B	4	11	15	1	3
CS Class C	3	9	12	1	2
TS Class C	6	8	14	2	4
CS Class D	10	6	16	5	5
TS Class D	7	13	20	1	6
Totals (n = 90)	34	56	90	11	23

Item 6: Planning or Implementing Reductions

Sixty-eight percent (61 districts) of the respondents identified their district as having had meetings to plan reductions, and in some cases, had implemented reductions (see Table 12). In Class A/B, 14 of 28 superintendents (50%) reported planning or implementation of reductions had begun, while 14 (50%) reported no actions had been taken. Class C superintendents in 17 of 26 districts (65.4%) reported planning or implementing was taking place, while nine (34.6%) said no actions had been taken. In Class D, 30 of 36 superintendents (83.3%) reported planning or implementation of reductions, as compared to six (16.7%) not taking action. Of the 61 superintendents that reported planning or implementing reductions, 30 (49.2%) were Control Group Superintendents and 31 (50.8%) were Treatment Group Superintendents.

Table 12

Planned or Implemented Reductions Reported by Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification

Respondents	YES	NO	Totals
CS Class A/B	9	4	13
TS Class A/B	5	10	15
CS Class C	7	5	12
TS Class C	10	4	14
CS Class D	14	2	16
TS Class D	16	4	20
Totals (n = 90)	61	29	90

Item 7: Involving Patrons in Planning

Of the respondents, fifty four superintendents (60.6%) said their board had involved, or was planning to involve, patrons in planning processes resulting from LB 1114 and LB 806 legislation (see Table 13). Class A/B superintendents reported less patron involvement as fewer districts answered yes, 13 of 28 (46.4%). In Class C, 17 of 25 superintendents (68%) reported planned patron involvement to eight (32%) deciding no. In Class D, 24 of 36 districts (66.7%) planned patron involvement compared to 12 districts (33.3%) that did not. Twenty-nine of 41 (70.7%) Control Group Superintendents said their districts were involving patrons, while 25 of 48 (52.1%) of Treatment Group Superintendents reported not.

Table 13

Number of Superintendents by Control (CS) and Treatment (TS) Groups and by District Classification that Reported Involving Patrons in Planning

Respondents	YES	NO	Totals
CS Class A/B	8	5	13
TS Class A/B	5	10	15
CS Class C	9	3	12
TS Class C	8	5	13
CS Class D	12	4	16
TS Class D	12	8	20
Totals (n = 89)	54	35	89

Summary of Superintendent Items 1-8

Superintendents responded about their school district in regard to information about district levy and state aid changes, subsequent net revenue changes, holding elections to override the levy caps, reorganization discussions, budget reductions, and involving patrons in planning processes. The purpose of items 1-8 was to ascertain whether districts from the sample were representative of varied outcomes relative to the legislation.

When classification was considered, as district size increased so did the amount of positive change in state aid and gain in net revenue. Conversely, as district size decreased, so did the amount of negative change in state aid and loss in net revenue. More elections to override the levy caps were held by smaller districts, although they were only slightly more successful in getting the overrides passed. As district size decreased, districts were more likely to engage in discussions regarding reorganization and have feasibility studies conducted. Smaller districts were more likely to have planned and/or implemented reductions and to have involved patrons in the planning toward such reductions.

When treatment and classification were considered, little difference was found between control and treatment groups within a classification regarding each question. The exceptions were Class A/B Control Group Superintendents were more likely than Class A/B Treatment Group Superintendents to have planned and/or implemented reductions as well have involved patrons in those discussions. Class D Control Group Superintendents were more likely than Class D Treatment Group Superintendents to have entered into reorganization discussions and feasibility studies.

Results: Superintendents and Board Presidents

Item 1: Our board-superintendent relationship has been respectful.

The mean range for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.42$ to 4.83 ($SD = 0.90$ to 0.39), shown in Table 14. For Control Group board presidents, the mean range was $M = 4.45$ to 4.75 ($SD = 0.52$ to 0.45). Treatment Group Superintendent means ranged from $M = 4.70$ to 4.83 ($SD = 0.47$ to 0.39). Treatment Group board president means ranged from $M = 4.58$ to 4.80 ($SD = 0.51$ to 0.42).

Table 14

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Respectful Relationship

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.42	0.90	12	4.80	0.41	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.64	0.50	11	4.80	0.42	10
Class C Supt.	4.83	0.39	12	4.83	0.39	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.75	0.45	12	4.67	0.49	12
Class D Supt.	4.60	0.51	15	4.70	0.47	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.45	0.52	11	4.58	0.51	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .941$, (.336), shown in Table 15. The F ratio for control group

superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .881, (.352)$. The F ration for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .857, (.430)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .782, (.462)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 15

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Respectful Relationship

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.941	.336
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.881	.352
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.857	.430
Within Position by Group and by Class	.782	.462

Item 2: Our board-superintendent relationship has been trusting.

The range of means for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.25$ to 4.83 ($SD = 1.14$ to $.039$). The range of means for Control Group board presidents was $M = 4.09$ to 4.75 ($SD = .054$ to 0.45). In the Treatment Group, superintendents and board presidents responded Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5) with only one exception. The range of means for superintendents was $M = 4.65$ to 4.87 ($SD = 0.49$ to 0.35). For board presidents, the range of means was $M = 4.50$ to 4.70 ($SD = 0.52$ to 0.48).

Table 16

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Trusting Relationship

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.25	1.14	12	4.87	0.35	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.36	0.92	11	4.70	0.48	10
Class C Supt.	4.83	0.39	12	4.75	0.62	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.75	0.45	12	4.50	0.52	12
Class D Supt.	4.40	0.83	15	4.65	0.49	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.09	0.54	11	4.67	0.49	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = 3.744, (.058)$, shown in Table 17. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .455, (.503)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .006, (.994)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .619, (.542)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 17

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Trusting Relationship

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	3.744	.058
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.455	.503
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.006	.994
Within Position by Group and by Class	.619	.542

Item 3: Our board-superintendent relationship has been courteous.

The mean range for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.25$ to 4.83 ($SD = 1.14$ to 0.39). For Control Group board presidents, the mean range was $M = 4.09$ to 4.75 ($SD = 0.54$ to 0.45). In the Treatment Group, the range of means for superintendents was $M = 4.65$ to 4.87 ($SD = 0.49$ to 0.35) and for board president the range of means was from $M = 4.50$ to 4.70 ($SD = 0.52$ to 0.48).

Table 18

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Courteous Relationship

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.25	1.14	12	4.87	0.35	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.36	0.92	11	4.70	0.48	10
Class C Supt.	4.83	0.39	12	4.75	0.62	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.75	0.45	12	4.50	0.52	12
Class D Supt.	4.40	0.83	15	4.65	0.49	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.09	0.54	11	4.67	0.49	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = 5.170$, (.027), shown in Table 19. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .278$, (.600). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .727$, (.488). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) =$

.766, (.469). The treatment had no effect on the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) regardless of group and/or class.

Table 19

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Courteous Relationship

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	5.170	.027
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.278	.600
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.727	.488
Within Position by Group and by Class	.766	.469

Item 4: Our board-superintendent relationship has fostered open discussion.

The range of means for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.25$ to 4.42 ($SD = 0.87$ to 1.16) and for Control Group board presidents was $M = 4.36$ to 4.75 ($SD = 0.50$ to 0.45). Responses by the Treatment Group superintendents and board presidents were as follows. Superintendent means ranged from $M = 4.45$ to 4.83 ($SD = 0.51$ to 0.39). Board president means ranged from $M = 4.17$ to 4.58 ($SD = 1.11$ to 0.51).

Table 20

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Fostering Open Discussion

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.25	0.87	12	4.67	0.49	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.36	0.50	11	4.40	0.70	10
Class C Supt.	4.42	1.16	12	4.83	0.39	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.75	0.45	12	4.58	0.51	12
Class D Supt.	4.40	0.63	15	4.45	0.51	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.50	0.53	11	4.17	1.11	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .764, (.386)$, shown in Table 21. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = 2.454, (.123)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .368, (.694)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .332, (.719)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 21

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Fostering Open Discussion

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.764	.386
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	2.454	.123
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.368	.694
Within Position by Group and by Class	.332	.719

Item 5: Our board-superintendent relationship has been damaged by disagreement within the relationship.

