

1978

## A Survey of the Selection Procedures and Practices Used in the Employment of Superintendents in Iowa Public Schools

Joseph Hrecz

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A SURVEY OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES  
USED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS  
IN IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis Abstract  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by  
Joseph Hrecz  
July 1978

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the selection practices used in the employment of public school superintendents in the State of Iowa. The study was centered on how closely and how extensively Iowa public school boards followed recommended selection procedures.

The method used was a survey instrument mailed to the president of the board of directors of the sixty-five Iowa public schools in which a vacancy for the superintendency occurred during 1977. Forty-five replies were received for a response of 69.2 percent. Data was tabulated according to school enrollment and for all schools.

The prominent findings were (1) 80% of the vacancies were in the smaller schools, (2) less than half of the recommended procedures were used by a majority of the schools, (3) the majority of the larger schools used more procedures than the majority of the smaller schools, (4) the number of schools using each of twenty-four procedures, (5) the majority of the schools obtained assistance from outside the school district from organizations or consultants, the smaller schools much less than the larger schools, (6) there were five procedures with a percent of use difference greater than twenty percent between the larger and smaller schools, (7) larger schools received more applicants and selected more candidates for interviews than smaller schools, (8) 90.5% of the boards reached a unanimous vote for the candidate to whom the job was offered, (9) involvement of people

other than board members in the selection process was very limited, (10) when other people were involved, a large majority were school-related persons and primarily from management, (11) over half of the involvement was the analysis of community and school needs and in interviewing candidates, and (12) those involved were used almost exclusively in an advisory capacity, the voting capacity being granted infrequently and never on final appointment decision.

The major conclusions were:

1. Iowa school boards do not follow recommended procedures in the selection of superintendents closely or extensively.
2. Iowa school boards involve other people in the selection process to a very limited extent.
3. Iowa school boards involve other people in the selection process in an advisory capacity almost exclusively and give the voting capacity infrequently and never in the final appointment decision.
4. Larger schools follow the recommended procedures in the selection process more closely and extensively than smaller schools.
5. Larger schools involve people other than board members in the selection process to a greater degree, but involved school-related people or management less than smaller schools.

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**This Study by:** Joseph Hrecz

**Entitled:** A SURVEY OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES USED  
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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the Degree of  
Specialist in Education

Donald L. Hanson

6-22-78  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Thesis Committee

R. P. Brimm

6/22/78  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member, Thesis Committee

Leland A. Thomson

6/22/78  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member, Thesis Committee

Upon recommendation of the Thesis Committee, accepted by

H. Ray Hoops

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

7-10-78

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people. The author would like to express his appreciation for this assistance. The foremost expression of appreciation is to Dr. Donald L. Hanson, Head, Department of School Administration and Personnel Services, University of Northern Iowa, who helped in the planning of the study and gave advice during the investigation.

A special thanks to Marlene Shea whose work in mailing the survey instruments and typing the study was invaluable.

The board presidents who took time to complete the survey instrument deserve a special thanks.

A very special thanks to the author's wife Rita who tolerated days of absence by the author during the compiling of literature and data, but gave encouragement all along the way.

Finally, thanks is given to those persons who served on the thesis committee for their assistance, patience, and understanding.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The selection of the chief school executive, the superintendent, is one of the most crucial decisions the public school district board of directors may be called upon to make. Not only are they charged by law with this responsibility; but also they are obligated morally to their constituents to assure this function be performed with utmost sincerity and diligence.

The one personal relationship most vital to the health of a school system is the one between the superintendent and the board of directors. If the selection of the superintendent is done carefully and well, the superintendent and board of directors can look forward to years of harmonious and productive teamwork, and all parties, including the school, will be the beneficiaries (Miller, 1971). "In spite of its sincerity, the search (for a chief administrator) is often a blundering pilgrimage fraught with uncertainties that make the odds against a promising relationship" (Spears, 1968: 64).

What were the procedures used and the relationship developed in the case reported in the Des Moines Register on July 12, 1977? Here the newly appointed superintendent served eleven days before his resignation was presented and accepted. He cited harassment from community members and felt that the situation was one to which he would not involve his family and their future happiness (Healey, 1977).

Healey quotes from the resignation,

"A group exists in your school district which may go to whatever means necessary to achieve their goals.... In my opinion, these are not normal incidents in a school district and there is no reason for me to assume that these people are going to react normally just because of a change in one person.... I also feel that some people in your district will attempt to 'assassinate' the professional character of any administrator who is in conflict with them."

There are other indications that often boards and superintendents enter into their professional relationships without mutual understanding of their particular situation or, once embarked upon their respective duties, cannot sustain the relationships developed during the selection process. During 1977, there were sixty-five changes of superintendents in Iowa's 449 public school districts (See Appendix B). There has been a marked increase in the percentage of superintendency turnovers during the past several years.

Although many of the state board associations and state superintendent associations, as well as their national organizations, have published suggested guidelines to be used in the search and selection process for a new superintendent, it appears that the procedures used vary from prefatory and cursory examination of each other's needs and abilities to extremely complex and structured investigations and procedures. The Iowa Association of School Boards has been called upon to assist or provide materials on the selection process only twice in the last two years, once in 1976 and once in 1977 (Davidson, 1977).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to determine the selection practices currently used in the employment of public school superintendents in the State of Iowa. The study focused on several aspects of the search and selection process as recommended by authorities and leaders in educational administration. The study was centered on the questions: (a) How closely are the recommended selection procedures followed by Iowa boards of directors? and (b) How extensive are the selection procedures used by Iowa boards of directors?

## ASSUMPTIONS

Some assumptions were made regarding the instrument used for the study, the decisions of the respondents, and the sample used. Each was necessary in constructing the foundation for the study.

First, the instrument used for the study was assumed to be the best possible means of gathering the necessary information. The items used in the instrument were based on search and selection procedures recommended by authorities and leaders in educational administration, and it was assumed that these procedures are the ideal means to accomplish the search and selection process.

Second, the decisions made by the respondents were assumed to reflect objective appraisal of their board's activities in the search and selection process, and these decisions were assumed to be reliable.

Last, the sample used was assumed to reflect the search and selection procedures used not only by those boards of directors who were engaged in the selection process during 1977, but also to those boards of directors not engaged in the selection process during 1977.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited by the time available for soliciting the information and analyzing the results. It was also limited to the study of those public school districts that hired new superintendents or had a vacancy for the superintendency during 1977 in the State of Iowa.

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The meanings and connotations of several words and terms used in this study are not standardized. For convenience they are defined here.

##### Board of Directors

A board of directors is the governing body of a school district, members of which have been duly elected or appointed under law to serve in that capacity.

##### School District

A school district is a political sub-division of the state consisting of a legally defined geographic area, the board of directors of which govern an operable school system providing educational program from kindergarten through twelve grades.



## Superintendent

A superintendent is the chief executive officer of a school district who, by law, is hired by the board of directors and serves as the executive officer of the board of directors.

## Selection Process

The selection process includes all activities, procedures, and practices conducted by authority of the board of directors either by the board or its representatives in the search for and appointment of a superintendent.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study yielded information about the current practices used in the employment of superintendents in Iowa public schools that will be useful to school boards, prospective candidates for superintendencies, and the students and instructors of educational administration.

School boards will be able to compare their existing or past practices in the selection process to current practices in Iowa.

Perspective candidates for superintendencies will be able to use information gained from the study about the current employment practices in Iowa in their preparation for seeking positions.

Students and instructors of educational administration will have available current data on the selection process.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

There is much literature advising boards with guidelines, procedures, and hints to be used in the selection of a chief school administrator. This study incorporated many of these suggestions into a composite model for the selection process. Using this model, a measure of the current practices in Iowa was made.

A search of the related professional material suggested five basic steps in the selection process: preparing for the search; searching for suitable candidates; screening applicants; interviewing candidates; and selecting and appointing the new superintendent.

#### LITERATURE PERTINENT TO PREPARING FOR THE SEARCH

The initial work to be done by the board when the superintendency becomes open involves decisions concerning (1) the obtaining of professional advice, (2) the involvement of community and staff, (3) the desired qualifications of the candidates, (4) the preparation of the job description, (5) the preparation of the position announcement brochure, (6) the preparation of the application, and (7) the establishment of procedures to be followed.

#### Obtaining Professional Advice

Several authorities recommend obtaining professional advice from outside of the district in selecting a new superintendent. The

degree of assistance may vary, but as Kaufman states, "professional counsel may be helpful in those cases where the lack of experience and confidence (or time) warrant such assistance" (Kaufman, 1974: 25).

The California School Boards Association (Lewis, 1976) plan suggests contacting representatives of the state school boards organization, the state organization of superintendents, or the intermediate unit chief (in Iowa, the area education agency administrator).

Campbell (1971: 8) delineates the type of systematic help that could be provided by consultants from universities or consulting firms. They may:

- (1) make some assessment of the nature of the community and its school and what these factors suggest for the new man, (2) help the board and sometimes teachers and lay citizens in the development of criteria to be used in the selection process, (3) seek suitable candidates from major universities and other sources, and (4) screen candidates in terms of the criteria and provide the board with a limited number of well qualified nominees.

Kaufman (1974: 25) warns of two disadvantages of outside counsel in that "they may not really understand the ambience or needs of the institution and thus offend important elements among the constituencies. Also, they can be expensive."

If the board is uncertain whether to hire consultants, Johnson (1975: 27) advises inviting a prospective consultant or two to visit the district for an interview. Through the consultant's explanation of his view of the role of a consultant, the board will learn what they will need to do if they do the process themselves.

If the consultant is used, the board is cautioned to retain control and full authority to make the selection and should clearly

define the limits of the consultant's role (Kaufman, 1974: 25).

#### Involvement of Community and Staff

There is a trend towards more involvement of persons affected by a decision in the decision making process. State and federal programs mandate advisory groups and many local boards and administrators seek out others to provide input in making decisions.

The selection process for a new superintendent offers "a perfect opportunity for a foresighted school board to draw its entire community into the undertaking," according to Johnson. He suggests using a consultant to meet with teachers, administrators, and representative groups of high school students in establishing selection criteria. The consultant may also participate in a public session conducted by the board for parents and other residents. "The idea is to outline to your public the dimensions of the search for a new superintendent, to define the consultant's role and why you need consultant advise - and also to make it clear that the board alone will make the final choice." (Johnson, 1971: 35) He further suggests that representatives of community organizations meet with the two or three final candidates. These representatives then would present their reactions, not their vote, to the board.

