

A NATIONAL SURVEY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
THE SEX OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS
OF HOW THEY RESPOND TO POLICY QUESTIONS

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The purposes of this study were to report on the effect of female board members and to determine if male and female board members held different perceived roles and responsibilities. Women have been stereotyped as having board interests which differed from their male counterparts. Women have also been viewed as having different perceptions of board responsibility than men.

A stratified random sample (4,441) of 18 percent was drawn from the population of subscribers to The American School Board Journal who are local school board members. A return rate of 34 percent (1,525) was realized.

The survey used in this study was divided into three parts. Part I of the survey gathered demographic information about the school board member's school district and the pressing management concerns of the same

districts. Part II, provided personal information about school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal. Part III sought information about personal views, opinions, and involvement of female school board members as seen by both males and females.

Respondents reported that males are more involved and more interested in facility and financial issues. This study indicated that if women gain more seats in the future, there will be an attempt to shift board emphasis from facility and financial concerns to curriculum and community involvement concerns. Female respondents were more likely to believe that school system operation would change if women became a majority on school boards.

The study showed that the number of female board members has not increased significantly over the past three years and a majority of female board members worked outside of the home. Females believed themselves more qualified in curriculum while males believed themselves more qualified in finance.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother, _____, who not only inspired me with her love and courage but also gave me the ambition to look to the stars and the inspiration to reach for one.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	4
Statement of the Problem	4
Research Questions	6
Statement of Significance	6
Limitations of the Study	7
Definitions	7
Organization of the Study	8
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	9
Historical Data of Female Board Members	9
Summary	60
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	61
Research Methodology	61
Sample	62

Instrumentation	66
Questionnaire Development	67
Data Collection	70
Method of Analysis	71
Summary	73
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	74
Description of the Population Sample	74
Demographic and Personal Data Relative to Respondents	75
Enrollment	75
Classification	76
Percentage of Female Board Members	80
Method of Selection	80
Sex of Respondents	83
Race of Respondents	83
Age of School Board Member	83
Educational Attainment of Respondents ...	87
Family Income of Respondents	91
Occupation Categories of Respondents	91
Years Served by Respondents	92
Marital Status	92
Children Attending Public School	92

Service to Present School District	96
Board Committee Involvement	99
Findings for Each Research Question	99
Research Question I	101
Research Question II	108
Research Question III	117
Summary	124
 CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 125
Purpose of the Study	125
Summary of Related Literature	126
Research Questions Restated	127
Research Methodology	127
Summary	128
Conclusions	131
Recommendations for Further Study	136
 RESEARCHER'S COMMENTARY	 138
BIBLIOGRAPHY	140
APPENDIX A	144
APPENDIX B	153
APPENDIX C	155
VITA	157

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Regions of the United States	64
2	Population and Sample by Region	65
3	List of Survey Items for Each Research Question	68
4	Distribution of Returned Surveys by Region with National Indicators ..	77
5	Distribution of Returned Surveys by Enrollment with National Indicators	78
6	Classification of Responding School Districts	79
7	Percentage of Female Board Members Nationally	81
8	Method of Selection of Respondents ..	82
9	Sex of Respondents	84
10	Race of Respondents	85
11	Regional Percentage of Respondents by Race	86
12	Age of Respondents	88
13	Educational Attainment of Respondents	89
14	Educational Attainment of Respondents by Region	90
15	Family Income of Respondents	93
16	Occupation Categories of Respondents	94

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
17	Years Served by Respondents	95
18	Service to the School District	97
19	Percentage of Respondents by Regions Employed by Their School Districts	98
20	Percentage of Respondents Reporting Board Committee Involvement	100
21	Board Members Reporting Enough Access to Financial Information	102
22	Access to Financial Information by Region	103
23	Percentage of Respondents Visiting Schools on a Regular Basis	104
24	Respondents Suggesting Changes in Operation of School After Visits to Schools	105
25	Area of Board Responsibility in Which Respondents Feel Best Qualified	106
26	Areas of Board Responsibility in Which Respondents Feel Best Qualified By Regions	107
27	Reviewing Instructional Material Before Classroom Use	109
28	Should More Time Be Spent on Basics	110
29	Level of Involvement	112
30	Effect of Women Serving on School Boards	114

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
31	Percentage of Respondents by Region Regarding the Effect of Women on School Boards	118
32	Agreement as to the operation of the School System	119
33	Primary Reason for Seeking Board Membership	122
34	Hours Spent on School Board Business per Week	123

LIST OF CHARTS

<u>Chart</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Percentage of Respondents Reporting Heavy Involvement in Categories of Board Responsibility	113
2	Effect of Women Serving on School Boards	115
3	Male and Female Board Members Agreement as to the Operation of the School System	120

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the focal governing bodies in communities throughout the nation is the local school board. This board is comprised of individual members elected or appointed to establish policy and to provide guidance for educational endeavors within the community. Struble (1922) in a study of school board personnel concluded that women generally did not make good school board members but did devote more time to school activities and did assist in educational policy development (p. 40). Caughn (1956) investigated the socioeconomic backgrounds and attitudes of Illinois school board members on pertinent educational issues and found that gender was not considered to be a significant factor with regard to school board effectiveness.

The National School Boards Association found in their 1974 report that women exceed men in time devoted to school board service and have more leadership experience prior to school board service (p.1). Their findings suggested that 76 percent of women school board members were either full or part time housewives.

Varner (1975) examined the personal characteristics

and relative importance assigned to selected educational problem areas by school board members in the state of Virginia. He concluded that knowledge of personal characteristics could not be predictive of the level of importance assigned to educational problems by board members. However, it was noted that males appeared more concerned with discipline and constitutional rights of students than females.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents in Saiter's 1978 poll of women school board members in Ohio thought that women were somewhat better at having insight into children's needs and fifty-seven percent thought women have the edge in being able to stay in contact with parents. However, forty-six percent thought men can better understand financial problems.