Question 5 was reverse coded to reflect Strongly Disagree (5) as most positive answer and Strongly Agree (1) as the most negative answer. Means for Control Group superintendents ranged from $M = 2.42$ to 4.08 ($SD = 1.31$ to 1.16). Board president mean ranges were $M = 3.18$ to 4.25 ($SD = 1.08$ to 1.14). The variation within the Treatment Group was less as superintendent means ranged from $M = 4.00$ to 4.53 ($SD = 1.08$ to 1.06). Board president means were in the $M = 4.42$ to 4.50 ($SD = 0.51$ to 0.53) range.

Table 22

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Relationship Damaged by Disagreement

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	2.42	1.31	12	4.53	1.06	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	3.45	1.29	11	4.50	0.53	10
Class C Supt.	4.08	1.16	12	4.50	0.90	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.25	1.14	12	4.83	0.39	12
Class D Supt.	3.93	1.28	15	4.00	1.08	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	3.18	1.08	11	4.42	0.51	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = 1.678, (.200)$, shown in Table 23. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .009, (.926)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = 1.018, (.368)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = 4.419, (.016)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 23

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Fostering Open Discussion

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Postion Regardless of Group and Class	1.678	.200
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	0.009	.926
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	1.018	.368
Within Position by Group and by Class	4.419	.016

Item 6: Our board-superintendent relationship has withstood the impact of difficult times.

The means for Control Group superintendents ranged from $M = 2.17$ to 4.80 ($SD = 1.19$ to 0.94) and for Control Group board members from $M = 3.64$ to 4.18 ($SD = 1.12$ to 0.60). Responses by the Treatment Group superintendents and board presidents were as follows. Means for superintendents ranged from $M = 4.45$ to 4.73 ($SD = 0.51$ to 0.46). Means for board presidents ranged from $M = 4.17$ to 4.58 , ($SD = 1.19$ to 0.51).

Table 24

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Withstanding the Impact of Difficult Times

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	2.17	1.19	12	4.73	0.46	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.18	0.60	11	4.50	0.53	10
Class C Supt.	3.67	1.30	12	4.58	0.67	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.42	0.67	12	4.58	0.51	12
Class D Supt.	4.80	0.94	15	4.45	0.51	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	3.64	1.12	11	4.17	1.19	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = 5.376$, (.024), shown in Table 25. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = 10.401$, (.002). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = 4.337$, (.017). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = 2.932$, (.061). The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 25

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Withstanding the Impact of Difficult Times

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	5.376	.024
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	10.401	.002
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	4.337	.017
Within Position by Group and by Class	2.932	.061

Item 7: Our board-superintendent relationship has been a positive part of our public relations.

The means for Control Group superintendents ranged from M = 3.58 to 4.33 (SD = 1.31 to 0.49) and for Control Group board members from M = 4.00 to 4.42 (SD = 0.89 to 0.67). Responses by Treatment Group superintendents and board presidents were as follows. Superintendent means ranged from M = 4.10 to 4.50 (0.91 to 0.67). Means for board presidents ranged from M = 3.92 to 4.17 (0.79 to 0.72).

Table 26

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Public Relations

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	3.58	1.31	12	4.40	0.74	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.89	11	4.10	0.74	10
Class C Supt.	4.33	0.49	12	4.50	0.67	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.42	0.67	12	4.17	0.72	12
Class D Supt.	4.00	0.65	15	4.10	0.91	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.00	1.00	11	3.92	0.79	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .076, (.783)$, shown in Table 27. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = 1.946, (.168)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .144, (.866)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .257, (.774)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 27

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Public Relations

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.076	.783
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	1.946	.168
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.144	.866
Within Position by Group and by Class	.257	.774

Item 8: Our board-superintendent relationship has been unified in regard to political involvement.

The means for Control Group superintendents ranged from $M = 3.75$ to 4.07 ($SD = 1.29$ to 0.80) and for board members from $M = 3.73$ to 4.18 ($SD = 0.65$ to 0.75). Responses by the Treatment Group superintendents and board presidents were as follows. Means for superintendents ranged from $M = 4.13$ to 4.58 ($SD = 0.92$ to 0.67). Means for board presidents ranged from $M = 3.83$ to 4.25 ($SD = 0.72$ to 0.62).

Table 28

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Political Involvement

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	3.75	1.29	12	4.13	0.92	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	3.73	0.65	11	4.00	0.82	10
Class C Supt.	3.83	0.83	12	4.58	0.67	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	3.83	1.03	12	3.83	0.72	12
Class D Supt.	4.07	0.80	15	4.20	0.89	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.18	0.75	11	4.25	0.62	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .879, (.352)$, shown in Table 29. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .879, (.352)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = 2.162, (.124)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .842, (.436)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 29

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Public Relations

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.879	.352
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.879	.352
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	2.162	.124
Within Position by Group and by Class	.842	.436

Item 9: Our board-superintendent relationship has provided a positive forum for receiving information.

The means for Control Group superintendents ranged from $M = 3.92$ to 4.33 ($SD = 1.00$ to 0.49) and for Control Group board members from $M = 4.18$ to 4.50 ($SD = 0.75$ to 0.52). Responses by Treatment Group superintendents and board presidents were as follows. Means for superintendents ranged from $M = 4.35$ to 4.58 ($SD = 0.59$ to 0.51) and for board presidents $M = 4.20$ to 4.33 ($SD = 0.79$ to 0.49).

Table 30

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Positive Forum

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	3.92	1.00	12	4.53	0.74	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.45	0.52	11	4.20	0.79	10
Class C Supt.	4.33	0.49	12	4.58	0.51	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.50	0.52	12	4.25	0.62	12
Class D Supt.	4.00	0.65	15	4.35	0.59	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.18	0.75	11	4.33	0.49	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .028$, (.867), shown in Table 31. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = 8.658$, (.005). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .528$, (.592). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .916$, (.406). The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) regardless of group or class.

Table 31

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Positive Forum

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.028	.867
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	8.658	.005
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.528	.592
Within Position by Group and by Class	.916	.406

Item 10: Our board-superintendent relationship has helped to reach consensus on issues.

The mean range for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.00$ to 4.50 ($SD = 1.04$ to 0.52). For Control Group board presidents, the mean range was $M = 4.00$ to 4.42 ($SD = 0.89$ to 0.67). In the Treatment Group, the range of means for superintendents was $M = 4.40$ to 4.58 ($SD = 0.68$ to 0.51). Board president means ranged from $M = 4.33$ to 4.40 ($SD = 0.65$ to 0.70).

Table 32

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Reaching Consensus

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.00	1.04	12	4.53	0.52	15
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.89	11	4.40	0.70	10
Class C Supt.	4.50	0.52	12	4.58	0.51	12
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.42	0.67	12	4.33	0.65	12
Class D Supt.	4.20	0.56	15	4.40	0.68	20
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.18	0.60	11	4.17	0.58	12

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = 4.009, (.050)$, shown in Table 33. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .518, (.474)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .021, (.980)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = .164, (.849)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 33

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Reaching Consensus

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	4.009	.050
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.518	.474
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.021	.980
Within Position by Group and by Class	.164	.849

Item 11: Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members and the superintendent.

The mean range for Control Group superintendents was $M = 4.00$ to 4.10 ($SD = 0.71$ to 0.32) and for board presidents, $M = 3.87$ to 4.00 ($SD = 0.64$ to 0.53). In the Treatment Group, the range of means for superintendents was $M = 3.50$ to 4.25 ($SD = 1.22$ to 0.96). Board president means ranged from $M = 3.50$ to 4.00 ($SD = 0.58$ to 0.82).

Table 34

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Working Through Disagreement

Respondents	Control			Treatment		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n (responded)</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n (responded)</u>
Class A/B Supt.	4.00	0.71	12 (3)	4.25	0.96	15 (4)
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	3.87	0.64	11 (3)	3.50	0.58	10 (4)
Class C Supt.	4.10	0.32	12 (2)	4.00	0.00	12 (2)
Class C Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.82	12 (4)	4.00	0.82	12 (4)
Class D Supt.	4.00	0.82	15 (5)	3.50	1.22	20 (6)
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.53	11 (3)	3.75	0.50	12 (4)

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .772, (.382)$, shown in Table 35. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = 4.218, (.043)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = .694, (.503)$. The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = 1.718, (.186)$. The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) regardless of group or class.

Table 35

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Working Through Disagreement Between Board Members and Superintendent

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.772	.382
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	4.218	.043
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	.694	.503
Within Position by Group and by Class	1.718	.186

Item 12: Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members.