Eisenberger (1975) notes that a growing number of school boards and superintendents are answering yes to the question, "Should citizens be allowed - even encouraged - to interview candidates and recommend finalists to the school board?" He gives two examples of this degree of involvement. In a large city in the South East, finalists were interviewed on local television and responded to

questions telephoned in by community members. In another city, finalists were interviewed at three separate community meetings: a meeting with teachers; a meeting with student leaders; and a meeting with representatives of PTA, civic organizations and service clubs.

The danger of this degree of involvement is that some qualified superintendent will not submit their names as candidates if candidate confidentiality is not respected (Eisenberger, 1975: 33).

Eisenberger states, "clearly, the most important function of the process of selecting a superintendent is matchmaking. The superintendent must be matched with the board and community. When good matches are not made, everybody loses..." He further supports this degree of involvement by quoting John Bennett, executive director of New York State's Council of Chief School Administrators:

If the process is carefully designed, it offers the superintendent protection from being evaluated on goals he never knew of or agreed to, while it provides the school board with evaluation criteria that are educationally sound and professionally meaningful.

Care must be taken in the formulation of rules for this degree of involvement and the public must be advised of them. The two segments that the public interview is usually divided into are (1) the candidate responding to board questions and they to his, and (2) the board chairman accepting questions from the floor and directing them to the candidate. Each segment has a pre-arranged cut-off time (Eisenberger, 1975: 64).

Erickson and Shinn commented on their experience as two consultants who worked with what they at first considered a screening committee overloaded with citizens. They warned the board about the problems with over-involvement, but the board insisted on a committee

of 14 members consisting of 11 citizens, one school secretary, one teacher representative, and one school administrator. The process took more time because of the need to train the group in proper screening procedures, but the consultants concluded that the community was satisfied and liked this procedure (Erickson, 1975).

Monahan (1973) makes two additional points concerning involvement. He suggests that the board may want to involve members of the community in evaluating prospective candidates before it makes a final selection, but he warns, "this can be touchy business" in that the special interest groups not represented may be resentful. Secondly, he recommends that the departing superintendent not play an active part in screening and evaluating his successor. The outgoing superintendent may be a valuable technical advisor and facilitator, but beyond that it is best that he remain as neutral and unobtrusive as possible.

Although referring to the generally accepted practice in business that every chief executive officer select and prepare his own successor, Levinson (1974) contends that this often creates more problems than it solves. The four reasons he gives for why a chief executive may help select a successor who will fail are (1) the hindsighted incumbent may be oblivious to changing conditions that dictate a different role for the new leader, (2) the incumbent may be unaware of the qualities that made him a success and that may therefore be necessary in the man who replaces him, (3) the incumbent may have unconscious feelings of rivalry towards anyone able to fill his shoes, and (4) the incumbent's obligation to tradition can so

circumscribe the selection process that innovators and outsiders are not considered.

#### Desired Qualifications of Candidate

Determining the desired qualifications and characteristics of the prospective candidates is a most important part of preparing for the search. The work that the board does during this phase of preparation affects all of the subsequent selection activities and even carries over once the new person is hired. It involves (1) delineation of the respective roles of the board and the superintendent and their relationship, (2) an analysis of the community, (3) an analysis of the school district and school system, and (4) the establishment of written qualifications for candidates.

Roles of the board and superintendent. Wennerberg (1967) suggests that a clear delineation of the roles of the board and the superintendent be made at this time. A review of the written board policies with special attention to the working relationships with the superintendent, staff, unions, and community should be done. If there is disagreement among the board members, a frank talk with an outside consultant may be called for. The final outcome should be a clear understanding among the board members as to what they want in a superintendent.

Wennerberg assigns seven distinct roles to the superintendent that should be considered by the board:

1. The superintendent serves as the executive officer of the board. In this role he advises the board, prepares agendas, and implements policy.

2. The superintendent serves as the educational leader of the school system. In this role he is responsible for the system's educational program, he includes staff in planning and evaluation, and provides for broad, direct contacts with the community to insure its representation in the public schools.

3. The superintendent maintains public relations and community contacts. In this role he establishes good lines of communication in the community, develops a working relationship with news media, ascertains the thinking of the community and its wishes and relays this to the board, and knows and works with community leaders.

4. The superintendent is responsible for personnel practices and staff organization. In this role he screens applicants and makes recommendations to the board, provides for the professional growth of both certificated and non-certificated staff, provides for sound evaluation practices, works with employee organizations, and establishes grievance procedures for staff members.

5. The superintendent is responsible for his own time for planning and professional growth. In this role he must reach agreement with the board on the need for personal professional growth, personal evaluation, free time to plan and visit other districts, membership in professional organizations, and considerations for personal development in order to develop and maintain the skills necessary for the office.

6. The superintendent is responsible for business practices. In this role he prepares the budget, directs accounting procedures, and maintains control of the physical plant and equipment.



7. The superintendent is responsible for planning for the future. In this role he must develop and maintain plans and programs in each of the six foregoing areas.

School boards should develop clear statements regarding board-superintendent relationships according to Monahan (1973). These statements define what the board expects of the superintendent and also what the superintendent may expect from the board. This developmental process of delineation not only helps the board clarify its thinking, but also helps the candidate analyze the position.

Examples of the types of considerations involved are (1) the role of the school board individually and collectively in giving advice to the superintendent, (2) the board's definition of the executive functions, (3) the board's relationship with district employees, (4) how the board refers complaints and communications, and (5) a statement of the board's support of administrative decisions.

Analysis of the community. An objective review of the community and an analysis of its needs and problems, strengths and weaknesses, should be made, with the help of an outside advisor if necessary. It should also include data on population, ethnic backgrounds, general composition, economic status, any special problems, cultural organizations and their leadership, and attitudes in the community towards the school (Wennerberg, 1967).

Analysis of the school district and system. An objective review and analysis of the school district should include its organization, size, status as to growth, reorganizational potential, any major recent

or anticipated changes, present and anticipated financial status, and any special problems. The review and analysis of the school system should include its general philosophy and objectives, the educational programs offered, its strengths and compatibility with district expectations, its basic needs, and areas requiring development or change, a review of the staff should include the adequacy and competence of central office, employee morale, personnel relations policies, and staff-board channels of communication (Wennerberg, 1967).

Establishment of written qualifications. All of the preceding procedures will influence the determination of the desired qualifications for candidates. Other recommendations concerning qualifications are:

1. Lewis (1970) suggests that if the board employs a consultant, the consultant may interview representatives of interested community groups to discuss sensitive areas. Further, the board may involve the community in an assessment of any special problems, needs and aspirations of the school community as a basis for determining the necessary and desirable qualifications of the new superintendent.
2. Johnson (1975) also encourages community involvement in determining the attributes desired in the new superintendent. He recommends involving a broad base of representation including professional staff members and representatives of the student body.
3. Dowler (1970), in describing the plan used by Tulsa, Oklahoma in selecting a new superintendent, said that (1) the desired qualifications we put in writing, (2) the writing assignment was

sidered are educational philosophy, personality, cultural background and interests, spouse and family, social, religious, political and age. Miller cautions, however, that the best possible person for the job must be sought regardless of race, sex, age or other extraneous factors due to civil rights and equal opportunity legislation.

6. In addition to several of the factors already given by other authorities, the Tulsa plan (Dowler, 1970) sought both elementary and secondary background, and experience in finance, buildings, personnel, curriculum, guidance, evaluation, and research. Additional personal characteristics desired were (1) demonstrated interest, participation, and leadership in civic, church, service and community affairs and activities, (2) demonstrated communication abilities, (3) educational concern with dedication to excellence in all categories and a keen interest in new developments, and (4) demonstrated administrative ability with imagination and strong leadership and the ability to make decisions without fear or favor.

7. Wennerberg (1967) further lists (1) holding of proper certification credentials and other legal requirements, (2) academic background with preferred factors such as specific major or fields of specialization, (3) health, (4) integrity and ability to command respect of staff and community, and (5) a personality that indicates the ability to work with others.

8. In his list of desirable qualifications, Turner (1971) also adds (1) pleasing personal appearance, (2) proper degree of confidence and idealism, (3) good judgment, common sense, and perception, (4) deep-seated belief that the public schools are operated for the benefit of those enrolled in them - not for boards,

administrators, teachers and parents, (5) varied accomplishments, (6) aggressive about upgrading the public school system, (7) a pronounced interest in improving the instructional program, (8) an open mind about the status quo and the many changes facing public education, (9) ability to organize and plan ahead, (10) ability to face controversy, to remain true to convictions, and to live in a high pressure job, and (11) the ability to delegate authority and to expedite.

9. Using a systems approach to administrative competencies and qualifications, Purrington (1968: 3) states:

If the system is to function properly, i.e., be effective, the administrator must at least minimally solve the four functional problems. The skills or competences of an occupant of an administrative position must therefore possess some minimal technical skill, some minimal conceptual skills, some minimal administrative skill and some minimal human relation skill in order to perform his functional role successfully.

#### Preparation of the Job Description

After preliminary work by the board is accomplished, Dunmire (1971), Fowler (1973), Johnson (1975), Lewis (1970), Monahan (1973), and the Shasta College (1971) plan all recommend that a job description or specifications be written.

Fowler's research strongly confirmed the value of the job description. Those school boards that determined in advance, and in writing, the personal qualities they wanted their superintendent to possess, and wrote job descriptions as well, were most pleased in the performance of their new superintendent in the area of public relations (Fowler, 1973: 33).

### Preparation of the Brochure

Monahan (1973) places the development of the brochure at the top of his list of essential steps in an effective selection procedure. Dowler (1970) places special emphasis on the designing of an attractive brochure telling about the opening and the community by saying that the money spent will be well spent.

In the Pennsylvania State Department of Education suggested plan for selection of school administrators, Dunmire (1971) not only places the preparation of the brochure as step one of the preparation process, but also suggests its preparation involve one or more of the following: (1) board of directors, (2) outgoing administrator, (3) community relations staff member, and (4) committee appointed to select the administrator. Johnson (1975) involves members of the community, staff, and student body in working on the elements to be included in the brochure.

In research conducted by Fowler (1973), those boards that planned their selection procedures carefully and used printed material to describe their districts in some detail were most satisfied with the performance of their hired superintendent in the area of personnel administration.