Nearly half of the women school board members in her survey thought homemakers and employed women make equally effective board members. Not surprisingly, those who believed women who stay at home perform better as school board members attributed it to their greater freedom and amount of free time. One agreeing with this point of view wrote, "Housewives are not as afraid to stick their necks out at a board meeting as some people who have careers. They don't have as much to lose." One who disagreed that

women who stay at home are better board members said "staying at home limits a person." (p. 252)

Other findings in this study included:

* Women most often are members of the education, public relations, legislative, policy, and personnel committees.

* Female board members tend to give priority to the content and quality of the education program and the public relations program.

* Women have an informal network from such organizations as the P.T.A., the League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women which provides a powerful, personal and professional support system.

* Women board members tend to perceive their roles and the role of the board more politically than do men board members. As a result men and women seem to approach school board membership differently, from different backgrounds, and sometimes with different goals.

According to Marshall and Heller, (1983) the percentage of women on U.S. school boards stood virtually unchanged at twelve percent between 1927 and 1975. An American School Board Journal article published in 1978 states that a 1972 survey conducted by the National School

Boards Association indicated that only 11.9 percent of school board members were female. In 1978 a national survey found that females make up 26 percent of the school board members. (Underwood, McCloskey, Umburger p. 23)

The Seventh Annual Survey of Board Members reported in the The American School Board Journal, January, 1985, that 31.4 percent of board members were women. (Underwood, Fortune, Cleary p. 29)

According to the Journal's seventh annual survey, women's professional training, availability, and schedule flexibility are reflected in their more frequent involvement in specific activities related to the school board, such as meetings and discussions with administrators, other board members, parents, and student groups, visits to the classroom, and community contact.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of the sex of school board members on school system operation as determined by questionnaire responses. In what ways will the differences impact the operation of the school system?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What effect does the increase in female board members

and their differences with male board members have on school boards? Women in the past have been seen as having different perceptions than men. Will women vote differently than men on policy questions? In what ways will these differences impact the policy of a school system's operation?

Women board members have increased significantly during the past thirteen years. According to Marshall and Heller (1983) they have more educational leadership training because of their involvement and experience in running such organizations as the P.T.A., League of Women Voters, and the Association of University Women. Because few women board members work outside of the home they have time to devote to school board duties.

According to Underwood and Alvey (1985) the results of a 1984 American School Board Journal survey indicate women board members see more imbalance in the division of power between the board and superintendent than men board members see. Women say that superintendents exercise more authority over administration, personnel, and financial management than do men board members. To right this imbalance, women tilt the scales further toward the board than their male colleagues would. (p. 25)

Will women, because of increasing numbers, as board

members change the board involvement in the decision making process or the administration of the school system?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In pursuit of the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Will board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum?
2. Will women change the board's involvement in the decision-making process or the administration of the school system?
3. Do male and female board members have different ideas regarding the operation of the school system?

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Do male and female board members have different ideas regarding the operation of the school system? If a difference exists, and the board begins to place a different emphasis on school operations, then superintendents, most of whom are male, will need to be aware of these changes.

A school system runs smoothly only when the board and the administration understand and agree on their

respective roles (Alvey & Underwood p. 25). The road to agreement might not always be smooth, but it can be traveled more easily if everyone knows what pitfalls to avoid. Finding out where perceptions mesh and where they clash --- can be healthy for the superintendent, the board, and for the school system. (Alvey & Underwood, p. 47)

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were:

1. A follow-up survey cannot be conducted in an effort to improve the response rate. The American School Board Journal requires anonymity in conducting surveys.

2. The population from which the sample was drawn was that of subscribers to The American School Board Journal and was not that of the total school board member population serving as school board members in the United States.

3. The responses to the questionnaires were assumed to represent the true opinions of the respondents.

DEFINITIONS

Several terms have special connotations in this study. These terms have been defined according to their application in this study.

Demographic characteristics refer to socially relevant variables such as age, sex, socioeconomic status, race, and marital status of the school board member's environment and personal status as noted by the individual school board member.

School board member refers to a citizen who is a member of a group of people, elected or appointed, which establishes policy in the local public schools.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The first chapter contains introduction, purpose of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the problem, limitations of the study, and definitions. The second chapter presents a review of the relevant literature about female school board members and their role in the governance of the schools. Chapter three includes a description of methodology, selection of the sample, instrumentation formulation, collection of data, and method of analysis. The fourth chapter is a description of the response data, descriptive data relative to variables, and analysis of data concerning research questions. Chapter five contains the summary, results, and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature relevant to the sex of school board members and their response to policy questions in the operation of a school system. This chapter is arranged historically, includes the characteristics of female school board members in general, the historical opinions of female board members, and their role on boards of education.

The sources reviewed included books, periodicals, journals, dissertations, and papers.

HISTORICAL DATA OF FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS

The American School Board Journal reported in it's reprise column in July, 1983 that in 1908, women were a "missing link" for boards. The column stated that men outnumber women on school boards by a wide margin. That even though relatively few in number, women board members now wield considerable, sometimes even disproportionate, influence over education decisions. (p. 39). Because of their generally more active roles in their children's education and in community activities, some school

officials would argue that women are especially effective board members in certain areas of school business.

In 1908, however, women board members were considered a novelty. At that time, debates were waged on the merits of allowing women to serve as school officials.