The mean range for Control Group superintendents was $M = 3.11$ to 3.80 ($SD = 1.27$ to 0.42). For board presidents, the mean range was $M = 3.80$ to 4.00 ($SD = 1.30$ to 0.82). In the Treatment Group, the range of means for superintendents was $M = 2.80$ to 4.67 ($SD = 0.84$ to 0.58). Board president means were $M = 3.50$ ($SD = 0.58$ to 0.71).

Table 36

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Number of Superintendents and Board Presidents by District Classification on Working Through Disagreement Between Board Members

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>Control</u>			<u>Treatment</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n (responded)</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n (responded)</u>
Class A/B Supt.	3.11	1.27	12 (3)	4.67	0.58	15 (3)
Class A/B Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.82	11 (1)	3.50	0.71	10 (2)
Class C Supt.	3.78	0.67	12 (3)	3.50	0.71	12 (2)
Class C Bd. Pres.	3.80	1.30	12 (5)	3.50	0.71	12 (2)
Class D Supt.	3.80	0.42	15 (5)	2.80	0.84	20 (5)
Class D Bd. Pres.	4.00	0.00	11 (5)	3.50	0.58	12 (4)

Key: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

The F ratio reported for all superintendents vs. all board presidents without regard to group and class was $F(1) = .171$, (.681), shown in Table 37. The F ratio reported for control group superintendents/board presidents vs. treatment group superintendents/board presidents was $F(1) = .259$, (.612). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by Class A/B, C, and D without regard for group was $F(2) = 1.392$, (.255). The F ratio reported for superintendents and board presidents by group and class was $F(2) = 2.285$, (.115). The treatment had no effect upon the difference in perception between superintendents and board presidents ($p > .001$) with or without regard to group or class.

Table 37

Results of the 3 Factor Mixed Model ANOVA on Working Through Disagreement Between Board Members and Superintendent

<u>Source</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Within Position Regardless of Group and Class	.171	.681
Within Position by Group Regardless of Class	.259	.612
Within Position by Class Regardless of Group	1.392	.255
Within Position by Group and by Class	2.285	.115

Summary of ANOVA for Items 1-12

The 3-factor mixed model ANOVA design resulted in findings of no significant differences either within group (by position and matched pairs) or between groups (by class and/or group) for any of the 12 items. The findings of no significant differences (alpha .001) using the 3-factor mixed model ANOVA design was consistent with the two preliminary tests run with all questions combined in the 2 and 3 factor independent measures ANOVA design and the 2 and 3 factor matched pairs ANOVA design (alpha .05).

Item 13: Additional (Optional) Comments from Superintendents and Board Presidents

Board Presidents and Superintendents in both groups and all classes were asked if they wished to make any additional comments regarding board-superintendent relationships. While most, 103 of 154 (66.9%) wrote no additional comments, those that did are quoted within their class, group, and position.

Comments by Class A/B Control Group Superintendents

Five of 12, 42.7%, Class A/B Control Group superintendents responded. Comments #1 and #2 were recognition of a break-in period in a new relationship when both parties have high hopes. Comment #4 was a set of positive statements that while disagreements occur, good relationships based upon sound indicators can overcome difficulties. Comment #3 indicated that differing priorities can result in divided boards and

strained board-superintendent relationships. Comment #5 resulted from a mutual agreement to separate that grew from severe difficulties within the relationship.

1. This is my first year. I have an excellent board.
2. We have had a superintendent change. After only four days, I don't think my answers would be valid. Honeymoon, you know.
3. The most damaging issue is money, where it comes from and where it goes. I can count on a 4-2 vote every time money is the topic, unless its (sic) athletics and then it would be 5-1 with the two nay votes switching to ayes and one aye vote switching to nay.
4. I believe the school board members have been open, honest, and ethical in their relationship with me. There have been times when disagreements did occur which were handled as board business. These did not seem to jeopardize our personal or professional relationship. Any concerns expressed were related to school improvements which were given attention. Fortunately those expectations did not exceed the professional expectations of myself and the school's educational staff.
5. The situation we are in at ... is such that you will not receive data from the superintendent or board president. Sorry.

Comments by Class A/B Control Group Board Presidents

Five of 11, 45.5%, Class A/B Control Group board presidents responded.

Comment #1 set out a critical component of the relationship in this board president's viewpoint. Comments #2 - #5 were indicators of problems in the board-superintendent relationship in those districts. Board presidents #4 and #5 are recognizing fracture lines, while #3 is an indicator of intra-board problems, as well as role clarification regarding micromanaging. Board president #2 noted that a feeling of mistrust contributed to the ending of the relationship.

1. Trust is an important yet fragile commodity; once lost, it is difficult to regain. Even in difficult situations, complete honesty is essential. As stated by another CEO in the public sector, if there is room for interpretation in a policy, the board's interpretation should be honored. Also, following policy should not be an option.
2. I have served as board president since January, 1998. This is my fourth [term] on the board. Because we did not extend the contract of the previous superintendent, I have worked with an interim superintendent until the new superintendent was hired in May and joined the district in July. Answers are based on experiences with interim and new superintendent. Obviously, responses would have been significantly different for the previous superintendent. Quite frankly,

problems in the areas of trust, political involvement, and building consensus led to the previous contract not being extended.

3. Our board is definitely a 4-2 board which makes it difficult. However, our superintendent does well handling this. Luckily it is 4 and superintendent! However, the 2 are very vocal and aggressive and rarely ever attend seminars or NASB meetings. Micromanaging is our biggest fault.

4. The board-superintendent relationship has always been good in our district. However, the board has questioned a few decisions the last couple of years and this has led to a deterioration in the board-superintendent relations. It is still on a pretty even keel "overall."

5. In the past, I've noticed that some of our board members don't believe our superintendent takes a strong enough leadership role.

Comments by Class A/B Treatment Group Superintendents

Seven of 15, 46.7%, Class A/B Treatment Group superintendents responded.

Superintendents #2, #3, and #5 alluded to factors that kept relationships strong: having a strong relationship built on openness and honesty before major issues occur, having quality members elected, and a large gain in state aid. Superintendent #4 recognized the uncertainty that goes with the first-year relationship. Superintendent #7 recognized that when one in the first year may be following the collapse of a board-superintendent relationship.

1. Some board members talked of developing a "process and cut list." Last year we stated budget increase would be held to a minimum to assure attaining required 1.10 this year.

2. Superintendent-board relations in this district were not affected by 1114 and 806. However, prior relationships would have precluded any adverse feelings concerning 1114 and 806 were we to have had a negative effect or impact from the legislation. Strong superintendent-board relationships are built on open and honest dealings on all issues, large or small, therefore, when significant issues arise the foundation is in place to weather the storms and maintain a positive relationship.

3. We have enjoyed excellent board-superintendent relations in ... The quality of board members elected to office makes the above statement easy to claim.

4. I am a new superintendent to the district and it was difficult to know how accurate my responses are.

5. I happen to be lucky enough to work for a very fine board. It also didn't hurt that we gained over \$800,000 in state aid.

6. I started at ... on July 1 and don't have a historical background to respond at this time.

7. I started July 1 and my relationship with the board has been fine, but the previous superintendent had many problems.

Comments by Class A/B Treatment Group Board Presidents

Five of 10, 50%, Class A/B Treatment Group board presidents responded. Board President #1 highlighted three issues: (a) the problem board member, (b) the board member who cannot demonstrate consistency, and (c) the resulting deterioration of trust that divides the relationship. Comment #2 showed that board and superintendent being politically involved may not mean that everyone agrees on the position. Comments #3, #4, and #5 indicated that good relationships are built before problems occur, such as new laws passed.

1. While the majority of our board works well together and can reach consensus on most issues, we have one member who takes the position of not wanting to spend any additional dollars for anything. If something new is put in, something equal in dollars must be taken out. Another board member waives and we never know if we are reaching that person or not. While they seem to have a general mistrust of the administration and perhaps government in general, we continue to work with them and they are, for the most part, professional when expressing differences of opinion.

2. Our school district has historically been very low spending - low levy. Our board and superintendent have discussed the impact of LB 1114 and LB 806. Members of our board and our superintendent were in touch with our state senators regarding these two pieces of legislation. Some of our group lobbied for the passage of 806.

3. Our board and superintendent work great together on all school matters.

4. Board-superintendent relations should not be affected by this legislation.

5. We have a very cordial, trusting and open relationship with our superintendent.

Comments by Class C Control Group Superintendents

Five of 12, 41.7%, Class C Control Group superintendents responded. All respondents expressed positive comments and suggestions about creating and maintaining a positive board-superintendent relationship. Understanding roles, caring about students,

cordial behavior, high level of trust, and providing the best within the resources were comments about making a positive relationship.