Suggested items to be included in the brochure are (1) job description and a list of criteria for selecting the new superintendent (Lewis, 1976), (2) problem areas as well as positive statements (Lewis, 1976), (3) advertising and announcing the vacancy (Johnson, 1975), (4) data about the school, the community, and qualifications expected of a candidate (Dunmire, 1971), (5) method and specific timing of the selection process, (6) request for a personal letter

from the applicant, if desired, and suggestions as to what the letter should contain, (7) reminder to send college credentials, (8) name of person to send application, (9) assurance that applications will be kept in confidence unless released by the candidate, (10) reminder that personal applications to individual board members is not desired (Wennerberg, 1967), (11) the highest salary the board expects to pay, and (12) provisions for payment of expenses for the interview (Johnson, 1975).

#### Preparation of the Application

Dunmire (1971) includes the selection or development of an application blank in preparation for the search. The application may include a list of questions to be answered by the applicants in paragraph form.

Although other literature does not mention a formal application blank, the board may consider this option in order to standardize information they may desire that may not appear in the applicant's supportive papers.

#### Establishment of Procedures

Many of the procedures to be following during the selection process will have been established during the board's preparation activities. Decisions may have been made concerning (1) obtaining professional advice and for which functions, (2) the degree of involvement of community and staff, (3) the qualifications, characteristics and attributes desired of the candidates, (4) the functional roles of the board and superintendent, (5) analysis of the community, school district and school system, (6) use of testing

instruments for assessing potential of candidates, (7) data to be included in an announcement brochure, and (8) use of a formal application.

Other decisions about the procedures to be used during the remainder of the selection process should be considered as preparation for the search. These decisions involve (1) the means and extent of the search, (2) methods used in and persons involved in screening applicants, (3) methods used in interviewing candidates, (4) visitations to communities of candidates, (5) weighting and rating candidates, and (6) final details of appointing the new superintendent.

#### LITERATURE PERTINENT TO SEARCHING FOR SUITABLE CANDIDATES

Fowler's research found that those boards that sought candidates from a wide geographic area (coast to coast) were most likely to be satisfied with the new superintendent's "overall performance." This geographic search factor was the only selection variable with a significant relationship to overall performance. According to Fowler (1973), it virtually constitutes an axiom - the wider the geographic selection base, the better the chances of making a good selection.

The first step in the solicitation of applications is to identify sources of securing candidates (Monahan, 1973). Besides the common practice in Iowa of advertising in the Des Moines Register, other sources are (1) letters to universities and colleges asking for their recommendations, (2) request the state boards association, state administrators association, area education agencies, superinten-

dents of neighboring schools for desirable candidates who may be asked to apply (Wennerberg, 1967), (3) placement officer of various institutions, (4) departments of education of various institutions, (5) graduate schools of education, (7) commercial placement agencies, (8) professors of educational administration, (9) ASCUS (a national agency of teacher placement bureaus representing colleges of education), and (10) educational salesmen's organizations (Dunmire, 1971).

Miller (1975: 11) suggests that boards keep in mind that the search not be limited to announced available candidates. He says:

It is also important to seek out good prospects who may not have announced their availability at all. One trustee has suggested the type of letter that says, in essence, "If you yourself are not interested, perhaps you can recommend someone else whom you feel to be qualified." From this group of people not generally thought to be available may come many able candidates.

#### LITERATURE PERTINENT TO SCREENING APPLICANTS

A search of the literature relating to the screening process suggests that boards must make decisions concerning (1) membership of the screening committee, and (2) the screening procedures to be followed.

#### Membership of the Screening Committee

Opinions concerning who should serve on the screening committee vary from well qualified individuals competent in the evaluation of qualifications who have no local commitments (Wennerberg, 1967) to volunteer citizen leaders and student leaders (Eisenberger, 1975).



Monahan (1973) feels that the initial screening should be done by competent professional educators who have the ability to analyze the applications. He claims most authorities recommend that the board hire a professional advisor to manage the search. While it is preferred that the advisor not be on the screening committee, it is not uncommon for the advisor to chair the group.

Lewis (1976) also recommends a professional screening committee in order to provide for an objective, professional judgment on the qualifications of the applicants. He advises against the appointment of residents of the school district or representatives of local organizations to the screening committee. He cautions that if this is done, "the way is opened to all special-interest groups to demand a like voice in the selection" (Lewis, 1976: 3).

In the Pennsylvania State Department of Education plan, the screening committee may vary a great deal in its composition depending on the desires of the local board. It may be composed of (1) an educational consultant serving as a committee of one, (2) in part by college or university related people, (3) selected board members, (4) the board members as a whole, (5) the director of personnel as a committee of one, (6) board members and members of the administrative staff, (7) board members and county superintendents, (8) representatives of top administrative staff, secondary and elementary principals, and secondary and elementary teachers, (9) representatives of the board, faculty, administration and community, (10) one or more administrators from other districts along with district personnel, and (11) the outgoing superintendent as a committee of one (Dunmire, 1971).

### Screening Procedures to be Followed

Once the screening committee is selected, they should evaluate each set of credentials in terms of written statement of criteria for selection and recommend three to five candidates for in-depth evaluation and interview (Eisenberger, 1975). The Shasta College policy for selection of administrators incorporates the idea that each committee member screen all the applications and that all applicants favored by at least two committee members be retained (Shasta College, 1971).

Besides reviewing credentials, the screening committee is responsible for checking past performance and personal interviews prior to recommending the finalists to the board according to Wennerberg (1967).

Cresap (1970: 34) includes a checklist for reviewing resumes for their completeness, presentation and employment history.

Completeness should be ascertained by checking for (1) an accounting of all time periods from college to the present, (2) a description of the responsibilities of each position, and (3) a listing of publications and professional references.

The adequacy of the presentation should be measured in terms of if (1) it is well written and easily read, (2) it is organized in a logical manner, (3) the details presented are relevant, (4) it is concise and not unduly wordy, (5) the candidate describes his own areas of responsibility in specific terms, and (6) specific accomplishments are discussed.

Employment history should be checked to ascertain if (1) each position was more responsible than the preceding position, (2) posi-

tions were held for reasonable periods to time, and (3) there were long periods in which no additional responsibilities were assumed.

Not only are resumes to be checked, but references and recommendations should be verified. Miller (1971) suggests using the telephone for this procedure. This procedure is fast with prompt replies and it is frank because past or present employers will often give a confidential and more honest estimate on the phone than they would in a letter.

Cresap (1970: 39-41) includes a checklist for reviewing references in regards to (1) relationship to the candidate, (2) verification of information given by the candidate, (3) performance of the candidate, (4) personal effectiveness of the candidate and (5) potential of the candidate.

The relationship of the person given as a reference with the candidate should be checked by ascertaining (1) the capacity in which that person knew the candidate, (2) how long that person has known the candidate, (3) how much opportunity that person has had to observe the candidate's performance or hear about it from others, and (4) if they are personal friends.

The following items should be checked to verify information given by the candidate: (1) the candidate's position, (2) how long was the position held, and (3) if the title was changed at any time.

The performance of the candidate should be verified to determine (1) a characterization of his approach to education, (2) the greatest problems and challenges the candidate faced and what the candidate was able to accomplish or unable to accomplish, (3) what aspect of the candidate's job was strongest, (4) what aspect of the

candidate's job was performed least well or with least enthusiasm, (5) judgment of the candidate, (6) the candidate's ability to develop staff, (7) any inclination towards experimentation or innovation and the end result, (8) the employer's regard towards the candidate's performance, and (9) the degree of the candidate's ability to gain financial support for the schools from outside agencies.

The personal effectiveness of the candidate should be verified to determine (1) the candidate's ability to communicate better orally or in writing, (2) the regard with which the candidate is held by the staff, students, parents, other professionals, minority groups, and the public in general, and (3) the candidate's ability to handle conflict.

The candidate's potential should be verified to determine (1) any health problems, (2) if the candidate would perform better under other circumstances, (3) the candidate's ability to do as good a job if there were more responsibility and additional pressure, and (4) any reason that the candidate might want to leave the position now held.

#### LITERATURE PERTINENT TO INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

A search of the literature relating to interviewing candidates suggests concerns in the areas of (1) objectivity versus subjectivity, (2) procedures for the conduct of interviews, (3) interview questions, (4) visits to the communities of the candidates, and (5) evaluation of the interviews.

### Objectivity Versus Subjectivity

Usually the selection procedures accomplished by the board up to the personal interview can be done on an objective basis. Starting with the interview, the selection process becomes more subjective in nature. Heller (1975: 32) states,

"An interview, no matter how well structured, is in itself a subjective situation."

"No matter how astute each board member may be, he can be fooled by a candidate who is skilled being interviewed. Based on a brief interview or two, it is impossible for board members to assess objectivity just how sharp, dedicated, aware, and talented a candidate is. Subjective judgment must be exercised."

"This subjectivity need not be whimsical nor capricious. Facts must be weighted - but the scale will be tipped in favor of interpretations."

Other authorities suggest procedures for structuring the interview in an effort to make them more objective and productive.

### Procedures for the Conduct of Interviews

Suggested procedures to be followed in the conduct of interviews are:

1. Each board member should read the confidential papers of each finalist before the interview (Lewis, 1976).
2. Each board member should indicate his evaluation of each candidate on a numerical rating scale before the interview (Lewis, 1976).
3. Ample interviewing time should be given each candidate, at least a half day followed by lunch or dinner (Lewis, 1976).
4. The interview should not be highly structured but have enough design to obtain the needed information (Lewis, 1976).
5. Pertinent interview questions should be prepared in advance (Lewis, 1976).

6. A mimeographed interview checklist should be used (Lewis, 1976).
7. All expenses for the interview should be borne by the school district (Lewis, 1976).
8. A visit should be made to the communities of the finalist candidates (Lewis, 1976; Fowler, 1970; and Wennerberg, 1967).
9. Only the board should interview the candidates (Johnson, 1971; Dowler, 1970).
10. A file folder for each candidate interviewed, containing all data about him, may be kept by each interviewer (Dunmire, 1971).
11. Following the interview, the candidate may be taken on a tour of the community. This may lead the candidate, or the interviewer, to raise questions which did not arise during the interview (Dunmire, 1971).
12. Candidates who meet the criteria established and who are interviewed successfully are referred to a specific professional clinic for psychological evaluation (Dunmire, 1971).
13. Show the candidates the administrative office building as well as selected school buildings (Dowler, 1970).
14. With the consent of the two or three finalists, invite representatives of community organizations to meet them so that the board may have their reaction, not vote, to the finalists (Johnson, 1971).
15. Notify those not chosen by the screening committee for an interview of the situation and that they are still being considered until a final decision is made (Wennerberg, 1967).