Pauline Periwinkle published "Women on School Boards" in the June, 1908 issue of the Journal. The agitation about women serving on school boards at that time was not due to any wish to reflect on school management by men, but the feeling was gaining that women could be of much assistance to men in looking after certain phases of school interests that had not been sufficiently stressed. She explained that the commercial and financial aspects of life "have cut a deep groove in his mind - some might call it a rut". Women were much needed in every phase of civic life that concerned childhood as they were in the home.

The Journal quoted Periwinkle as saying, "There is no reason why woman's abilities should not prove equally as valuable on school boards as in schoolrooms." She listed reasons why a woman could fill certain needs that no man could supply: The majority of teachers are women; occasions arise affecting the health, morals, and discipline of children; teachers could freely confide to a fellow woman in authority, knowing that she would

"concentrate her time and ability and womanly experience to solving these problems." (p. 39)

She went on to say that men as a whole were not as actively interested in school matters as were women as a whole. There were not 'fathers' clubs' in every ward but that ward was a rare and neglected one that did not have a 'mothers' club'. They have forged that 'missing link' between the school and the home, which school boards never supplied.

Periwinkle felt that women intuitively sympathize with and understand child nature and needs. That man sees the material needs and plays the 'good provider' in the schools just as he does at home.

Even when it came to making financial provisions, she said it was customary for school boards to appeal to the women to help secure the funds needed for school extension and betterments. So why not place this powerful influence and active interest at a point in school service where the public would reap even greater benefit from it?

Periwinkle's closing statement in this 1908 article was:

Certainly, the home life offers the best condition for all-around development that provides both the paternal and the maternal

influences. The time will come when school boards will be no more complete without women than they would be without men. (p. 39)

Blackwell (1911) states that many sources agree that the efforts of interested women proved very effective in helping to pass school bond issues. In various states across the country, the votes of women helped to erect new school buildings and to raise money for other school improvements.

Scott Nearing (1917) investigated the sex of board members and the size of boards. Smaller boards, that is 10 or less members, tended to predominate with only the larger cities having larger boards. Women constituted 7 percent of school board membership, with women board members more common in the larger cities. The vast majority of school boards were composed of business and professional people, and a relatively small number of women and wage earners (who comprised the majority of the population in the areas surveyed) were represented on boards.

George Struble (1922) studied the efficiency and effectiveness of city school board members. He stated that individuals with teaching experience generally made good school board members, but women teachers were judged

to be lower in financial acumen than other groups. Struble also concluded that women generally did not make good school board members but devoted more time to school activities and assisted in educational policy development.

The American Association of School Administrators Yearbook (1946) lists the following as three of the signposts for service for a board of education: membership on the board is an opportunity for public service, unity within the board is so essential that the board should have the minimum of permanent committees, and in the best school administration practice the board "legislates" and the superintendent "executes".

The thirty-fourth yearbook by the American Association of School Administrators (1956) described the typical school board as having about five members. There may be one or two women -- about 1 in 10 members is the average for the country as a whole.

It goes on to describe a typical female board member as more interested in a first-rate education for boys and girls and not so much in the financial end of the school board duties. She is usually a former teacher and sympathizes readily with the teachers in the job confronting them.

Carolyn Mullins (1972) wrote that the female school

board member still has a tough time of it, but her number is growing -- and so is her determination. The article portrays women as one of the most unmilitant minorities in this country. In The American School Board Journal survey of that year one characteristic emerged from the portrait drawn of the female school board member. She is a woman who can cope. She can cope with the obligations of a family or career, with an exhausting schedule, and with trials that plague school board members, irrespective of sex. Above all, Mullins states that she can cope with the patronizing and with the veiled hints that she is some kind of unfeminine freak.

Mullins states as her opinion that most often, the American boardwoman is somewhere between 35 and 55, is or has been a professional businesswoman. Teachers and housewives were plentiful in the survey but did not appear in overwhelming numbers. Most have husbands and children, the latter being, in most cases, grown or nearly so.

Mullins (1972), who served as a boardwoman for a school district in suburban Chicago, makes this point:

Considering, then, that the pace is just short of killing; the burdens of office enormous and the problems frequently compounded by her sex; the financial

rewards generally nonexistent; and heaven knows there's more grief than glory in it -- why on earth does she serve?

The reasons listed are because she wants to prove that a woman "can" do it; she believes that a truly representative board needs a "feminine viewpoint"; she cares about the education of children, and she believes she's every bit as capable and qualified as the next person.

Female board members, according to this article, resent the implication that they ran only because they were female. While it seems clear that their sex was far from being the sole determining factor in the decision to seek office, few female candidates were able to ignore their sex completely.

According to The American School Board Journal Survey (1971) there was a growing awareness on the part of voters that women can serve as effective policy makers, bringing to their boards insights and abilities often beyond the scope of their male colleagues. The fact that they are women may make them more attuned to the needs of children, possibly more so than busy businessmen who do not spend as much time with youngsters.

According to Mullins (1972) the boardwoman's rapport

with students, teachers, and the community is, as she tells it, head and shoulders above that of male colleagues, because she is available. She has more time than most of her breadwinning counterparts, and she is willing to give it generously. Her constituents tend to turn to her more often with problems and criticism than to the men because, she believes, they find a more sympathetic ear.

Louise Dyer (1973) based her observations on a nationwide sampling of board members. Board members in districts of all sizes, are fed up with being caught in the middle and bearing the blame for education's failures. They are listening to their public as never before. They understand that their destinies are shaped in the shadow of the ballot box.

Dyer's contention is that schools have been the toy of educators for entirely too long--a plaything you couldn't get close to unless you learned and used that elaborate language called educationese. (p. 19) She feels that a split vote has merit. Education, according to Dyer, has labored for a long time under the belief that almost unanimous consent is essential and that education is above controversy.