1. Early training of our new board members led by the board leadership is imperative to clarifying what the roles of boards of education are. New board of education members must be like a jury and not carry any axes or hide skeletons in the closet. Single agenda members are a drain on the team. All new and some old members need to read and digest the Board Member Manual available from the Center for Board and Administrator Relations in Sioux City, Iowa.

2. To this point, I have enjoyed a good working relationship with our school board members. After nine years there is only one member left that hired me, but we have been very fortunate to have people that truly care about kids that have filled our school board vacancies.

3. We have an outstanding board-superintendent relationship, as well as outstanding member to member relationships. This board and superintendent have worked hard to present a united front on key issues - especially on a bond issue.

4. The only board-superintendent relationship that is a constant test at ... is in relationship to facilities and the need to remove two elementary schools from two small towns. This long-time debate within the district serves as a constant point of contention between board members. Other than that major issue, we maintain a very cordial and positive working relationship.

5. The key to the excellent relationship between the board and me has been because all parties understand their role, i.e., the board establishing policy and the superintendent administers those policies. A high level of trust exists which prevents disagreement. I have been blessed with excellent board members who subscribe to the theory of providing the best they can with the dollars they have.

Comments by Class C Control Group Board Presidents:

Four of 12, 33.4%, Class C Control Group board presidents responded. All respondents recognized the importance of a superintendent that is perceived as "good" in board members' eyes. Board president #3 noted that their superintendent plays a key role in reversing previous negative public opinion about the board and administration, in addition to being strong in school finance. Board president #1 provided insight into the difficulties faced when experience is replaced with new people who are interested in making changes after a period of perceived stagnation. The respondent noted how important it was to be able to rely on professional support organizations in difficult times. The respondent added

two qualities that contribute to a sound relationship: board members being perceived as level-headed and board members not expecting perfection from the superintendent.

1. We are a young board in experience with a superintendent who has only been here three years and we are his first job. Past boards, and the superintendent (18 years) and principals only kept a status quo - very few changes initiated. Since I was elected 5.5 years ago, the board has made tremendous progress and more so with the new superintendent. This of course has caused enormous strain on a staff with an average of 16 plus years of experience. That coupled with budgetary constraints, and 80 year-old building in poor repair, etc., has made for long meetings. The superintendent and board are very frank with each other, we do not play games. We use NASB often. I believe it has been a very successful relationship with all the complications handed to us. There are always patrons trying to micromanage and eat away at the confidence of the superintendent and board. We have circled the wagons and maintained our professionalism and made sure that the seven of us are all well informed. Three incumbents didn't run so 1/2 of the board will be new January 1. We are working very hard to get the 6 candidates up to speed, with workshops, mailed information and attending board meetings. We have had several crises in the last three years, all unavoidable and unpredictable. We have handled them well. It helps when the majority of the board is level headed and does not expect the superintendent to be perfect.

2. We are blessed with an excellent superintendent. Our differences are always openly discussed and a conclusion is reached that both sides can work with.

3. [The superintendent] does very thorough fact-finding and uses resources well, both to benefit the district and to answer questions and concerns. Two board members have served several terms and are quite knowledgeable and also objective. Board and superintendent both have best interests of district and students in mind, [with] no personal agendas. Superintendent is very knowledgeable about budget and finance, [which] has been very important to the last 2-3 years of decision-making process. Superintendent has worked extremely hard to overcome negative public opinion and perception of board and administration.

4. Our school has an excellent superintendent which makes each board member's job easier.

Comments by Class C Treatment Group Superintendents

Four of 12, 33.4%, Class C Treatment Group superintendents responded.

Superintendents added several comments that support their relationships: (a) board members understanding problems, (b) open, trusting relationship, (c) strong relationship before problems occurred, (d) board is open and accepting of administration's ideas, and (e) being willing to connect with the public to solve problems.

1. Board members understand the problems. We reduced staff by 2.0 through attrition and RIF. Sometimes politics enters in to what to cut. The combining of [elementary] grades did not fly because some board members think they know more than the "experts" who know that it can work. Unfortunately, our district, and I think many others, haven't been making the right business decisions from the start, which has led us into the problem of public distrust.

2. We have an open, trusting relationship. We have been fortunate in that alternative ways for temporarily overcoming the impacts of the aforementioned legislation have been found and implemented. If deep cuts were to have been required, we ... would have had to dig deeper into our philosophies of determining what is important. Because of the great relationship we have, I have no fears that we could have made those decisions. I probably trust him, and I believe he [trusts] me, as much as anyone I know.

3. [The] school board has been open and accepting of suggestions from the administration in dealing with the impact of changes in school funding.

4. We used a community task committee to study the situation and report to the board. The process was effective. But, some politics and bias were evident in the process.

Comments by Class C Treatment Group Board Presidents

Three of 12, 25%, Class C Treatment Group board presidents responded. Board presidents responded favorably to having good relationships, including a relationship with a superintendent who had recently moved to a superintendency in another district. Having a positive outlook, informing the community, and receiving appropriate information from the superintendent were elements of positive relationships.

1. We have a new superintendent starting [soon]. Our previous superintendent had been with us since 1968. We had and continue to have a good working relationship with both superintendents.

2. Our administrative team and board have always maintained a positive outlook. We have from the beginning told our community what we need to do, and that if we stick together we will make it and have a quality school in the end. We have worked together with one of our neighbors and next year will have a new high quality school that I believe both communities will be proud to say is "our school."

3. [The] superintendent has supplied the board with abundant information making the board's decisions easy.

Comments by Class D Control Group Superintendents

Six of 15, 40%, Class D Control Group superintendents responded.

Superintendents pointed out that when legislation caused financial strain, their board-superintendent relationship had to overcome the disagreements on how to handle problems, which may affect how other issues are handled. Agreeing to disagree and mutual trust were cited by respondent #1 as important to maintaining a good relationship.

1. My board has been very supportive. In rural districts hit hard by levy caps it is absolutely essential to have a strong, united working relationship. We have made a number of difficult decisions in the past 24 months - RIF's, staff reductions, budget cuts in supplies, equipment, etc. There is disagreement and spirited discussion at times, but we understand that we need to "agree to disagree" in order to arrive at consensus. My board places a great deal of trust in me, and I in them.

2. We have had an excellent relationship up to this point in time. As cutbacks continue to be a problem, the relationship could be strained.

3. We have some local problems that have not been solved - coaching assignments, etc.

4. Things are going great at ..., except for state aid and the 1.10. We built a new school 25 years ago when our neighbors would not consolidate with us and build a common high school when we both needed new buildings. Now they want us to close our high school and go to their high school.

5. [We have had] isolated cases of board member interference with personnel matters outside of proper school district chain-of-command. Board member frustration with small school treatment by legislation and rule setting has created a somewhat negative outlook by members that carries over to other issues.

6. [We] are fortunate to have one of the best school boards in the state.

Comments by Class D Control Group Board Presidents

Two of 11, 18.2%, Class D Control Group board presidents responded. Board president #1 showed the exuberance of being pleased with who has been hired to be the new superintendent. Board president #2 indicated that feeling well-informed, trust, honesty, and openness made their relationship work. Respondent #2 also highlighted the fact that the board valued the superintendent for having the courage to provide information even if it did not show the superintendent in the best light.

1. We have a new superintendent (just three weeks ago) so our time together is limited, but it has been great.

2. Our superintendent keeps us very well informed on all issues, whether they put him in a favorable light or not. Honesty and trustworthiness are the hallmark of our operations. Everyone is open and that in itself helps to preclude most conflicts.

Comments by Class D Treatment Group Superintendents

Four of 20, 20%, Class D Treatment Group superintendents responded.

Superintendents responded relative to LB 1114 and LB 806, noting one significant relationship issue. When board and superintendent have to make decisions that negatively affect staff members, the superintendent's relationship with the staff may suffer.

1. Legislators need to provide funding or close schools under 300 students. Can't plan for anything when ... state funding changes from one year to the next. The big change is the superintendent's relationship with staff (ex. RIF) and general public. They see you (superintendent) as the bad guy.

2. We are not as bad off as other districts. We say a large increase in state aid in 1996 that helped us through the impact. We are placed into the "sparse" cost group which helped.

3. I think our board feels we have enough cash in reserve to make any shortfall. We probably will, but only for one year.

4. [Legislative bills] 1114 and 806 have not decimated our district as some have been since our levy was 1.00. Plans for informational meetings as public forums are in the works. We have been to three meetings discussing mergers on what might happen and plans for a feasibility study are in the works.