### Interview Questions

Dunmire (1971), Wennerberg (1967), and Lewis (1970 and 1976) provide lists of areas to be covered in interview questions or specific questions to be asked during the interview. Lewis (1970 and 1976) suggests the addition of questions suggested by citizens, teachers, and board members on specific problems in the district.

Dunmire (1971: 36) suggests opening the interview with the following question:

"Mr. X, we would like first to know something about you, your background, training and experience. Won't you take a few minutes, please, to introduce yourself in a manner which you think would be helpful in relating your qualifications and competencies for the superintendency of this district."

Subsequent questions should help the board determine:

1. The candidate's philosophy of education, what the school should accomplish, and how they might be organized to achieve these purposes.

2. How the candidate would familiarize himself with the internal operation of the school, the community and its interests, strengths and weaknesses of the school system, and so forth.

3. The candidate's familiarity and point of view with respect to recent innovations in educational practices such as (1) team teaching, (2) use of educational television, (3) use of programmed learning, (4) advanced college placement, (5) merit rating of teachers, and (6) recent changes in science, math, foreign language, etc.

4. The candidate's concept of the respective functions of the board of education, the superintendent, and the administrative staff.

5. The candidate's concept of public relations.

6. What the candidate has done in his own community to improve the schools.

7. The candidate's eligibility for state certification for the superintendency.

Dunmire (1971: 37) then gives specific questions in the area of (1) teacher militancy, (2) steps to take to insure a modern education for children, (3) vocational education - specialized versus comprehensive high school, (4) teacher rating and evaluation, (5) maintenance problems and personnel, (6) role of the superintendent in dealing with the public, (7) student discipline, (8) experimentation versus traditional classroom organization, (9) interests outside of school work, (10) desired salary, and (11) willingness for the board to visit the candidate's community.

Additional areas of inquiry provided by Wennerberg (1967) are:

1. What criteria would the candidate use in evaluating an educational program.

2. What major problems has the candidate faced in present or previous administrative positions and how did the candidate solve them.

3. How does the candidate recruit qualified staff.

4. Has the candidate been successful in obtaining support from the voters for levies and bond issues and how.

5. What does the candidate consider to be his or her greatest assets and liabilities.



Additional areas of inquiry provided by Lewis (1976) are:

1. How would the candidate keep the board current on educational issues and problems.
2. How does the candidate feel about a split vote by the board on a recommendation.
3. What would the candidate do if the board opposed something the candidate thought educationally sound.
4. What has the candidate done to motivate staff to innovate and improve performance.
5. What expertise does the candidate possess in budget preparation and business administration.

Visits to the Communities of  
the Candidates

Boards should make preparations for visitations to the communities of candidates who have been selected for interviews. Lewis (1970) suggests that boards (1) procure certain information from the candidate about the community to be visited prior to the visitation, and (2) use a checklist for the visitation.

Information from the candidate. A suggested memo to the candidates is provided by Lewis (1970: 24). To assist the board in its visitation the following information should be requested from the candidate (1) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of leading citizens and officers or organizations, (2) the names of individuals who have been critical of the candidate and the candidate's programs, and (3) a map of the community.

The memo further advises the candidate that (1) the candidate might well invite the board members to his or her home to meet the candidate's spouse and to relax for a short time during the visit, and (2) the delegation would not be limited in its contact to those names supplied by the candidate.

Checklist for the visitation. The suggested questions given by Lewis (1970: 26-27) can be placed in categories of concerns involving (1) personal attributes, (2) relations with the board, (3) relations with the public, (4) curriculum, (5) staff, (6) problem solving, and (7) financial ability.

Personal attributes that should be determined are (1) proper training and experience for the job, (2) ethical and professional in all contacts, (3) proper personal and personality traits for the job, (4) ability to guide and motivate others, and (5) ability to speak well and effectively before groups.

Relations with the board that should be determined are (1) board policies are carried out with honesty and sincerity, (2) well prepared and full information is presented to the board on all matters under consideration, (3) the board feels involved in making the important decisions, and (4) the candidate's preparation in advance for meetings.

Relations with the public that should be determined are (1) degree of relations with the community, (2) degree of active participation with all segments of the community, and (3) if a close and cooperative feeling exists between the school and the community.

Matters concerning curriculum that should be determined are (1) the presence of a vigorous program of curriculum development and instructional supervision, and (2) the degree of satisfaction expressed by parents with the educational program.

Matters concerning staff that should be determined are (1) the state of staff morale, (2) the presence of a democratic organization administered with the staff involved and credit given to the staff, and (3) the adequacy of staff selection and retention policies.

The problem solving abilities of the candidate should be ascertained if (1) the candidate has shown the ability to make sound decisions, (2) the candidate has planned for future growth or decline of the districts, and (3) the candidate is able to resolve problems and issues in conference with groups and/or individuals.

The candidate's financial ability should be appraised by checking if (1) the budget has provided a balanced program, and (2) the estimates on which the budget is based have been accurate and that the financial operation has been well supervised.

#### Evaluation of the Interviews

According to Fowler (1973) those school boards that place emphasis on a detailed candidate-interview format when hiring a superintendent are likely to be most pleased with the superintendent's subsequent performance in public relations. He attributes this to (1) the interview itself amounts to a public relations situation, and (2) planned interviews give ample opportunity for candidate participation and enable the board to judge how well the candidate can work with people.

Rating scales. Besides the planned interview structure suggested earlier, several authorities recommend that each board member evaluate each item covered in the interview by use of a rating scale. (Cresap (1970: 38) suggests a scale of very poor, poor, average, good, and superior. Dunmire (1971) suggests a simple fair, good, and excellent rating scale, and notes that the checklist and rating scale should not be checked in the presence of the candidate. Further, Dunmire provides space for comments on (1) the strongest quality observed, (2) the weakest quality observed, and (3) other observations. Turner (1971) uses a rating scale similar to most grading scales, that is A, B, C, D, and F.

Weighting of rating scales. Seeley (1971) suggests a weighting chart be designed for two purposes: (1) to relate the evaluation of candidates' qualifications to the relative importance of each qualification, and (2) to help average the judgments of two or more people involved in evaluating candidates' qualifications. He warns, however, that the weighting charts devised should never be used mechanically in selecting personnel. It should be used to help analyze the strengths and weaknesses of candidates or to compare candidates with one another or with the ideal or total score. After priorities have been established collectively by the board for each criteria to be used, the board establishes the weight for each item to be rated with a numerical weight from 5 to 25. Seeley then assigns a minus 6 points to a very poor rating, a minus 2 points to a poor rating, 1 point to an average rating, 2 points to a good rating and 4 points to a superior rating. Then the numerical weight

is multiplied by the points assigned each rating for a score. A total is gained of all the scores of all the qualifications by each interviewer, and the average of all interviewers' scores can be made.

#### LITERATURE PERTINENT TO SELECTING AND APPOINTING THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT

After the evaluation of interviews, the board may decide to narrow the field of candidates to two or three finalists before visitations and final selection. Both Dunmire (1971) and Lewis (1976) suggest a meeting with the successful candidate for a final searching interview concerning terms of the contract, working relationships, and entry into a contract. Lewis further suggests that the entire board in executive session make the final choice with every effort being made to secure a unanimous vote.

Prior to the final decision, board may be advised to (1) request a pre-contract physical (Lewis, 1971), (2) refer the candidate to a specific professional clinic for psychological evaluation (Dunmire, 1971), and (3) not offer the contract until the board is reasonably certain that the offer will be accepted (Johnson, 1975).

Out of courtesy, the board should notify unsuccessful candidates, prior to a news release concerning the final decision (Lewis, 1970). This announcement should be timed with the resignation and release of the new superintendent from his current position.

Dunmire (1971) suggests that following the selection, a reception be arranged for the new administrator and family inviting all school employees and board members and their spouses.

## Chapter 3

### SELECTION PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES USED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The review of the related literature provided a wide range of suggestions for school boards to use in the selection of a superintendent. The salient features from these suggestions were selected and used as the basis for a descriptive survey of the selection procedures and practices used in the employment of superintendents in Iowa public schools.

#### RESEARCH PROCEDURES USED

##### Design of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was designed in three parts.

Part one identified the enrollment of the respondent's school on the enrollment certification date used by the State of Iowa for determination of school budgets. Respondents were asked to check one of the five enrollment categories given: (1) zero to 499 students, (2) 500 to 999 students, (3) 1,000 to 1,999 students, (4) 2,000 to 2,999 students, and (5) 3,000 or more students.

Part two consisted of twenty-seven questions concerning procedures used in the selection process. Eleven questions concerned Preparation for the search. Five questions concerned screening of applicants. Eight questions concerned the interviewing process. Three questions concerned the appointment of the new superintendent.

Part three was designed to determine the amount of involvement of various persons, groups, or representatives of groups in the selection process. Fifteen categories of persons or groups were listed including an open-ended "Other (Please list)" category. The respondents were asked to check whether the board involved any of the categories listed in an advisory capacity only, or in a full voting capacity in each of five phases of the selection process. The five phases were (1) analysis of the community and school needs, (2) the setting of qualifications for candidates, (3) the screening of applicants and selection of candidates, (4) the interviewing of candidates, and (5) the final selection of the superintendent. Respondents were instructed that no check marks in a particular phase would indicate that the person or group listed was not involved in that phase of the decision making process.

#### Distribution of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was sent to the president of the board of directors of each of the sixty-five Iowa public school districts who hired a superintendent or had a vacancy for the superintendency during the calendar year 1977 (Appendix B). The instrument and a cover letter (Appendix C) were mailed on May 5, 1978. A follow-up letter (Appendix D) and another copy of the instrument were mailed on May 19, 1978. The instruments were coded by number for the sole purpose of identifying those who returned surveys.

## PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data Concerning Enrollments  
and Survey Response

The survey instrument was mailed to sixty-five board presidents. Forty-five were returned representing a response from 69.2 percent of the schools involved. Responses were received from 92.3 percent of the schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more, while 63.5 percent were returned from schools with enrollments of less than 1,000. It was decided to tabulate the data from the instrument in three enrollment classifications: (1) all schools, (2) Class A schools representing enrollments of less than 1,000, and (3) Class B schools representing enrollments of 1,000 or more.