A National School Boards Association commission on the

role of women in educational governance reported survey results in Women on School Boards (1974). In the first major study conducted about school boardwomen, two provocative findings were that:

Male and female school board members share many characteristics in their school board service. Attitudes about women appear to be a major impediment to women seeking school board office. (p. 1)

The research report (1974) goes on to state that in some areas, women excel men; they devote more time to school board service, and they have more leadership experience prior to school board service. A larger percentage of women (84.7) as compared to men (69.8) have served on the board of at least one other organization before becoming school board members.

Male and female board members alike consistently volunteered the observation that a qualified woman's chances for election or appointment to the board are no different from a qualified man's "unless" there is already "a" woman or "too many" women, on the school board. (p. 1)

It was suggested that women, being only 11.9 percent

of the nation's school board members, were "grossly under represented" on school boards (particularly in the south, west, and central regions of the nation) and that students, women themselves, and school boards were not well served by this imbalance.

This 1974 report did not challenge the image of the typical school board member. It focused on one segment of the school board population which was excluded from the "typical" image: the female school board member. It challenged the often-repeated assumption that male school board members were more able than female school board members, because this study showed the characteristics of men and women on school boards to be comparable. Moreover, those women who were full-time housewives possessed an amount of formal education and leadership experience comparable to male school board members and comparable to employed female school board members. (p.8)

The "average" female school board member in this 1974 study, at the time of her election or appointment to the board:

- * was 42.2 years old
- * had 15.4 years of formal education
- * was either a homemaker or a professional person

- * had served on the board of at least one organization
- * was a homeowner
- * had lived in her community for 17.1 years
- * was married, to a professional person
- * had 3.1 children, of whom 2.8 were attending public schools.

The survey asked the board members to give the three most important factors which influenced their decision to seek office and to serve on the school board. These insights were offered:

* Roughly 8 out of 10 candidates were primarily influenced by their own "personal interest in school affairs" or "sense of duty to community."

* The friends and neighbors of school board candidates exerted more influence than do any other persons.

* One candidate in four was motivated by a particular issue about which they felt strongly.

* School board members attempted to influence school board selection, but only one candidate in four was encouraged by board members.

* Fewer than 1 in 10 candidates were encouraged by school administrators.

* Few candidates sought school board office out of a desire for political experience.

* Neither political parties nor the press had much influence on school board candidates.

Spouses and families, school-related organizations, and non-school-related organizations encouraged more women to seek office than they did the men.

Women indicated they spend more hours per week on school board duties such as meeting, reading, school visitation, and public relations, than men in school districts of comparable size. Women indicated they spend an average of 11.6 hours; men 7.4 hours. Full time housewives spend more time - 12.6 hours - than do women who are employed - 9.7 hours.

W. Michael Morrissey reported in the October, 1973 issue of Phi Delta Kappan on 97 women serving on Indiana school boards in 1971. These women did not believe that they were discriminated against because of sex. He reported that women with six or more years of experience on school boards generally rejected the notion that the superintendent exhibited a bias in favor of men, but women who had fewer years of experience on school boards were

likely to suspect the superintendent of having such bias.
(p. 142)

Concerning board leadership, the women suspected that teachers attempting to deal with troublesome issues would show bias in favor of male board members. The same women felt that they were more effective than men when dealing with library, textbook, and instructional matters.
(p. 142)

Morrissey (1973) went on to state that the study showed that the women with the most education felt that parents were biased in favor of women board members where children and schools were the primary matters of concern. Those respondents, with the highest level of education also indicated that they believed the instructional phase of education was more important than financial matters.

Findings of this study resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Since it is apparent that some sex prejudice, even if a limited amount, is believed to exist among boards of education, it is highly recommended that superintendents take whatever measure they can to increase their own sensitivity to this problem.

2. Superintendents should be prepared to work in a frank and sincere manner with new women board members.

These new members should be given whatever inservice training is necessary.

3. Superintendents should take special notice of the possibility that sex prejudice may exist and may influence the thinking of its women board members.

4. As a means of helping women (and men) board members put their total school district operation in proper perspective, superintendents should plan a seminar for their board members, stressing the interrelatedness of the various aspects of the school operation (plant, finance, and instruction). At the same time, the superintendent could point out the inherent dangers of consistently placing certain board members on certain committees because they possess "special abilities." The tendency to assign board members to tasks because of their "expertise" could conceivably cause them to lose sight of the board's chief policy-making function. Through the seminar vehicle, superintendents might prevent board members from forming their own individual priorities and help them to view the educational process as one which ought to consider, as the basis for every decision, the educational welfare of the student in the community (p. 142).

Research by Paul D. Blanchard (1975) suggested that

women board members are more sensitive to community needs. He stated that women tend to be more open about the school board's decision-making process and that school boards on which women serve are more likely to have conflicts.

A survey of school superintendents found that most of them had negative opinions about women school board members. Blanchard's research revealed meaningful differences between men and women school board members. In a survey administered to a national sample of more than 1,000 school board members, a few significant differences emerged in their attitudes toward representation and decision-making. When asked about the responsibilities of a school board member which were most important, women respondents emphasized the importance of "hearing complaints and grievance of parents" and "maintaining contact with state and federal legislators" substantially more than their male counterparts. Blanchard (1975) concluded that this seems to indicate among the women a sensitivity to community needs and desires, and an orientation to communicate with important constituencies outside of the educational world to a greater extent than among male board members.