Comments by Class D Treatment Group Board Presidents

One of 15, 6.7%, Class D Treatment Group board presidents responded. This superintendent made the point that LB 1114 and LB 806 may create such a negative circumstance that superintendents leave. A new relationship is created with the next superintendent that may be immediately subject to the strain of existing problems.

1. [Legislative bills] 1114 and 806 put enough pressure on superintendents to cause them to choose movement to different schools. This does cause an undue change in the relationship of board and a new superintendent. In some situations, positions that had to be combined to save cost. This is not always a good situation for the school district.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of board of education presidents and superintendents regarding the professional relationship between the board and its superintendent during local district planning and preparation for the management of their districts under legislatively imposed limitations, in LB 1114 and LB 806, for the 1998-99 school year. Two research questions were posed. First, is there a significant difference between the perceptions of board of education presidents and their respective superintendent about the professional relationship between the board of education and its superintendent in Nebraska Class II, III, and VI school districts relative to state aid and available property tax revenue as they prepared for the first year of implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806? Second, is there a significant difference in that relationship between district size groups, using Nebraska School Activities Association classification groups A and B combined, C, and D?

The "Review of Selected References" was focused upon superintendent roles and responsibilities, board of education roles and responsibilities, problems within board-superintendent relationships, and recommendations to improve board-superintendent relationships. Computer searches and existing bibliography lists were used to generate titles for possible inclusion. Consultants from the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provided assistance in the planning of and implementation of the statistical analysis of the data.

Three research designs were implemented for this study. The first, an independent measures ANOVA, was chosen to compare between positions (board and superintendent), groups (Control and Treatment), and classes (A/B, C, D). The first design was based upon an assumption that there were differences between superintendents and board presidents

from the same district, therefore, each position should be treated individually. A second design, a repeated measures/matched pairs ANOVA, was chosen based upon an assumption that a superintendent and board president from the same district had much in common because they represented the same district, same meetings, same agendas, same discussions, etc. This set of tests, in a mixed group factorial ANOVA, increased the power of significant differences should they exist, while still testing for any difference between superintendents and board presidents. Both designs resulted in no significant differences between subjects for all questions combined. The third design was chosen to discover whether or not differences existed for each question between the difference in perceptions of control group superintendents and board presidents and the difference in perceptions between treatment group superintendents and board presidents. The third design is reported in two tables for each question to show: (a) the mean and standard deviation for responses by superintendents and board presidents in each group, and (b) the F statistic and significant difference relative to within and between subjects comparisons.

Findings

No significant differences were found relative to any of the twelve items between the differences of control group superintendents and board presidents and treatment group superintendents and board presidents for all districts and relative to classification. The data and subsequent analysis support the first null hypothesis. No significant differences were found between the perceptions of board of education presidents and superintendents about the professional relationship between the board of education and its superintendent in Nebraska Class II, III, and VI districts relative to state aid and available property tax revenue as they prepared for the first year of implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806.

The data and subsequent analysis also supported the second null hypothesis. No significant differences were found in board-superintendent relationships between classes, using Nebraska School Activities Association classification groups A and B combined, C

and D, in spite of the fact that larger districts were generally reported as gaining state aid, while smaller districts were reported as losing state aid.

No tests for significant differences were conducted for the superintendent only items. The purpose of the superintendent only items was to demonstrate the sample population represented districts with varying characteristics relative to the legislation.

Authors cited in Chapter II wrote of problems within the board-superintendent relationship that were serious enough to cause severe tension and result in superintendents leaving, or being forced from, their positions. The authors indicated problems grew out of differing role expectations that parties were all too often unable to solve. The resulting conflict created a climate of disagreement and conflict between boards and superintendents.

Of particular note is the factor of defining ethical behavior and assigning unethical motives to the other party. Arnez (1981) Blumberg and Blumberg (1985), Bryant and Grady (1990, 1992a, 1992b), Freeman, Underwood, and Fortune (1991), Danzberger (1998), and Kowalski (1999), wrote about the difference between perceptions of superintendents and board members about their ethical expectations of the other party. When superintendents find fault with their boards, they are more likely to describe the board's action as unethical according to their perception of professional and educational standards. Conversely, boards view conflicts with their superintendents from a different perspective. Boards tend to ground their judgment in questions of the superintendent's character and behavior, particularly whether or not the superintendent is making decisions based upon personal gain. The question of ethical perspective alone can affect the board-superintendent relationship regarding every issue undertaken and may be of greater impact on the tenure of Nebraska superintendent's than currently realized. Shannon, executive director of NSBA and Houston, executive director of AASA promote the basic concept of working together through role difficulties. However, while Shannon (1997) wrote that boards expect superintendents to be of high moral and ethical character in their behavior,

Houston (1998a) issued a reminder to superintendents that the bottom line is boards expect the superintendent to follow their direction in a civil and respectful manner.

Whatever the reasons for difficulties in the board-superintendent relationship, superintendent tenure is decreasing. By some estimates, the average tenure is already below five years (Danzberger, 1998), shorter in urban districts and slightly longer as district size declines (Carter and Cunningham, 1997; Chapman, 1997). In Nebraska, the average tenure is under seven years and declining. The data from Nebraska superintendents and board presidents in this study indicates a healthy relationship between boards and their superintendents. At the same time, the data is an indicator that there are other factors beyond legislation affecting board-superintendent relationships and superintendent tenure. The fact that median tenure of Nebraska's 282 district superintendents is only four years, only slightly better than the national average of three, shows that Nebraska superintendents and boards must be watchful for problems within their relationships (Ossian, 1999).

Recommendations

Recommendations based upon the literature, data analysis, and subsequent conclusions are as follows.

1. Defining one's own ethical perspective and assigning an ethical judgment based upon a perspective of another's motives and behaviors must be viewed as a major consideration from the literature affecting the board-superintendent relationship. Professional practice must reflect that superintendents and board members understand this concept and understand the need to work with each other as they come from different perspectives. Training for superintendents and board members must include the concept of ethical behavior, its application, its implications, and how to resolve differences. Adding a course of study reflecting this need to Educational Specialist superintendent programs would insure that all new superintendents would begin to develop the knowledge base and skills to work through such issues. Professional associations for superintendents and board

members can offer sessions at conferences to do the same for those already in the superintendency and on local boards. Required training for board members, in states where it exists, can provide a consistent basis for teaching the knowledge base and skills that will be discretionary in other states.

2. The data and analysis showed that there was no significant difference between district size in relation to the perception of the impact of the legislation on board-superintendent relationships, nor were there any significant differences between board presidents and superintendents. There were isolated examples of deteriorating relationships pushed over the edge, early retirements taken, board members not running for re-election, and public outcry over board-superintendent decisions. The data did not support any conclusion that the legislation damaged board-superintendent relationships as districts tried to handle consequences of the legislation. In fact, respondents reported strong relationships based upon mutual respect, trust, courtesy, and communication regardless of district size.

The implication for professional practice is that boards and superintendents recognize and build toward the quality of relationship that becomes the foundation for whether or not the board and superintendent are able to work through difficult issues which might otherwise become fatal to the relationship. In-service opportunities must be made available for board members and superintendents to support relationship-building. The conclusion that district size was not significant in the study of board-superintendent relationships indicates that at least most learning opportunities can be of benefit in any district. The conclusion that board presidents and superintendents did not perceive the impact of the legislation on their relationship differently is an indicator that relationship-building learning opportunities can be of value to both parties.

Professional development for superintendents must include skills and issues regarding relationships with the board of education. Professional literature and coursework are important sources of this development, and should be enhanced by practical advice

from practicing superintendents, board members, and representatives of education organizations. The experiences of other practitioners is an integral part of that prior experience and can be shared in a problem-solving context, in informal exchanges, in development opportunities by educational organizations, and in formal course settings. Superintendents must, as Grady and Bryant (1991) wrote, learn to identify what may become a critical incident. Superintendents must learn and apply appropriate problem solving skills and relationship skills within the context of board as final authority, rather than reacting out of emotion.

Board of education members must be encouraged to take part in seminars and workshops that are organized by school board associations, administrator organizations, and education service agencies. The opportunity to meet and discuss issues with other board members is crucial to broadening the perspective of what proper roles and responsibilities are, as well as the critical nature of the board-superintendent relationship. Board members must also be able to meet with superintendents to discuss the issues of relationships and role delineation beyond their respective superintendent. Board members must become willing to advance their "board member education" at every opportunity so they can build a personal frame of reference that includes a governance team approach in a larger perspective. Their work does not diminish when a new superintendent is hired, rather, as Bird (1993) asserted, boards must be active in a transition process in ways that validate and educate the new superintendent. They must become willing to support themselves as a board and their superintendent as a team member toward the success of the district's mission to educate its students.