Table 1, page 38, shows the number and percent of superintendent vacancies and the number and percent of surveys returned, classified by enrollment. Of the vacancies during 1977, 80 percent were in Class A schools and only 20 percent in Class B schools.

Data Concerning Procedures  
Used in the Selection  
Process

The second part of the survey instrument included twenty-four items concerning procedures used in the selection process.

The tabulated data (Appendix E) shows that at least one school used each item and that no particular item was used by all the schools responding. The two procedures used only once by respondents were (1) the use of tests or evidence of scores on testing instruments as predictors of potential success of the candidates, and (2) the contract stipulation that a psychological



Table 1

Number and Percent of Superintendent Vacancies  
and the Number and Percent of Surveys  
Returned, Classified by Enrollment

Enrollment Class	Number of Vacancies	Percent of Vacancies	Number of Surveys Returned	Percent of Surveys Returned
0 - 499	30	46.2	20*	66.7
500 - 999	22	33.8	13*	59.1
1,000 - 1,999	5	7.7	5	100.0
2,000 - 2,999	2	3.1	2	100.0
3,000 or more	6	9.2	5*	83.3
All Schools	65	100.0	45	69.2
Class A, less than 1,000	52	80.0	33	63.5
Class B, 1,000 or more	13	20.0	12	92.3

\*One respondent in this enrollment classification hired a superintendent from within the school system without a search.

evaluation be completed prior to the assumption of duties by the selected superintendent. Although no particular item was used by all schools, 97.6 percent of those responding verified information on resumes and references by phone or personal contact.

Less than half of the items were used by a majority of the schools. The eleven items used, and their frequency and percent of use were:

1. Item 13. Verified information on resumes and references by phone or personal contact - 41 responses, 97.6%.

2. Item 3. Reviewed and defined respective roles of the board and the superintendent - 39 responses, 92.9%.

3. Item 19. Narrowed the field of candidates and selected final candidates after interviews - 38 responses, 90.5%.

4. Item 25. Reach a unanimous vote on the candidates to whom the position was offered - 38 responses, 90.5%.

5. Item 6. Made an analysis of the school district and school system, their status, basic needs, areas requiring change, etc. - 31 responses, 73.8%.

6. Item 18. Used a prepared list of questions to be covered in the interview with all candidates - 31 responses, 73.8%.

7. Item 5. Made an analysis of the community and its needs and problems, strengths and weaknesses - 29 responses, 69.0%.

8. Item 21. Visited the communities of the final candidates - 28 responses, 66.7%.

9. Item 7. Established written desired qualifications and personal attributes for candidates - 26 responses, 61.9%.

10. Item 4. Reviewed the written board policies with special attention to the working relationships of the superintendent - 25 responses, 59.5%.

11. Item 12. Adopted a written statement of criteria (or a checklist) to be used by those involved in the screening - 22 responses, 52.4%.

Half of the schools responding prepared a written job description for the superintendency as part of the preparation for the search.

The remaining twelve items were used in less than half of the schools responding. Listed from the least frequently used, they are:

1. Item 9. Required tests or evidence of scores on testing instruments as predictors of potential success of the candidates - 1 response, 2.4%. (The test instrument used was reported as "ISU".)

2. Item 26. Extended the contract to the selected superintendent with the stipulation that a psychological evaluation be completed prior to assumption of duties - 1 response, 2.4%.

3. Item 2. Hired a consultant to aid in the selection process - 6 responses, 14.3%.

4. Item 22. Used a checklist during visits to the communities of final candidates - 7 responses, 18.4%.

5. Item 11. Required a special application blank to be completed by candidates - 8 responses, 19.0%.

6. Item 23. Used a rating scale for each item covered during the interview and/or visitation to help evaluate the information gained - 9 responses, 21.4%.

7. Item 27. Extended the contract to the selected superintendent with the stipulation that a physical examination be completed prior to the assumption of duties - 9 responses, 21.4%.

8. Item 14. Used a checklist to verify information on resumes and references - 14 responses, 33.3%.

9. Item 10. Prepared a brochure or packet of information to be sent to candidates concerning the community, school, and the position - 17 responses, 34.1%.

10. Item 1. Obtained assistance from organizations such as the Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa Association of School Administrators, or the Iowa Department of Public Instruction - 16 responses, 38.1%.

11. Item 17. Each board member had a file folder for each person interviewed containing all data about the candidate - 20 responses, 47.6%.

12. Item 24. Each item covered during the interview and/or visitation was weighted as to the board's feeling of importance - 20 responses, 47.6%.

Items 1 and 2 reflected the obtaining of assistance for the selection process from outside the school district, either through organizations or consultants. The combined frequency reported for these two items was 22 or 52.4 percent.

The tabulation of the twenty-four items by two enrollment classes (Appendix F) shows none of the Class A schools used (1) item 9 concerning use of tests as predictors of potential success of candidates, and (2) item 26 concerning the psychological evaluation as a contract stipulation. No item was used by all Class A schools.

At least one Class B school used each item and they all used item 13 concerning the verification of resumes and references.

Table 2, page 43, shows the items used by the majority of schools in the two enrollment classes. The majority of Class A schools used eleven items and the larger Class B schools used fourteen items. The three additional items were (1) item 1 concerning obtaining assistance from organizations, (2) item 11 requiring a special application blank, and (3) item 17 providing a file folder on each candidate for each board member.

The combined frequency of items 1 and 2 was 12 or 38.7 percent for Class B schools. Less than a majority of Class A schools used assistance from outside the school district, but the use of this procedure ranked very high in Class B schools.

The data revealed other significant differences in the amount of use of procedures between Class A and Class B schools. Table 3, page 44, shows five procedures with a percent of use difference of twenty percent or more between Class A and Class B schools. Listed from the greatest difference they are (1) item 17 concerning providing each board member a file folder for each person interviewed containing all data about the candidate, (2) item 11 concerning the use of a special application blank to be completed by candidates, (3) item 1 concerning obtaining assistance from organizations for the selection process, (4) item 10 concerning the preparation of a brochure to be sent to the candidates, and (5) item 21 concerning visiting the communities of final candidates. In all five procedures, the larger Class B schools participated to a greater extent.

Table 2

Procedures Used by a Majority of Schools  
in Two Enrollment Classes

Class A Schools			Class B Schools		
Item	Procedures Used	Frequency	Item	Procedures Used	Frequency
3	Defined roles	30	13	Verified information	11
13	Verified information	30	3	Defined roles	9
19	Narrowed field	29	17	Interview file	9
25	Unanimous note	29	18	Interview questions	9
6	Analyzed school	23	19	Narrowed field	9
18	Interview questions	22	21	Visited communities	9
5	Analyzed communities	21	25	Unanimous vote	9
4	Reviewed policies	19	5	Analyzed communities	8
7	Written qualifications	19	6	Analyzed school	8
21	Visited communities	19	1	Obtained assistance	7
12	Screening checklist	16	7	Written qualifications	7
			8	Job description	7
			4	Reviewed policies	6
			12	Screening checklist	6

Table 3

Procedures With a Percent of Use Difference of Twenty Percent or More Between Class A and Class B Schools

Item	Procedure	Percent of Use		Difference Percent of Use
		Class A	Class B	
17	Interview file folder	35.5	81.8	46.3
11	Application blank	9.7	45.5	35.8
1	Obtained assistance	29.0	63.6	34.6
10	Prepared brochure	29.0	50.0	21.0
21	Visited communities	61.3	81.8	20.5

The data revealed significant agreement in the amount of use of procedures between Class A and Class B schools. Table 4, page 45, shows eight procedures with a percent of use difference of five percent or less between Class A and Class B schools. Listed from the greatest agreement they are (1) item 6 concerning analysis of the school district and school system, (2) item 7 concerning the establishment of written desired qualifications for candidates, (3) item 12 concerning use of a checklist to be used in screening applicants, (4) item 24 concerning the weighting of each item covered during the interview as to the board's feeling of importance of the item, (5) item 13 concerning verification of information on resumes and references, (6) item 14 concerning use of a checklist to verify information on resumes and references, (7) item 27 concerning contract stipulation that a physical examination be completed prior to assumption of duties, and (8) item 5 concerning analysis of the community and its needs and problems, strengths and weaknesses.

Table 4

Procedures With a Percent of Use Difference of Five Percent  
or Less Between Class A and Class B Schools

Item	Procedure	Percent of Use		Difference Percent of Use
		Class A	Class B	
6	Analyzed school	74.2	72.7	1.5
7	Written qualifications	61.3	63.6	2.3
12	Screening checklist	51.6	54.5	2.9
24	Importance weighting	48.4	45.5	2.9
13	Verified information	96.8	100.0	3.2
14	Checklist to verify	32.3	36.4	4.1
27	Physical exam	22.6	18.2	4.4
5	Analyzed community	67.7	72.7	5.0

The second part of survey instrument also included four questions which did not measure a procedure used but (1) the number of applications received, (2) the number of candidates selected for interviews, (3) the number of finalists selected after interviews, and (4) the voting of boards in appointing the new superintendent. The tabulation of data for items 15, 16, 20, and 25 of the survey instrument are shown in Appendix G.

Item 15 dealt with the number of applications received for the position. The total number of applications received by the thirty-nine schools responding was 1,255. The range was from 1 to 20, the mean was 32, and the median was 27. The twenty-nine Class A schools received 706 applications, the range was from 1 to 56, the mean 24,



and the median 23. The ten Class B schools received 549 applications with a range from 12 to 120, the mean 55, and the median 56.

Item 16 dealt with the number of candidates selected for further investigation and interviews after the applications were screened. The forty-one schools responding selected 243 candidates. The range was from 1 to 12, the mean and median was 6. The thirty-one Class A schools selected 170 candidates, the range was from 1 to 10, the mean 5, and the median 6. The ten Class B schools selected 73 candidates, the range was from 3 to 9, the mean 7, and the median 8.

Item 20 dealt with the number of final candidates selected by those boards that narrowed the field of candidates after interviews. These thirty-six schools narrowed the number of candidates to 95. The range was from 1 to 5, the mean and median were 3. The twenty-eight Class A schools narrowed the number to 72 with the range of from 1 to 5, the mean 3, and the median 2. The eight Class B schools narrowed to 23, the range from 2 to 4, the mean and median 3.

Item 25 dealt with the procedure of reaching a unanimous vote for the candidate to whom the position was offered. A second part of this question, which was not previously reported, dealt with the votes of those boards that did not reach unanimity. Of the forty-two schools, there were four split decisions, two in Class A schools and two in Class B schools. The split votes in the Class A schools were 4-1 and 3-2. One of the Class B schools did not report the vote and the other board split 5-2.