Other items in Blanchard's survey involved board members' relationships to interest groups in the school

district. Responses to these questions revealed a somewhat ambivalent attitude of women toward these groups. On the one hand, women more often than men were likely to be contacted by representatives of interest groups. On the other hand, women were less likely than men to initiate contact with groups to try to gain support for a specific policy. Blanchard's conclusion was that apparently large numbers of women are uncomfortable with such a strategy, possibly because they find it to be an unacceptable part of their role, or perhaps because they are too inexperienced to know which groups to contact or the most effective method of initiating such contact. (p. 8)

Blanchard referred to the 1975 NSBA survey which revealed two areas of the decision making process upon which female board members seemed to have a significant impact. One important finding was that boards with at least two women members were less likely to conceal the decision-making process from the public. Board members with less than two women on their board were much more likely to report that the board voted unanimously on an important issue, despite disagreement among board members.

The second important impact of women on school boards is that boards with at least two women on them not only

did not conceal the internal conflict which existed, but in fact, had more internal conflict.

According to Blanchard, many observers believe that school board conflict is inevitable, and that boards without conflict are probably not doing a conscientious job of responding to the diverse opinions of the people they represent. His conclusion then was that:

...the presence of women on local boards of education contributes in a meaningful way to a healthier, more realistic and open atmosphere of decision-making. (p. 9)

Blanchard (1975) also addressed the major obstacle of attitude of people when voting for school board members. It is not the attitude of the women themselves, but the attitude of school administrators, especially superintendents, as being prejudiced against women.

He quoted one Boston area superintendent who characterized women school board members as follows in a statement to The American School Board Journal:

By and large, women on school committees (school boards) are nitpicking, emotional, use wiles

to get what they want, demand to be treated as equals, but have no hesitancy at all to put on the pearls and insist on "respect" when the going gets rough - and they talk too much.

This attitude, according to Blanchard's article, can become a more serious obstacle under certain conditions. The NSBA Commission (1975) described an "informal quota system" which operated to the disadvantage of women candidates. Interviews with hundreds of board members revealed the fact that it was more difficult for a woman to be appointed or elected to a school board if a women or women served on that school board.

Although American women have been eligible to vote and to hold public office for almost seventy years, men have always outnumbered women in political life. The roles of governmental leader and decision maker have taken on a masculine image. Sexual stereotyping has tended to discourage women from entering the political arena or from seeking positions of political authority.

Kay Hodes Kamin (1974) in a paper presented at the Berkshire Women's History Conference at Radcliffe College

stated that the office of school board member is the one exception to the traditional image in politics. Women have been serving successfully in this capacity for the past eighty years.

Her paper, because of the obvious contrast which schoolboardwomen offer to traditional political stereotyping, took a close look at the historic significance of female school governance. Kamin said:

Available evidence suggests that the origins of female school governance can be traced back to ideas germinated by leaders of the common school movement in the early nineteenth century. In order to hire cheap labor for the new tax supported public schools, these leaders tried to alter traditional notions of female passivity by encouraging women to enter the job market and become public school teachers. The kinds of ideas advanced by these leaders, and the wide acceptance with which they were met, seemed to prepare the public mind to accept arguments concerning female school governance which were advanced at the end of the nineteenth century. (p. 2)

One of the views of the common school founders was the role of women as the natural and proper teachers of children within the home and, therefore, were the natural and proper teachers of children outside the home. This view of the educative role of women was later used to validate claims that it was both appropriate and desirable for women to serve on school boards and to vote in school elections.

A second widely circulated view was that women had more free time to devote to educational activities than men. Kamin (1974) quotes those who favored female governance in Chicago. One proponent explained:

The strong point in favor of (putting women on the school board)... is that women have the time and will attend to the work. The men say that their time is taken up with business, and, of course, it is true.

Another said:

A businessman may be able to give up an evening once a week to the discussion of certain details and school management... but he is not able to leave his shop or office twice or thrice a week during

school hours and visit primary or grammar schools to see whether they are well managed.
(p. 3)

The third, and perhaps most convincing argument, according to Kamin (1974) for female school board members was based upon the success in inducing women to enter the teaching profession. In 1890, approximately 65.5 percent of the nation's teachers were women.

Chicago was among the first cities to appoint female school board members due to the efforts of the Chicago Woman's Club. The club first began to concentrate upon this issue in the 1870's. These women began to discuss the possibility of broadening their control over the education of their children. As one source explained:

Women's Clubs are discussing the public school systems; they are comparing notes on the education of their children; they are scrutinizing and passing upon the qualifications of teachers. Realizing their great common interest in the schools, they are beginning to inquire into the way school boards are chosen,

and the question is mooted in their clubs whether women should not have a voice in choosing the members of the school board, or in fact whether it wouldn't be a good thing to have a few of their own sex placed on such boards.

(p. 5)

The Chicago Woman's Club sent a formal petition to Mayor Monroe Heath in 1877 requesting that two of its members be appointed to vacancies on the school board. The petition received immediate support in the local newspapers.

Kamin (1974) listed the four major points presented in the petition. The first three points dealt with the appropriateness and the practicality of appointing women to the school board.

The petition read:

The interest of the women of Chicago in all matters pertaining to education, whether as mothers, teachers or citizens, being as great as men, entitles them to a voice in all that concerns the public schools of our city.

Women have shown such superior ability, fitness, and fidelity whenever entrusted with a share of the educational work as teachers, principals of schools...or trustees as to entitle them to still higher positions of trust.

The work of a large number of the 19 standing committees of our board, notably those relating to rules and regulations, special studies, textbooks, courses of instruction, salaries, appointment of teachers, libraries, and sanitary affairs need and should have, the counsel and action of women and men.

There are 1,250 female to 50 male teachers in the public schools of Chicago. The interests of these women teachers should not be confided entirely to men.

Female teachers and principals of the time favored the appointment of women to the Board of Education. Kamin quotes one teacher as commenting, "I am not by any means a believer in women suffrage, but I think the idea of electing women to the Board of Education is an excellent one."