The promotion of an atmosphere of team-building must be a constant theme in all professional development activities. Sessions regarding the implementation of retreats, planning sessions, and social activities will help boards and superintendents understand each other's needs and how planned activities can strengthen their relationship. Board

organizations and superintendent organizations can provide the facilitation service so that professional guidance is available when requested to increase the possibility that such planned activities are successful.

3. Conferences and professional development opportunities made available by professional organizations and departments of education should take heed of the fact that there are a variety of issues that can impact the relationship. While building relationships can be presented as the cornerstone for working through the myriad of issues confronting boards and superintendents, opportunities must be made available regarding information, planning, implementation of plans, outcomes, and implications of the actual issues of the day. Those organizing conferences and professional development activities already attempt to ascertain what boards and superintendents are concerned about. Boards and superintendents can take action to improve the process. By taking the responsibility of having a discussion of professional development needs at a board retreat, planning meeting, or regular meeting and forwarding that information to the professional organizations, boards and superintendents can provide information that may fulfill their needs. This change in professional practice can make the learning opportunities more effective.

4. Given the decreasing tenure statistics, board organizations and superintendent organizations should provide learning opportunities for boards and superintendents to analyze their needs, wants, group and individual personalities, work styles, and relationship concerns. Superintendents gather information about the community, schools, people, and board before accepting a position just as board members do background checks and use search committees for superintendent candidates. An opportunity for self-analysis will help those already in their positions to better develop a working relationship. The beginning of a strong board-superintendent relationship occurs in the selection process, but must continue throughout the relationship.

5. A concerted effort must be made by boards and superintendents to develop their relationship on a regular basis and ask for assistance when appropriate. Professional practice can be improved by learning what the warning signs are and where assistance is available. Rather than be forced into the process of finding a new superintendent or searching for new candidates for the board, both parties should apply the fundamental attributes of respect, trust, courtesy, openness, problem-solving, consensus-building, perseverance, and public relations toward strengthening their relationship. Both parties must be willing to seek assistance when they believe threats to their relationship are beyond their abilities. The assistance may come through legal counsel, facilitators, retreats, learning opportunities, air-clearing during legitimate closed sessions, or meetings between individuals to gain better understanding. Such assistance may get the relationship through difficulty or at least identify the difficulties more clearly so better paths can be chosen.

6. Further qualitative research on the perspectives of issues that divide boards and superintendents can identify more clearly the human factor of what affects the relationship, both positively and negatively, and why. A study of the internal relationships within boards of education would contribute much to a board's understanding of itself, as well as to the relationship with the superintendent. The connection between the research, training, and practice can be improved with a conscious effort by board and superintendent organizations to find ways to create training opportunities that reflect research conclusions. While this connection has been common in professional development for teachers, the professional development for boards and superintendents appears more driven by external issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Classification and Assignment

<u>Class A/B</u> (36)	<u>Class C</u> (42)	<u>Class D</u> (64)	Class D (cont.)
Alliance	Bayard	Adams	Potter-Dix
Bellevue	Bertrand	Allen	Prague
Columbus	Bloomfiled	Amherst	SE Nebraska
Fremont	Blue Hill	Arcadia	Schickley
Grand Island	Bridgeport	Bancroft-Rosalie	Silver Creek
Hastings	Cambridge	Beemer	Sioux County
North Platte	Centura	Benedict	Spalding
Papillion-LaVista	Doniphan	Bradshaw	Stapleton
Ralston	Elkhorn Valley	Brady	Sterling
South Sioux City	Elm Creek	Bruning	Taylor
Adams Central	Emerson-Hubbard	Butte	Theford
Albion	Garden County	Cedar Bluffs	Twin Valley
Arlington	Gibbon	Cedar Rapids	Verdigre
Beatrice	Gordon	Chambers	Wallace
Bennington	Grant	Chappell	Walthill
Blair	Hemingford	Crawford	Wauneta-Palisade
Broken Bow	Henderson	Culbertson	Wausa
Central City	Homer	Curtis Med. Valley	Wheatland
Columbus Lakeview	Laurel-Concord	Davenport	Wilcox
Conestoga	Louisville	Dawson-Verdon	
Fairbury	Loup City	Diller	
Falls City	Morrill	Dodge	
Gothenburg	Nemaha Valley	Elba	
Gretna	Oakland-Craig	Friend	
Kimball	Osmond	Giltner	
Lexington	Plainview	Harvard	
Logan View	Poncas	Hayes Center	
Madison	Randolph	Hildreth	
Milford	Raymond Central	Humboldt	
Mitchell	Red Clf/Guide Rock	Kenesaw	
Norris	Republican Valley	Litchfield	
Platteview	Rock County	Lodgepole	
Schuyler	Rushville	Loomis	
Wahoo	St. Paul	Lynch	
Waverly	Stromsburg	Macy	
Wayne	Sutton	Maxwell	
	Syracuse	Maywood	
	Tecumseh	McCool Junction	
	Tekamah-Herman	Milligan	
	Wakefield	Monroe	
	Weeping Water	Nelson	
	Winside	Odell	
		Petersburg	
		Pleasanton	
		Polk-Hordville	

Appendix B

Cover Letter to Superintendents in Sample Districts

July 1, 1998

Dear Superintendent,

As you proceed through the summer portion of planning, budgeting, and projects, I would appreciate a few minutes of your time to help me with dissertation research that I hope adds to a very important topic for modern school leadership, the relationship between boards of education and their superintendents.

The research question is: Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of board of education presidents and their superintendents about the professional relationship between the board of education and its superintendent as they prepare for the first year of implementation of LB 1114 and LB 806? The population is all Class II, III, and VI school districts in Nebraska, from which a sample size of 50% will be used.

Enclosed are two surveys. The survey instruments are labeled for board of education president and superintendent to complete separately and return separately in the addressed, stamped envelopes provided to insure confidentiality. The surveys are color coded and identification coded so that a district's superintendent and board president responses can be kept together and placed into NSAA classifications. Please give the board president's questionnaire, including a copy of this cover letter, to your board president prior to your regular July board of education meeting. At your July board meeting, please encourage your board president to complete and return the questionnaire. A non-participation check-off is included on the survey should anyone choose not to complete the instrument. July 21, 1998, is the final postmark date for returning responses. This will allow for board meetings called on the third Monday of the month.

You, and your board president, are free to decide whether or not to participate in this study with no adverse affect upon any current or future relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska. While participation in this study is voluntary, your help to provide responses from your district is appreciated. The questionnaire will take approximately fifteen minutes of your time. All responses will be stored by myself at my home and will be destroyed upon completion and acceptance of the dissertation. Return of the questionnaire implies consent to use the data in an aggregate form.

I appreciate allowing me to "invade" your time to gather this information on a continuing critical issue in school district leadership for local districts and their professional associations, as well as for the educational preparation of aspiring superintendents. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. I am available to answer questions about the study at my home (402) 447-9902, my office (402) 447-2721, or at the following e-mail address: jhabben@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Sincerely,

Jon Habben, Primary Investigator
P.O. Box 452
Newman Grove, NE 68758

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1018

Appendix C

Questionnaires Sent to Superintendents and Board of Education Presidents in Sample Districts

General Information: Superintendents, please respond to the following eight questions regarding your district.

This page is in addition to the questionnaire for superintendents, but not included in the questionnaire for board members. Please be sure to include this page when you mail your questionnaire response. Thank you.

Please circle the response that describes your district.