Data Concerning Involvement in  
the Selection Process

The third part of the survey instrument concerned the frequency of involvement of various persons, groups, or representatives of groups in the decisions made during the selection process. The tabulation of the number of schools reporting either an advisory or voting involvement by fifteen different categories of persons or groups during five phases in the selection process is shown in Appendix H. The frequency of involvement by persons or groups, excluding the school board, shows:

1. The largest participation was in phase one, the analysis of community and school needs. Here 76 persons or groups were used by the 39 reporting schools in an advisory capacity and 2 in a voting capacity.

2. Participation in phase four, the interviewing of candidates, ranked second with 51 persons or groups represented in an advisory capacity and 3 in a voting capacity.

3. Phase two, the setting of the desired qualifications for candidates, followed closely with 52 persons or groups represented in an advisory capacity and 1 in a voting capacity.

4. During phase three, the screening of applicants, 43 persons or groups were represented in an advisory capacity and 2 in a voting capacity.

5. During phase five, the final selection and appointment of the superintendent, 27 persons or groups were represented in an advisory capacity. The school boards reserved the final decision on appointment completely to themselves, and no persons or groups were accorded a voting capacity during this phase.

Appendix H also shows that boards grant very few persons or groups a voting capacity during any of the other four phases in the selection process. The voting capacity was granted only eight times and then only to the board secretary, the outgoing superintendent, or district administrators. This is in contrast to the advisory capacity being granted 249 times. The voting capacity was granted 3 times during the interviewing of candidates, twice during the analysis of community and school needs, twice during the screening of applicants, and once during the setting of qualifications for candidates.

The 39 reporting schools used various persons or groups during the five phases in the selection process 257 times. The persons or groups used and the frequency of their participation were:

1. Board secretary - 66
2. Outgoing superintendent - 54
3. District administrators - 53
4. Faculty - 23
5. Community leaders - 12
6. Non-certified staff - 11
7. Parents - 11
8. Consultants - 10
9. Pupils - 6
10. Selection advisory group - 3
11. Civic groups - 3
12. The media (TV, press) - 2
13. Other - past board members - 2
14. Unions - 1

The tabulation of the number of schools with enrollments of less than 1,000 students reporting advisory or voting involvement of persons, groups, or representatives of groups in five phases of the selection process is shown in Appendix I. The frequency of participation in the five phases was:

- (1) Phase one, analysis of community and school needs, 56 advisory and none voting.
- (2) Phase two, setting qualifications for candidates, 39 advisory and 1 voting.
- (3) Phase four, interviewing candidates, 33 advisory and 1 voting.
- (4) Phase three, screening applicants, 32 advisory and none voting.
- (5) Phase five, final selection of the superintendent, 21 advisory and none voting.

The Class A schools granted the voting capacity only twice. Once to the outgoing superintendent during the setting of qualifications for candidates and once to district administrators during the interviewing of candidates. The advisory capacity was granted 181 times.

The persons or groups used and the frequency of their participation reported by the 29 Class A schools were:

1. Board secretary - 54
2. Outgoing superintendent - 42
3. District administrators - 36
4. Faculty - 13
5. Community leaders - 10

6. Non-certified staff - 8
7. Parents - 7
8. Consultants - 5
9. Pupils - 4
10. Civic groups - 2
11. Other - past board members - 2

The Class A schools did not involve (1) selection advisory group, (2) unions, or (3) the media (TV, press).

The tabulation of the number of schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students reporting advisory or voting involvement of persons, groups or representatives of groups in five phases of the selection process is shown in Appendix J. The frequency of participation in the five phases was:

- (1) Phase one, analysis of community and school needs, 20 advisory and 2 voting.
- (2) Phase four, interviewing candidates, 18 advisory and 2 voting.
- (3) Phase two, setting qualifications for candidates, 13 advisory and none voting.
- (4) Phase three, screening applicants, 11 advisory and 2 voting.
- (5) Phase five, final selection of superintendent, 6 advisory and none voting.

The Class B schools granted the voting capacity six times. Twice each to (1) the board secretary, (2) the outgoing superintendent, and (3) district administrators. The advisory capacity was granted 68 times.

The persons or groups used and the frequency of their participation reported by the 10 Class B schools were:

1. District administrators - 17
2. Board secretary - 12
3. Outgoing superintendent - 12
4. Faculty - 10
5. Consultants - 5
6. Parents - 4
7. Non-certified staff - 3
8. Selection advisory group - 3
9. Pupils - 2
10. Community leaders - 2
11. The media (TV, press) - 2
12. Civic groups - 1
13. Unions - 1

Class B schools did not report any other persons or groups than those listed on the survey instrument, however, they reported using all of those listed including the media and unions.

Table 5, page 52, shows the frequency and percent of involvement of school-related persons or groups in the selection process classified by enrollment. It shows that of the 257 responses indicating involvement, 213 or 82.9 percent were from the school-related categories of (1) board secretary, (2) outgoing superintendent, (3) district administrators, (4) faculty, (5) non-certified staff, and (6) pupils. Class A schools involved these people 157 times for a percentage of 85.8. Class B schools involved these people 56 times for a percentage of 75.7.

Table 5

The Frequency and Percent of Involvement of School-Related  
Persons or Groups in the Selection Process,  
Classified by Enrollment

Enrollment Class	<u>Frequency of Involvement</u>		Percent of Involvement
	All persons or groups	School-related persons or groups	
Class A	183	157	85.8
Class B	74	56	75.7
All Schools	257	213	82.9

Table 6 shows the frequency and percent of involvement of management in the selection process classified by enrollment. It shows that of the 257 responses indicating involvement, 173 or 67.3 percent were from school management categories of (1) board secretary, (2) outgoing superintendent, and (3) district administrators. Class A schools involved management 132 times for a percentage of 85.8. Class B schools involved management 41 times for a percentage of 55.4.

Table 6

The Frequency and Percent of Involvement of Management  
in the Selection Process, Classified by Enrollment

Enrollment Class	<u>Frequency of Involvement</u>		Percent of Involvement
	All persons or groups	School-related persons or groups	
Class A	183	132	72.1
Class B	74	41	55.4
All Schools	257	173	67.3

Table 7 shows the number of schools reporting, the frequency and mean frequency of involvement of persons or groups other than the school board in the selection process classified by enrollment. The frequency of involvement of persons or groups other than board members reported by 39 schools was 257, for a mean frequency of 6.6. The 29 Class A schools reported a frequency of 183, for a mean frequency of 6.3. Class B schools reported a frequency of 74, for a mean frequency of 7.4.

Table 7

The Number of Schools Reporting, The Frequency  
and Mean Frequency of Involvement of Persons  
or Groups Other Than the School Board,  
Classified by Enrollment

Enrollment Class	Number of Schools Reporting	Frequency of Involvement	Mean Frequency of Involvement
Class A	29	183	6.3
Class B	10	74	7.4
All Schools	39	257	6.6



## Chapter 4

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The selection of the chief school executive, the superintendent, is one of the most crucial decisions the public school district board of directors may be called upon to make. The one personal relationship most vital to the health of a school system is the one between the superintendent and the board of directors.

During calendar year 1977, there were sixty-five changes of superintendents in Iowa's 449 public school districts (Appendix B). This amounts to almost a one in seven turnover rate of superintendents. There has been a marked increase in superintendency turnover during the past several years.

### THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to determine the selection practices currently used in the employment of public school superintendents in the State of Iowa. The study focused on several aspects of the search and selection process as recommended by authorities and leaders in educational administration. The study was centered on the questions: (a) How closely are the recommended selection procedures followed by Iowa boards of directors? and (b) How extensive are the selection procedures used by Iowa boards of directors?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study consisted of a survey instrument which was mailed to the president of the board of directors of each of the sixty-five Iowa public school districts who hired a superintendent or had a vacancy for the superintendency during the calendar year 1977. Forty-five replies were received representing a response from 69.2 percent of the schools involved.

The items included in the survey instrument were based on the salient features gleaned from a wide range of suggestions found during the review of the related literature.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) was designed in three parts:

1. Part one identified the enrollment of the respondent's school. From this information, the data was tabulated in three enrollment classifications (1) all schools, (2) Class A schools representing enrollments of less than 1,000 students, (3) Class B schools representing enrollments of 1,000 or more students.
2. Part two consisted of twenty-seven questions concerning procedures used in the selection process.
3. Part three was designed to determine the amount of involvement of various persons, groups or representatives of groups in five phases of the selection process.

## FINDINGS

Some of the prominent findings were:

1. Of the vacancies during 1977, 80% were in Class A

schools, and 20% were in Class B schools (Table 1).

2. Less than half (eleven) of the twenty-four items concerning procedures used in the selection process were used by a majority of the schools (Appendix E).

3. The majority of the Class A schools used eleven of the twenty-four procedures and the majority of the Class B schools used fourteen (Table 2).

4. The procedures used in the selection process by a majority of schools were (1) verified information on resumes and references by phone or personal contact, (2) reviewed and defined respective roles of the board and the superintendent, (3) narrowed the field of candidates and selected final candidates after interviews, (4) reached a unanimous vote on the candidate to whom the position was offered, (5) made an analysis of the school district and school system, (6) used a prepared list of questions to be covered in the interview, (7) made an analysis of the community, (8) visited the communities of the final candidates, (9) established written qualifications for candidates, (10) reviewed the written board policies with attention to the working relationships of the superintendent, and (11) adopted a written statement of criteria to be used in screening (Appendix E).

5. The procedures not used in the selection process by a majority of schools were (1) required tests as predictors of potential success of candidates, (2) extended contract with a stipulation that a psychological evaluation be completed, (3) hired a consultant to aid in the selection process, (4) used a checklist during visits to communities of finalists, (5) required a special application blank, (6) used a rating scale for items covered in the interview and/or

visitations, (7) extended contract with a stipulation that a physical exam be completed, (8) used a checklist to verify information on resumes and references, (9) prepared a brochure to be sent to candidates about the community, school, and position, (10) obtained assistance from organizations for the selection process, (11) provided each board member with a file folder containing data for each person interviewed, (12) weighted each item covered during the interview and/or visitation as to the board's feeling of importance, and (13) prepared a written job description for the superintendency (Appendix E).