The mayor declined the petition, using the argument that it would be improper for a woman to sit on the same school board with men. The Mayor explained that many subjects come up for discussion in the board meetings which "were not exactly suitable topics of conversation between men and women." He went on to say that a woman's presence at such meetings would "at least be embarrassing, and might prevent that freedom of speech and expression of opinion which the educational interests demanded." (p. 6).

Kamin states that there were two additional reasons for the Mayor's decision which were suggested by a local newspaper editorial. The first dealt with purely political considerations. Following the assumption that political appointments are best used for the payment of political debts, the editorial suggested that a female appointment to the board would be "to squander after the most wasteful fashion something which is exclusively meant for the payment of political debts."

The second reason, suggested by the editorial for the Mayor's reluctance to appoint schoolboardwomen, was based on the popular sexual stereotype that women had no head for business. Thus, women were "not fitted for the handling of financial transactions, the oversight of architects and the selection of sights." All of these

were important responsibilities of school board members. She goes on to say that these reasons seem to approximate more closely the kind of subtle obstacles which still confront women in politics today (p.7).

Eleven years, four petitions, and three mayors later, the Chicago Woman's Club finally achieved its goal. In 1888, Mayor John Roache agreed to appoint Mrs. Ellen Mitchell to the Board of Education. Although no explanation is available as to why Mayor Roache was willing to make such an appointment when his predecessors were not, one newspaper speculated that the election of a few women to school boards in some small suburban districts in Illinois might have had some influence on his decision.

Kamin contrasts the sedate way in which Chicago finally appointed schoolboardwomen to the effort to elect women to the Boston School Committee. She states that a public brouhaha started in 1874 when an all male electorate elected four prominent women to serve on the school board.

Immediately after the election, the Boston City Solicitor issued a legal opinion stating that the City Charter and Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts denied women the legal right to serve on school boards.

(p. 9) According to the Solicitor, Mr. Healy, citizens were only eligible to hold those public offices for which they could legally vote. Thus, in a close ballot, the four board positions to which the women had been elected were denied them.

A March 16, 1874 issue of the New York Times charged that the action of the school board was "ill-considered, unjust, injurious to the educational interests of the city, and especially wrong to those wards which have chosen to be represented by the ladies."

The women applied to the Massachusetts Supreme Court for a mandamus to secure their seats on the school board. The Supreme court granted their petitions. Despite this Supreme Court ruling, the City Solicitor issued an opinion stating that since the school commissioners alone, not the courts, had the power to decide upon all questions relative to the "qualification, election, and return of their members", the women were still ineligible to serve. (p. 10). The women again applied to the Supreme Court for redress, but this time the judges sided with the City Solicitor and dismissed their petition.

In 1874, State Senator Fitzgerald, a strong supporter of the women's position, introduced a bill into the Massachusetts Legislature providing "that sex shall not

disqualify a person from serving on school committees." The bill met with little opposition and became law that year.

According to Kamin, a review of late nineteenth -- early twentieth century journals and newspapers revealed four major categories of school policy in which women seemed to have an immediate and favorable impact. These included school financing, the school curriculum, compulsory school legislation, and teacher benefits.

Kamin (1974) suggests that the predominantly upper-middle class origins of the first schoolboardwomen tended to make them rather conservative on most school policy decisions. The positions of early schoolboardwomen seemed indistinguishable from those of the men with whom they served. Even today, she goes on to say, the less than radical nature of the women who run for school board positions is reflected in the kind of slogans they choose to represent them. One recent campaign slogan was "We need a mother on the school board". (p. 17)

Kamin states that from a political point of view, women never seemed to be able to consolidate their gains in the area of school government and for the past eighty years have tended to remain an insignificant minority on most schoolboards. This tends to suggest that the

election and appointment of schoolboardwomen has only been a form of tokenism.

By 1892, the following states had some form of school governance by women: California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin, and the territories of Arizona, Washington, and Wyoming. (p. 20).

Bernadette Doran describes the female board member in a 1977 article for the American School Board Journal as having more experience with power structures and organizing than most men have had because of lack of time. She made the point that because most women did not work in a job outside of the home, she has belonged to club and organizations and chaired several committees and served on boards of these organizations. Because the female of 1977 knows she is bright and talented, she's getting angry with herself for wasting it. According to Doran's article, she is encouraged by friends to run for the school board.

Shirley McCune, director of the Title IX Workshops Project, is quoted in Doran's article as saying:

"There's the general influence of the women's movement. Many feminist organizations

have set up conscious strategies to enable women to run for school board membership and similar positions. At the same time, the movement has simply enabled women to develop the confidence and self-assurance it takes to want to try. Women as a whole are becoming more active politically as well, and they recognize that the school board is a good place to start up the ladder." (p. 26)

The time for increased female participation seemed ripe in 1977. Kenneth Underwood, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, is quoted by Doran as saying:

Title IX, the women's movement, any number of factors have been contributory to the increase in the number of women school board members. Women have more time and, often, more governance experience than do men, and they've been proving it in the last two years by being elected. It's time for women to get out of their kitchens and become active in local affairs. (p. 26)

Doran, not as a derogatory remark, said that the kitchen is where it's been for most of the women. The

overwhelming majority of female school board members listed their occupation as housewife in 1977. She makes the point that women who work outside the home have other channels for leadership and other reinforcements. That it is the well-educated woman at home who realized that public service offers a way to use her talents and resources. Another sign of the times in the late seventies surfaces when Doran quotes McCune as saying, "It'll still be a while before women in business gain the status to have the time professional men do. Obviously, a secretary can't take off three days a week to devote to the school board."