1. Total of 1997-1998 Property Tax Levies that are subject to the LB 1114 maximum caps, excluding Bond Fund levies: (circle the letter)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| a. Below \$0.90 | d. \$1.31 to \$1.50 |
| b. \$ 0.90 to \$1.10 | e. \$1.51 to \$1.70 |
| c. \$1.11 to \$1.30 | f. \$1.71 and above |

2. How much did the total state aid to your district change under the December 1, 1997 LB 806 certified amounts for 1998-1999 over the 1997-98 LB 1050 certified amount? (circle the letter)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. increased by 20% or more | d. decreased by 9% or less |
| b. increased by 10% through 19% | e. decreased by 10% through 19% |
| c. increased by 9% or less | f. decreased by 20% or more |

3. What was your school district's net gain or loss calculated as follows: 1998-99 total of property tax revenue, motor vehicle revenue, and total state aid minus 1997-98 total of property tax revenue, motor vehicle revenue, and total state aid ? (circle the letter)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. increased by 20% or more | d. decreased by 9% or less |
| b. increased by 10% through 19% | e. decreased by 10% through 19% |
| c. increased by 9% or less | f. decreased by 20% or more |

4. Is your Board of Education planning to hold, or has your board already held, an election for the district to exceed the levy caps prior to 1998-1999? (circle) YES NO

If already held, did the override pass? YES NO Vote: For: ____ Against: ____

If the override passed, what levy amount and years are specified? _____ / _____

5. Is your Board of Education planning to discuss, or has your board held discussions, regarding any type of reorganization with other district(s)? (circle) YES NO

If YES, has a formal request for a feasibility study been made? YES NO

6. Is your Board of Education planning reductions, or has your board already implemented reductions, in reaction to LB 1114 and LB 806? (circle) YES NO

7. Is your Board of Education planning to involve patrons directly, or has your board already involved patrons directly, in the planning process as a result of LB 1114 and LB 806? (circle) YES NO

**Board President Perceptions about the Board of Education
and Superintendent Relationship:**

The following items are designed to ascertain your perceptions about the professional relationship between your board of education and your superintendent in your district. Answer as if prefacing each with "overall, our ..."

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, all sources will be kept confidential and all questionnaires will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, please check here: NO ____ , and return in the enclosed envelope.

Circle your response using the following scale:

SA - strongly agree, A - agree, N - neutral, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Our board-superintendent relationship has been respectful. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. Our board-superintendent relationship has been trusting. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Our board-superintendent relationship has been courteous. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. Our board-superintendent relationship has fostered open discussion. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. Our board-superintendent relationship has been damaged by disagreement within the relationship. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Our board-superintendent relationship has withstood the impact of difficult times. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Our board-superintendent relationship has been a positive part of our public relations. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. Our board-superintendent relationship has been unified in regard to political involvement. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. Our board-superintendent relationship has provided a positive forum for receiving information. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Our board-superintendent relationship has helped to reach consensus on issues | SA A N D SD |
| 11. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members and the superintendent. (skip if no disagreements) | SA A N D SD |
| 12. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members. (skip if no disagreements). | SA A N D SD |

13. If you choose, please provide any clarifying and/or additional information from your perception as to your board-superintendent relationship in your district below.

Thank you for allowing me to “invade” your time to gather this information on a continuing critical issue in school district leadership for local districts and their professional associations, as well as for the educational preparation of aspiring superintendents.

I appreciate your efforts to complete the questionnaire and have it mailed by July 21, 1998 in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. I am available to answer questions about the study at my home (402) 447-9902, my office (402) 447-2721, or at the following e-mail address: jhabben@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Sincerely,

Jon Habben, Primary Investigator
P.O. Box 452
Newman Grove, NE 68758

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1018

**Superintendent Perceptions about the Board of Education
and Superintendent Relationship**

The following items are designed to ascertain your perceptions about the professional relationship between your board of education and yourself in your district. Answer as if prefacing each with "overall, our ..."

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, all sources will be kept confidential and questionnaires will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, please check here: NO _____, and return in the enclosed envelope.

Circle your response using the following scale:

SA - strongly agree, A - agree, N - neutral, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Our board-superintendent relationship has been respectful. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. Our board-superintendent relationship has been trusting. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Our board-superintendent relationship has been courteous. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. Our board-superintendent relationship has fostered open discussion. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. Our board-superintendent relationship has been damaged by disagreement within the relationship. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Our board-superintendent relationship has withstood the impact of difficult times. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Our board-superintendent relationship has been a positive part of our public relations. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. Our board-superintendent relationship has been unified in regard to political involvement. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. Our board-superintendent relationship has provided a positive forum for receiving information. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Our board-superintendent relationship has helped to reach consensus on issues | SA A N D SD |
| 11. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members and the superintendent. (skip if no disagreements) | SA A N D SD |
| 12. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members. (skip if no disagreements). | SA A N D SD |

13. If you choose, please provide any clarifying and/or additional information from your perception as to your board-superintendent relationship in your district below.

Thank you for allowing me to “invade” your time to gather this information on a continuing critical issue in school district leadership for local districts and their professional associations, as well as for the educational preparation of aspiring superintendents.

I appreciate your efforts to complete the questionnaire and have it mailed by July 21, 1998 in the enclosed envelope. Please be sure to include the General Information page with your questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. I am available to answer questions about the study at my home (402) 447-9902, my office (402) 447-2721, or at the following e-mail address:
jhabben@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Sincerely,

Jon Habben, Primary Investigator
P.O. Box 452
Newman Grove, NE 68758

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1018

**Board President Perceptions about
the Board of Education and Superintendent Relationship**

The following items are designed to ascertain your perceptions about the professional relationship between your board of education and your superintendent during district planning and preparation in reaction to the net impact of LB 1114 and LB 806 in 1998-1999.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, all sources will be kept confidential and questionnaires will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, please check here: NO ____, and return in the enclosed envelope.

Circle your response using the following scale:

SA - strongly agree, A - agree, N - neutral, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Our board-superintendent relationship has been respectful regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. Our board-superintendent relationship has been trusting regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Our board-superintendent relationship has been courteous regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. Our board-superintendent relationship has fostered open discussion regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. Our board-superintendent relationship has been damaged by disagreement within the relationship regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Our board-superintendent relationship has withstood the impact of LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Our board-superintendent relationship has been a positive part of our public relations regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. Our board-superintendent relationship has been unified in regard to lobbying about LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. Our board-superintendent relationship has provided a positive forum for receiving information regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Our board-superintendent relationship has helped to reach consensus regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |

11. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members and the superintendent. (skip if no disagreement) SA A N D SD
12. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members. (skip if no disagreement) SA A N D SD
13. If you choose, please provide any clarifying and/or additional information from your perception as to your board-superintendent relationship in your district below.

Thank you for allowing me to “invade” your time to gather this information on a continuing critical issue in school district leadership for local districts and their professional associations, as well as for the educational preparation of aspiring superintendents.

I appreciate your efforts to complete the questionnaire and have it mailed by July 21, 1998 in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. I am available to answer questions about the study at my home (402) 447-9902, my office (402) 447-2721, or at the following e-mail address:
 jhabben@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Sincerely,

Jon Habben, Principal Investigator
 P.O. Box 452
 Newman Grove, NE 68758

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1018

**Superintendent Perceptions about the Board of Education
and Superintendent Relationship**

The following items are designed to ascertain your perceptions about the professional relationship between your board of education and yourself during district planning and preparation in reaction to the net impact of LB 1114 and LB 806 in 1998-1999.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, all sources will be kept confidential and questionnaires will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

If you do not wish to complete the questionnaire, please check here: NO _____, and return in the enclosed envelope.

Circle your response using the following scale:

SA - strongly agree, A - agree, N - neutral, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Our board-superintendent relationship has been respectful regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 2. Our board-superintendent relationship has been trusting regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 3. Our board-superintendent relationship has been courteous regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 4. Our board-superintendent relationship has fostered open discussion regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 5. Our board-superintendent relationship has been damaged by disagreement within the relationship regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 6. Our board-superintendent relationship has withstood the impact of LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 7. Our board-superintendent relationship has been a positive part of our public relations regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 8. Our board-superintendent relationship has been unified in regard to lobbying about LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 9. Our board-superintendent relationship has provided a positive forum for receiving information regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |
| 10. Our board-superintendent relationship has helped to reach consensus regarding LB 1114 and LB 806. | SA A N D SD |

11. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members and the superintendent. (skip if no disagreement) SA A N D SD

12. Our board-superintendent relationship has successfully worked through disagreement between board members. (skip if no disagreement) SA A N D SD

13. If you choose, please provide any clarifying and/or additional information from your perception as to your board-superintendent relationship in your district below.

Thank you for allowing me to “invade” your time to gather this information on a continuing critical issue in school district leadership for local districts and their professional associations, as well as for the educational preparation of aspiring superintendents.