6. The three additional items used by the majority of Class B schools were (1) obtained assistance from organizations for the selection process, (2) required a special application blank, and (3) provided each board member with a file folder containing data for each person interviewed (Table 2).

7. The majority of the schools (52.4%) obtained outside assistance for the selection process from outside the school district either from organizations or consultants. These sources of aid were utilized by 38.7% of Class A schools and 90.9% of Class B schools (Appendices E and F).

8. There were five procedures with a percent of use difference greater than twenty percent between Class A and Class B schools, with the Class B schools participating to the greater extent. The procedures and the differences in percent of use were (1) interview file folder - 46.3%, (2) application blank - 35.8%, (3) obtained assistance - 34.6%, (4) prepared brochure - 21.0%, and (5) visited communities - 20.5% (Table 3).

9. The mean number of applications received was 32. Class A schools received a mean of 24 while Class B schools received a mean of 55 (Appendix G).

10. The mean number of candidates selected for further investigation and interviews was 6. Class A schools selected a mean of 5 while Class B schools selected a mean of 7 (Appendix G).

11. The mean number of final candidates selected by boards that narrowed the field after interviews was 3 (Appendix G).

12. Although 90.5% of the boards reached a unanimous vote for the candidate to whom the position was offered, four boards did not. The split votes of the three schools reporting were 5-2, 3-2, and 4-1 (Appendices E and G).

13. School boards involved various persons, groups, or representatives of groups in the decision making process for the selection of the superintendent on a very limited basis (Appendix H and Table 7). Class B schools involved people other than board members slightly more than Class A schools (Table 7).

14. When school boards involved other people in the selection process a large majority (82.9%) were the following school-related persons (1) board secretary, (2) outgoing superintendent, (3) district administrators, (4) faculty, (5) non-certified staff, and (6) pupils. Class A schools relied on these people to a greater extent (85.8%) than Class B schools (75.7%) (Table 5).

15. The involvement of school management personnel (1) board secretary, (2) outgoing superintendent, and (3) district administrators was great (67.3%). Class A schools relied on these people to a greater extent (72.1%) than Class B schools (55.4%) (Table 6).

16. Over half of the involvement of persons or groups in the selection process was in the areas of (1) analysis of community and school needs and (2) interviewing candidates. The setting of qualifications for candidates and screening applicants involved less persons and groups, and the final selection of the superintendent involved the least number (Appendix H).

17. Boards involved others almost exclusively in an advisory capacity, allowing the voting capacity in only eight instances compared to granting the advisory capacity 249 times. The voting capacity was granted only to (1) the board secretary, (2) the outgoing superintendent, or (3) district administrators. The voting on the final decision on the appointment of the superintendent was reserved solely for the board (Appendix H).

#### CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. Iowa public school boards do not follow recommended procedures in the selection of superintendents closely or extensively. Over half of the procedures measured by the survey instrument were not used by a majority of those schools responding (Appendix E).

2. Iowa public school boards involve other persons, groups, or representatives of groups in the selection process to a very limited extent (Appendix H and Table 7). The majority of those involved are school-related people (Table 5), and primarily management personnel (Table 6).

3. Iowa public school boards involve other people in an advisory capacity almost exclusively with the voting capacity being given infrequently and never given during the final selection vote, which by law must be reserved for the board (Appendix H).

4. Iowa public school boards with school enrollments of 1,000 or more follow recommended procedures in the selection of superintendents more closely and extensively than those boards with school enrollments of less than 1,000. The majority of the larger schools used fourteen of the twenty-four procedures (Table 2). The larger schools had a larger percentage of use in a majority of procedures used (Appendix E and Table 3).

5. Iowa public school boards with school enrollments of 1,000 or more involved other persons, groups, or representatives of groups more than those boards with school enrollments of less than 1,000 (Table 7). The larger schools involved school-related people and management personnel less than the smaller school (Tables 5 and 6).

Other conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. Iowa public school boards with school enrollments of less than 1,000 call for outside assistance for the selection process from organizations or consultants much less than boards with enrollments of 1,000 or more (Appendixes E and F).

2. Iowa public schools with school enrollments of more than 1,000 receive more applicants for the superintendency, and select more candidates for further investigation and interviews than boards with enrollments of less than 1,000 (Appendix G).

3. Iowa public school boards do not all reach unanimity in voting for the appointment of school superintendents. One superintendent gained his position on a 3 to 2 vote, a highly precarious situation for a new person entering into a new superintendency (Appendices E and G).

#### IMPLICATIONS

Some of the implications of the study are:

1. Iowa school boards should be more concerned about the procedures used in selecting a new superintendent. If they are uncertain as to procedure when the opening occurs, they should call upon the Iowa Association of School Boards, the Iowa Association of School Administrators, or the Iowa Department of Public Instruction for assistance.

2. These three organizations as well as Iowa colleges and universities with departments of school administration should become more active in training Iowa school boards through distribution of materials, consultants, or workshops.

3. Candidates for superintendencies should become aware of recommended selection procedures in order to judge the school board's operation and effectiveness during the selection process, and through this, they may gain an insight into the board's effectiveness in operating the entire school system.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations for future study are:

1. Follow-up on the schools that responded to this study



at some time in the future to determine the degree of satisfaction with the performance of the superintendents hired and compare this with the results of this study.

2. Determine the reasons for the high turnover in superintendencies in Iowa with special attention to the schools with enrollments of less than 1,000 students which experienced 80 percent of the vacancies during 1977. Figures obtained from the State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction show that during September of 1977, 324 or 72.2 percent of Iowa public schools had an enrollment of less than 1,000, and 125 or 27.8 percent had an enrollment of 1,000 or more.

3. Study certain elements of this study more in-depth, such as the criteria used by schools in screening applicants or the types of questions or concerns raised during interviews and their relative importance to boards.

4. Create a model for selection procedures to be used by Iowa public school boards that reflects current conditions, trends, and concerns as expressed by the educational leadership of the state.

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APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

A SURVEY OF THE SELECTION PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES  
USED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF SUPERINTENDENTS  
IN IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Please check the enrollment category for your school on January 13, 1978.

0-499      500-999      1,000-1,999      2,000-2,999   
3,000 and over

Please indicate whether your board of directors followed the procedures listed below in the selection process for the superintendent you hired for the vacancy that existed during 1977. Please fill in the blanks where additional information is requested if it applies to your district.

As part of the preparation for the search:

	YES	NO
1. Did you obtain assistance from organizations such as the Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa Association of School Administrators, or the Iowa Department of Public Instruction?	___	___
2. Did you hire a consultant to aid in the selection process?	___	___
3. Did you review and define the respective roles of the board and the superintendent?	___	___
4. Did you review the written board policies with special attention to the working relationships of the superintendent?	___	___
5. Did you make an analysis of the community and its needs and problems, strengths and weaknesses?	___	___
6. Did you make an analysis of the school district and school system, their status, basic needs, areas requiring development of change, etc.?	___	___
7. Did you establish written desired qualifications and personal attributes for candidates?	___	___
8. Did you prepare a written job description for the superintendency?	___	___

YES NO

9. Did you require any tests or evidence of scores on testing instruments as predictors of potential success of the candidates?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

If yes, please indicate the testing instruments used:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Did you prepare a brochure or packet of information to be sent to candidates concerning the community, school, and the position?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

11. Did you require a special application blank to be completed by candidates?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

As part of the screening of applications:

YES NO

12. Did you adopt a written statement of criteria (or a checklist) to be used by those involved in the screening?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

13. Did you verify information on resumes and references by phone or personal contact?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

14. Did you use a checklist to verify information on resumes and references?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

15. How many applicants did you have for the position?

\_\_\_\_\_

16. How many candidates were selected for further investigation and interviews after the initial screening process?

\_\_\_\_\_

As part of the interviewing process:

YES NO

17. Did each board member have a file folder for each person interviewed containing all data about the candidate?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

18. Did you use a prepared list of questions to be covered in the interview with all candidates?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

19. After the interviews, did you narrow the field of candidates and select final candidates?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_

20. How many final candidates did you select?

\_\_\_\_\_



- |   | YES | NO  |
|---|-----|-----|
| 21. Did you visit the communities of the final candidates?  | ___ | ___ |
| 22. Was a checklist used during visits to the communities of the final candidates?  | ___ | ___ |
| 23. Was a rating scale used for each item covered during the interview and/or visitation to help evaluate the information gained? | ___ | ___ |
| 24. Was each item covered during the interview and/or visitation weighted as to the board's feeling of importance?                | ___ | ___ |

As part of the selection and appointment process:

- |  | YES | NO  |
|--|-----|-----|
| 25. Did the board reach a unanimous vote on the candidate to whom the position was offered?                                      | ___ | ___ |
| If not, what was the vote?<br>___ yes, ___ no, ___ abstaining  |     |     |
| 26. Was the contract extended with a stipulation that a psychological evaluation be completed prior to the assumption of duties? | ___ | ___ |
| 27. Was the contract extended with a stipulation that a physical examination be completed prior to the assumption of duties?     | ___ | ___ |

The section on the next page concerns the involvement of various persons, groups, or representatives of groups that may have participated in the decisions made during five phases of the selection of a new superintendent. The five phases are listed under columns 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and are (1) the analysis of community and school problems, strengths, weaknesses, and needs, (2) the setting of the desired characteristics and qualifications for the new superintendent, (3) the screening of the applicants and the selection of candidates for further investigation and interviews, (4) the interviewing of the selected candidates, and (5) the final selection and appointment of the new superintendent.

Under each of the columns representing one of the phases, you are asked to place a check mark whether the board involved any of the persons, groups, or representatives listed in an advisory capacity only (that is to gain reactions, comments, advice, or input), or whether in a full voting capacity in making the final decision for that phase.

No check mark for a group in a particular column would indicate that the group was not involved in that phase of the decision making process.

PERSONS, GROUPS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS	1	2	3	4	5
	<u>Analysis of Community and School Needs Advisory/Voting</u>	<u>Setting Qualifications for Candidates Advisory/Voting</u>	<u>Screening Applicants Advisory/Voting</u>	<u>Interviewing Candidates Advisory/Voting</u>	<u>Final Selection of Superintendent Advisory/Voting</u>
School Board	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Board Secretary	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Outgoing Superintendent	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Consultants	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
District Administrators	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Faculty	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Non-certified Staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pupils	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Community Leaders	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Selection Advisory Group	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Civic Groups	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Unions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
The Media (TV, Press)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please List)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## APPENDIX B

## SUPERINTENDENT VACANCIES DURING 1977

Compiled by Rose Thomas, Secretary, Supervision Division, Department of Public Instruction, State of Iowa.