Many well educated women of this time chose not to be employed outside the home and were interested in public service. Donald Taverner, executive secretary of the State School Boards Association, Inc. of Maine said that better educated women have the interest, motivation, time to read, and they come to meetings better prepared than many men.

Doran states that with more women as board members, decisions and policies and procedures should not change very much except for a possible improvement in governance. Simply because she states, women have more experience in group leadership positions than men board members.

In the areas of school board concern, however, the consensus is that things might be a little different. Men and women seem to have gained reputations for concern about certain things as school board members. "This is because a board member draws from his or her own experience in coming to the board," says Marian Thompson, Chairperson of the NSBA's 1974 Commission on the Role of Women in Educational Governance. "Men," Thompson asserts, "tend to be physical plant-oriented, and they love administration. Women tend to be student-oriented." (p. 27).

"I expect that school boards will begin to take greater interest in the curriculum than in the basketball coach and the leaky roof," predicts Ken Underwood. (p. 27)

Other predictions in Doran's article were that there may be no changes at all. Darld Long believes that board members will go along the same general direction, whatever their sex. Their experience becomes the same, and they will begin to operate in the same context.

Many states remain well below the 18-22 per cent national average in female board members. One board out of four still had no women members, and one-third had only a token number. The disparity seemed to follow a regional trend, with school boards in the East having the highest concentration of women members.

Darld Long of Utah is quoted by Doran as saying:
Women are accepted as board members, but
I think men are still uptight about this
kind of thing. Men who are defeated by
women in running for the board seem to
take it a lot harder than if a man had
beaten them. They generally find it
more humiliating. (p. 27)

Doran feels that attitudes are the last to go, and
can still be a minor hurdle for the female school board
member, not among the constituency who elected her but
among those male colleagues who still are not able to
understand why she was elected. Can a male school board
member handle it? "To the extent that man can handle it,"
says N.E.A.'s McCune. "Right now, it seems more difficult
for administrators than board members. But none of these
problems--acceptance or entrance--can be blamed on men.
Both men and women are victims of traditional thinking."
Lorraine Collins of South Dakota said, however, things are
changing. "Men no longer resent or distrust us, in fact
they're on the verge of taking us seriously. For the most
part, men are still humorously tolerant of us." (p.27)

Although men may feel threatened at first, it is a

transitional situation that will "take care of itself in time", explains David Taverner of Maine.

The Ohio School Board Journal did a survey of women board members in their state which was printed in October, 1977. The Journal did not draw a "typical" woman board member. It found that each of the persons who wears the label "woman school board member" to be descriptively and attitudinally unique.

A little more than half the respondents were Republican and white, finished college, married, had a family income of \$30,000 plus, belonged to PTA, civic clubs and considers herself "middle of the road" on educational issues, rather than conservative or progressive. Her concerns are in providing "quality education" and her number one problem is school finances.

Of the 536 respondents in this survey, 68 percent disagreed that a housewife is better able to serve as a school board member than a woman who has a full time job outside the home. One woman wrote, who was not employed, that "Staying at home limits a person," and another said, "working women have a tendency to prioritize and organize their time to a greater advantage,

Viewpoints of those who agreed that housewives make

better board members include: "A housewife is not as afraid to make waves", "Her board duties will occupy a high priority instead of competing with her job," and "She will have time to visit schools while they are in session".

When asked about the differences in the ability of men and women school board members one woman wrote, "I think most mothers are closest to their children's problems, not only at school but in most everything, and therefore have a different viewpoint than fathers or other men have.

Another thought that "Male administrators tend to "trust" men board members more. Administration prefers men. Most administrators are men and resent women board members." Another said, "There is some resentment by superintendents against women being on school boards because this is another area that is dominated by men, and they feel we are intruding. A housewife board member, sees no problems with overt prejudice and little difference in the ability of women and men to function as board members. The female board member, somehow, gets more input from parents and is more aware of the "little things" that become problems. Perhaps she has more time to listen says this housewife. "I do think that at times

male members tend to "put down" a female member or not give her equality in certain issues."

A third of the respondents felt that other men on the board show the most prejudice toward female board members. Male community members are the runner-ups. Fifty seven percent of the respondents felt women have the edge in maintaining contact with concerned parents.

Susan Saiter (1978) reported on this same 1977 Ohio study in the November issue of Phi Delta Kappan. In discussing the differences between male and female school board members, she said that respondents saw little differences in the ability of male and female board members in setting goals for education, working with administrators, understanding teachers' problems, or being familiar with curricular matters. However, seventy-three percent thought women were somewhat better at "having insights into children's needs and forty-six percent thought men better understood financial problems.

Sixty-one percent of the respondents in this survey had attended college or received a bachelor's degree, and nineteen percent had attended graduate school or held a master's degree. Of those not working outside the home, twenty-six percent had been teachers at one time. Of those now working outside the home, the most frequently

named occupation was teacher.

The Third Annual Survey of School Board Members by the American School Board Journal showed that women are increasingly in the picture. The number of female board members was 28 percent in 1979 with the biggest gain in the Western and Pacific regions. The percentage of females grew from 11 percent in 1978 to 23 percent in the Western Region and from 10 percent in 1978 to 39 percent in 1979 in the Pacific region of the U.S. (Underwood, Thomas, Cooke, Underwood p. 23)

The Fifth Annual Survey of the Journal (1983) showed that following a nine-year increase (12 percent women board members in 1972, 32.8 percent in 1981), the proportion of women board members dropped to 28.3 percent nationally in 1982. Women lost representation on school boards in all five regions of the U.S. Only in two regions - the Pacific (33.8 percent) and the Northeast (31 percent) was the percentage higher than the national average. (Underwood, Fortune, Meyer p.23)