I appreciate your efforts to complete the questionnaire and have it mailed by July 21, 1998 in the enclosed envelope. Please include the General Information page with your questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please call the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965. I am available to answer questions about the study at my home (402) 447-9902, my office (402) 447-2721, or at the following e-mail address: jhabben@pluggers.esu8.k12.ne.us

Sincerely,

Jon Habben, Principal Investigator
P.O. Box 452
Newman Grove, NE 68758

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1018

Appendix D

Follow-up to Survey Questionnaire

TO: District Superintendent

FAX _____FROM: Jon Habben, Superintendent, Newman Grove Public Schools
FAX (402) 447-2445

RE: FAX Follow-up to Survey Questionnaire

DATE: August 10, 1998

Prior to the July board of education meetings across the state, you received survey questionnaires from me. The questionnaire is a data collection instrument for my doctoral dissertation research in educational administration at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. I have attached the original cover letter for clarification.

My code records show that I have not yet received responses from you, your board president, or both. If you have responded in the meantime, I greatly appreciate your help. The quality of my data is only as strong as the percentage return rate allows it to be. Your input is very important to this level of quality.

I would appreciate your help in assuring responses from your district. If you are able to complete the questionnaire, please help me by doing so and postmarking by Monday, August 17. Your confidentiality will be strictly protected.

Survey questionnaire not received from:

Superintendent _____

Board President _____

If you and/or your board president choose not to complete the questionnaire, for any reason, please mark "NO RESPONSE" and return the questionnaire anyway. If you cannot find your questionnaire and were planning to mark "NO RESPONSE" please return this FAX as soon as possible with "NO RESPONSE" checked at the bottom. Your confidentiality will be strictly protected.

NO RESPONSE:

Superintendent _____

Board President _____

Please accept my sincerest appreciation for your help.

Appendix E

Rates of Return

Rates of Return: Total in Position

Superintendents - 102 of 142 (71.83%)

Board Presidents - 83 of 142 (58.45%)

Districts where both superintendent and board president responded - 79 of 142 (55.63%)

Rates of Return: Total in Position by Class

Class/Group	Sample	Superintendents	Board Presidents	Both, Same District
A/B	36	32 (88.88%)	26 (72.22%)	26 (72.22%)
C	42	28 (66.66%)	27 (64.29%)	26 (61.90%)
D	64	42 (65.63%)	30 (46.88%)	28 (43.75%)

Rates of Return: Control Group Superintendents and Board Presidents by Class

Class/Group	Sample	Superintendents	Board Presidents	Both, Same District
A/B	18	16 (88.88%)	15 (83.33%)	15 (83.33%)
C	21	13 (61.90%)	13 (61.90%)	13 (61.90%)
D	32	18 (56.25%)	14 (43.75%)	13 (40.63%)
Total	71	47 (66.20%)	42 (59.15%)	41 (57.75%)

Rates of Return: Treatment Group Superintendents and Board Presidents by Class

Class/Group	Sample	Superintendents	Board Presidents	Both, Same District
A/B	18	16 (88.88%)	11 (61.11%)	11 (61.11%)
C	21	15 (71.43%)	14 (66.66%)	12 (57.14%)
D	32	24 (75.00%)	16 (50.00%)	15 (46.88%)
Total	71	55 (77.46%)	41 (57.75%)	38 (53.52%)

Appendix F

Joint National School Boards Association/American Association of School Administrators

Statement on Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards (1994):

To make clear that the board's primary role is the establishment of policy in furtherance of its function of governance as the epitome of the American institution of representative governance of public elementary and secondary education in our free democracy.

To work with the superintendent and the community to develop a vision for the schools.

To establish a structure and create an environment that will help the school system achieve its vision.

To develop academic standards based on high expectations and an assessment system to measure academic performance toward the achievement of such standards, so that the school board can be accountable to the people of the community.

To formulate strategies to help students who are not performing up to standards to attain their maximum potentials.

To engage in advocacy on behalf of students and their schools and promote the benefits of a public education system in the community.

To support the superintendent in all decisions that conform to board policy, other decisions made by the board, or recognized professional standards.

To hold the superintendent responsible and accountable for the administration of the schools through regular, constructive, written and oral evaluations of an ongoing effort and should be linked to goals established by the board with the advice and counsel of the superintendent.

To provide the superintendent with a comprehensive employment contract.

To provide fair and adequate compensation that will attract and retain excellent people in all circumstances.

To give the superintendent the benefit of individual board members' expertise, familiarity with the local school system, and community interests.

To hold all board meetings with the superintendent or a designee present.

To consult with the superintendent on all matters, as they arise, that concern the school system, and on which the board may take action.

To develop a plan for board-superintendent communications.

To channel communications with school employees through the superintendent, especially if any action is suggested, and to refer all applications, complaints, and other communications, oral or written, first to the superintendent. Doing so ensures that such communications can be processed in a coordinated fashion that is responsive to students and patrons.

To take action on matters only after hearing the recommendation of the superintendent.

To include in board policies a specific policy on the effective management of complaints against district personnel.

To provide the superintendent with administrative assistance, especially in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.

To exercise continued oversight of all education programs.

To work closely, where appropriate, with other governmental agencies and bodies.

To collaborate with other school boards through state and national school boards associations, to let state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials know of local concerns and issues.

To mandate and provide resources for high-quality board and professional development programs using qualified trainers that will enable school leaders to have the knowledge and skills needed to provide excellent policy leadership for the school system. In some cases, boards and superintendents should engage in joint training.

To provide for self-evaluation of the board's own effectiveness in meeting its stated goals and performing its role in public school governance.

To establish a periodic review of all school board policies for current relevance and necessity to ensure student's needs are being appropriately served.

To work to ensure that the district has the necessary funds, and that a balance is maintained between needs and resources in the distribution of available monies.

To delegate to the superintendent responsibilities for all administrative functions, except those specifically reserved to the board's presiding officer through board policy. Those reserved areas include establishing a regular time for the superintendent and the leader of the school board to meet for discussion of school board policy matters and joint preparation of each meeting agenda, conducting board meetings and public hearings, approving the agenda and minutes of board meetings, and engaging in other activities related to serving as the presiding officer of the board.

To ensure board members understand, under law, the school board acts as a board and that individual board members have no independent authority (NSBA/AASA, 1994, pp. 20-21).

Appendix G

Joint National School Boards Association/American Association of School Administrators

Statement on Roles and Responsibilities of Superintendents (1994):

To serve as the school board's chief executive officer and preeminent educational adviser in all efforts of the board to fulfill its school system governance role.

To serve as the primary educational leader for the school system and chief administrative officer of the entire school district professional and support staff, including staff members assigned to provide support service to the board.

To serve as a catalyst for the school system's administrative leadership team in proposing and implementing policy changes.

To propose and institute a process for long-range and strategic planning that will engage the school district for success in ensuing years.

To keep all board members informed about school operations and programs.

To interpret the needs of the school system to the board.

To present policy options along with specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt new policies or review existing policies.

To develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy.

To develop a sound program of school/community relations in concert with the board.

To oversee management of the district's day-to-day operations.

To develop a description for the board of what constitutes effective leadership and management of public schools, taking into account that effective leadership and management are the result of effective governance and effective administration combined.

To develop and carry out a plan for keeping the total professional and support staff informed about the mission, goals, and strategies of the school system and about the important roles all staff members play in realizing them.

To ensure that professional development opportunities are available to all school system employees.

To collaborate with other administrators through national and state professional associations to inform state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials of local concerns and issues.

To ensure that the school system provides equal opportunity for all students.

To evaluate personnel performance in harmony with district policy and keep the board informed about such evaluations.

To provide all board members with complete background information and a recommendation for school board action on each agenda item well in advance of each board meeting.

**To develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.
(NSBA/AASA, June, 1994, pp. 20-21)**

Appendix H



University of
Nebraska
Lincoln

Research Compliance Services
Institutional Review Board
103 Whitmer Bldg.
2255 'W' Street
P.O. Box 830849
Lincoln, NE 68583-0849
(402) 472-6965
FAX (402) 472-9323

June 12, 1998

Mr. Jon Habben
P.O. Box 452
Newman Grove NE 68758

Dear Mr. Habben:

IRB # 98-06-395 EX

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: **A Study of the Impact of LB1114 and LB806 Upon the Relationship
Between Boards of Education and Their Respective Superintendents**

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. This project has been approved by the Unit Review Committee from your college and sent to the IRB. It is the committee's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the subjects in this study. Your proposal seems to be in compliance with DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as exempt.

1. Enclosed is the IRB approved Informed Consent form for this project. Please use this form when making copies to distribute to your participants. If it is necessary to create a new informed consent form, please send us your original so that we may approve and stamp it before it is distributed to participants.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Reid" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Reid, Chair
for the IRB committee

xc: Dr. Donald Helmuth
Faculty Adviser
Unit Review Committee