Albert City-Truesdale	*Guttenberg	*Paton-Churdan
*Anthon-Oto	*H L V	*Preston
*Ayshire	Harmony	Rembrandt
*Baxter	Highland	*Riceville
*Beaman-Conrad	*Interstate 35	Semco
*Bennett	*Iowa City	Shellsburg
*Bettendorf	*Keokuk	*Sioux City
Blakesburg	*Lake City	Southeast Warren
*Boone Valley	Lisbon	*South Page
*Burt	*Lytton	*South Tama
*Cardinal	*Mar-Mac	*Spirit Lake
*Crestland	*Marion	*Titonka
Dallas	Maurice-Orange City	*Urbana
*Denison	Mingo	*Villisca
Dike	Morning Sun	*Vinton
Dubuque	*New Hartford	*Wall Lake
*Edgewood-Colesburg	*New London	Westfield
Exira	*Northeast	Whiting
*Galva	*Northeast Hamilton	Wilton
*Garnavillo	*Northwest Webster	*Woodbine
*George	Olin	*Woodward-Granger
*Graettinger	*Ottumwa	

\* Indicates school responding to the survey instrument.

## APPENDIX C

May 3, 1978

Dear Board President:

During the past few years, the number of superintendent vacancies has increased significantly. There were sixty-five vacancies in Iowa for the calendar year 1977. This has prompted an investigation of the selection procedures and practices used by boards in the employment of superintendents in Iowa public schools. It is the topic selected for a thesis being written to fulfill the requirement for the Specialist in Education Degree at the University of Northern Iowa.

As the president of a board who hired a superintendent or had a vacancy for the superintendency during 1977, we seek your participation in this study and ask that you complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. Your responses will be confidential and the results will not identify you or your school district in any way. The questionnaires are coded solely for the purpose of identifying response return.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning the completed instrument. Thank you in advance for taking the time from your busy schedule to contribute to this study.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hrecz  
Box 74  
Royal, Iowa 51357

JH:ms  
Enclosure

## APPENDIX D

May 18, 1978

Dear Board President:

Enclosed is a copy of a cover letter and questionnaire sent to you recently. If you have returned the completed questionnaire, thank you for your cooperation and please disregard this letter.

Realizing that this is a busy time of the year, and that some of you may have laid the questionnaire aside to complete at a later date, this follow-up is being sent.

There were sixty-five vacancies for the superintendency in Iowa during 1977, and a response is desired from each board president involved. Your completion of the questionnaire is vital to the validity of the study. I would be most grateful to you for finding the time to complete and return the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hrecz  
Box 74  
Royal, Iowa 51357

JH:ms  
Enclosure

## APPENDIX E

TABULATION OF 24 ITEMS OF SURVEY CONCERNING  
SELECTION PROCEDURES USED

Item Number	Procedure	Number of Schools Responding	Frequency Procedure Used	Percent Procedure Used
1	Obtained assistance	42	16	38.1
2	Hired consultant	42	6	14.3
3	Defined roles	42	39	92.9
4	Reviewed policies	42	25	59.5
5	Analyzed community	42	29	69.0
6	Analyzed school	42	31	73.8
7	Written qualifications	42	26	61.9
8	Job description	42	21	50.0
9	Used test	41	1	2.4
10	Prepared brochure	41	14	34.1
11	Application blank	42	8	19.0
12	Screening checklist	42	22	52.4
13	Verified information	42	41	97.6
14	Checklist to verify	42	14	33.3
17	Interview file folder	42	20	47.6
18	Interview questions	42	31	73.8
19	Narrowed field	42	38	90.5
21	Visited communities	42	28	66.7
22	Visitation checklist	38	7	18.4
23	Used rating scale	42	9	21.4
24	Importance weighting	42	20	47.6
25	Unanimous vote	42	38	90.5
26	Psychological exam	42	1	2.4
27	Physical exam	42	9	21.4

## APPENDIX F

TABULATION OF 24 ITEMS OF SURVEY CONCERNING  
SELECTION PROCEDURES USED CLASSIFIED  
BY ENROLLMENT

Item Number	Procedure	Enrollment Classification			
		Class A (Less than 1,000)		Class B (1,000 or More)	
		Number of Schools Responding	Frequency Procedure Used	Number of Schools Responding	Frequency Procedure Used
1	Obtained assistance	31	9	11	7
2	Hired consultant	31	3	11	3
3	Defined roles	31	30	11	9
4	Reviewed policies	31	19	11	6
5	Analyzed community	31	21	11	8
6	Analyzed school	31	23	11	8
7	Written qualifica- tions	31	19	11	7
8	Job description	31	14	11	7
9	Used tests	31	0	10	1
10	Prepared brochure	31	9	10	5
11	Application blank	31	3	11	5
12	Screening check- list	31	16	11	6
13	Verified informa- tion	31	30	11	11
14	Checklist to verify	31	10	11	4
17	Interview file folder	31	11	11	9
18	Interview questions	31	22	11	9
19	Narrowed field	31	29	11	9
21	Visited communities	31	19	11	9
22	Visitation check- list	28	4	10	3
23	Used rating scale	31	6	11	3
24	Importance Weighting	31	15	11	5
25	Unanimous vote	31	29	11	9
26	Psychological exam	31	0	11	1
27	Physical exam	31	7	11	2

APPENDIX G

TABULATION OF ITEMS 15, 16, 20, and 25 OF SURVEY CONCERNING  
SELECTION PROCEDURES USED

ITEM 15. NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR THE  
POSITION CLASSIFIED BY ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Class	Number of Schools Responding	Total Number of Applications	Range Applications Received	Mean Applications Received	Median Applications Received
Class A	29	706	1-56	24	23
Class B	10	549	12-120	55	56
All Schools	39	1,255	1-120	32	27

ITEM 16. NUMBER OF CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR INTERVIEWS  
CLASSIFIED BY ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Class	Number of Schools Responding	Total Number of Candidates	Range Candidates Selected	Mean Candidates Selected	Median Candidates Selected
Class A	31	170	1-10	5	6
Class B	10	73	3-9	7	8
All Schools	41	243	1-12	6	6

Continued



APPENDIX G CONTINUED

ITEM 20. NUMBER OF FINALISTS SELECTED AFTER INTERVIEWS  
CLASSIFIED BY ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Class	Number of Schools Responding	Total Number of Finalists	Range Finalists Selected	Mean Finalists Selected	Median Finalists Selected
Class A	28	72	1-5	3	2
Class B	8	23	2-4	3	3
All Schools	36	95	1-5	3	3

ITEM 25. NUMBER OF BOARDS REACHING A UNANIMOUS VOTE ON SUPERINTENDENT OFFERED POSITION  
CLASSIFIED BY ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Class	Number of Schools Responding	Frequency Unanimous Vote	Frequency Split Vote
Class A	31	29	2*
Class B	11	9	2**
All Schools	42	38	4

\* The votes of the two boards not reaching unanimity was 4-1 and 3-2.

\*\* One of these two boards did not report the vote, the other board split 5-2.

APPENDIX H

TABULATION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING ADVISORY OR VOTING INVOLVEMENT  
BY PERSONS, GROUPS, OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS IN FIVE PHASES  
OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

PERSONS, GROUPS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS	1		2		3		4		5	
	Analysis of Community and School Needs		Setting Qualifications for Candidates		Screening Applicants		Interviewing Candidates		Final Selection of Superintendent	
	<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>	
School Board	10	30	9	31	10	32	9	35	7	38
Board Secretary	17	1	12	0	13	1	12	0	10	0
Outgoing Superintendent	16	1	14	1	10	1	6	1	4	0
Consultants	2	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
District Administrators	12	0	10	0	11	0	11	2	7	0
Faculty	7	0	4	0	2	0	8	0	2	0
Non-certified Staff	4	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	0	0
Pupils	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
Parents	5	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	0
Community Leaders	6	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Selection Advisory Group	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Civic Groups	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
The Media (TV, Press)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Please list)										
Past Board Members	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frequency, 39 schools reporting (excluding school board involvement)	76	2	52	1	43	2	51	3	27	0

APPENDIX I

TABULATION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF LESS THAN 1,000 REPORTING  
ADVISORY OR VOTING INVOLVEMENT OF PERSONS, GROUPS, OR REPRESENTATIVES OF  
GROUPS IN FIVE PHASES OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

PERSONS, GROUPS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS	1		2		3		4		5	
	Analysis of Community and School Needs		Setting Qualifications for Candidates		Screening Applicants		Interviewing Candidates		Final Selection of Superintendent	
	Advisory/Voting		Advisory/Voting		Advisory/Voting		Advisory/Voting		Advisory/Voting	
School Board	10	22	9	23	8	23	8	25	6	28
Board Secretary	14	0	11	0	11	0	9	0	9	0
Outgoing Superintendent	14	0	11	1	8	0	5	0	3	0
Consultants	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
District Administrators	8	0	7	0	8	0	7	1	5	0
Faculty	4	0	2	0	1	0	5	0	1	0
Non-certified Staff	3	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
Pupils	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Parents	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Community Leaders	5	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Selection Advisory Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civic Groups	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Media (TV, Press)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Please list)										
Past Board Members	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frequency, 29 schools reporting (excluding school board involvement)	56	0	39	1	32	0	33	1	21	0

APPENDIX J

TABULATION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WITH ENROLLMENTS OF 1,000 OR MORE  
REPORTING ADVISORY OR VOTING INVOLVEMENT OF PERSONS, GROUPS,  
OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS IN FIVE PHASES  
OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

PERSONS, GROUPS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS	1		2		3		4		5	
	Analysis of Community and School Needs		Setting Qualifications for Candidates		Screening Applicants		Interviewing Candidates		Final Selection of Superintendent	
	<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>		<u>Advisory/Voting</u>	
School Board	0	8	0	8	2	9	1	10	1	10
Board Secretary	3	1	1	0	2	1	3	0	1	0
Outgoing Superintendent	2	1	3	0	2	1	1	1	1	0
Consultants	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
District Administrators	4	0	3	0	3	0	4	1	2	0
Faculty	3	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	1	0
Non-certified Staff	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pupils	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Parents	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
Community Leaders	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Selection Advisory Group	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Civic Groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
The Media (TV, Press)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (Please list)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Frequency, 10 schools reporting (excluding school board involvement)	20	2	13	0	11	2	18	2	6	0