The seventh Annual Survey (January, 1985) states that approximately one-third (31.4 percent) of board members were women. (Underwood, Fortune, Cleary)

The Eighth Annual Survey (1986) reports that the gains that women have made in serving as board members

over the last several years took another slight dip. While 36.1 percent of the respondents to the survey were women, statistics show that nationally, 28 percent of board members were women. The study (Underwood, Alvey) goes on to state that women perform committee assignments at a higher level than their percentage representation on the total board in the areas of textbook selection (47.4), curriculum (46.2), and public relations (43.3). (p. 4)

Alvey (1985) goes on to report that a much larger percent of the women board members (79.4) than the men (49.8) were active in parent/teacher organizations. A wider gap occurred regarding volunteer work with 73.8 percent of the women having contributed volunteer efforts compared with 35.3 percent of the men. (p. 27)

Managerial or professional positions were held by 42.1 percent of the women. Almost 40 percent of the women board members indicated that their occupation was that of full-time homemaker. (p.5)

Fran Jennings Aleshire (1980) reported findings in her doctoral study of six Arizona school districts based on interviews with superintendents and board members, the study disclosed that male and female board members had different expectations of the superintendent with whom

they worked.

Aleshire reported these findings in a November, 1980 American School Board Journal article: (p. 10)

* Female board members saw "eye to eye" with male superintendents less often than male board members do.

* Superintendents sometime secretly felt that talking to female board members was trickier business than talking with male board members.

* Female board members often believed that they did not always get the same kind of hearing in the district office that their male counterparts did.

The major problem for male superintendents and female board members, it would seem, is communication. But Aleshire states, "before anyone jumps to any snide, chauvinist, or sexist conclusions concerning this dilemma, consider a few well-documented "givens" concerning this survey:"

* In the areas surveyed, fewer than ten percent of school board members are female and even a smaller percentage of females occupy the superintendency.

* A female board member often is the only representative of her sex on a school board and often must work with an all-male group of administrators.

* Many female board members have not had experience in working with large businesses or organizations and

often are not familiar with the depersonalized relationship that often exists between the school executives and the school board. (p. 10)

The survey showed that females are more comfortable than males with written materials, and women are more inclined to take seriously what they read.

Another finding that can be equated with business experience has to do with school budgets. Aleshire states that the female board members in the Arizona survey tended to think of the budget as a way to communicate the goals and priorities of the district. They also indicate that they thought the line-item format of the Arizona budget was confusing and uninformative, and that it was the superintendent's job to explain the budget in a manner that made sense to them. Male board members also cited the budget as the area of problem with communication with the superintendent but were more inclined to take it "on faith" that the superintendent knew what he was doing.

Female board members participating in the study overwhelmingly rejected public confrontation with other board members or with the superintendent. Their preference was to work out interpersonal problems privately.

In Nexus, a publication of the Northeast Coalition

of educational leaders, (summer, 1981) women working for women board members find both "joy" and "pain". It quoted a woman educator as saying "when I applied for the job I figured I didn't stand a chance with a school committee made up mostly of women. I'd heard that women school committee members just don't hire women administrators." (p. 1)

But she was surprised. She found that they were not strong feminists, but were very supportive. The woman went on to say that she had more trouble with men, who sometimes treated her in a paternalistic way, calling her sweetie and honey.

Another woman who also insisted on anonymity because she also still worked for the same board, had a different story. She is quoted:

"I have more trouble with the women on my school committee than I've ever had with men. Maybe it's a "Queen Bee" thing. They don't like, nor are they comfortable with a woman being in charge." (p.1)

Some other women administrators interviewed by Nexus view their experiences with woman school committee members as ranging from neutral to extremely positive.

"There was a real understanding of purpose, of

strategies, a sense of working as a team, an understanding of the way women work together to achieve a goal...The power was in the hands of women" says Jo Ann Medwid, former principal in Scarborough, Maine.

Suzanne Dubuc, former elementary principal in East Greenwich, R.I. said the women school committee members were supportive of her, but she found the opposite to be true in terms of female teachers working for her. Ms. Dubuc said a conception shared by many women administrators is that generally women tend to pit one against the other to compete in a destructive way. Women have a difficult time working for women.

Two other women were quoted as saying that behavior is dictated by the person rather than the sex, although there is still evidence of the persistence of stereotypes.

The article stated that running for the school board in a small town is much less political than in a more densely populated area. Women who simply care about schools and are not politically oriented are more apt to get involved in a small town.

Barbara Houston, a school board member in New Hampshire said that she has found women board members were willing to do committee work that had to be done during the day such as meeting with teachers or working on

negotiations. "Our women members have been willing to carry an extra share to make it possible for men to be on the board," she said. She also noted that she found the League of Women Voters an excellent training ground for women who later became interested in local or state government. She added that the equal treatment she has received may stem from her background as a math professor. "When we deal with budgets, I feel comfortable," she said.

Marshall and Heller (August, 1983) set out to learn more about schoolboardwomen, why they seek board membership, what they regard as their most important tasks, how do they describe their roles and functions, and do they bring specific "female" leadership qualities to their boards?

The findings were reported in The American School Board Journal. They surveyed 311 school board members in DuPage County, Illinois. The population was around 650,000, had 45 school districts, all of which participated in the study. The number of the county's school board members responding to the survey was 210 or 67.5 percent. The males represented 57 percent of the respondents and the females represented 43 percent.

The typical female board member was between 30 and 49 years old. At least 30 percent had a bachelor's degree,

89 percent were married, 60 percent had a family income of \$40,000 or more, and 78 percent were employed part time or held no job outside the home. Parents represented 97 percent of the respondents and 78 percent were elected rather than appointed to the board.

The study disclosed a number of ways the women differ from the men surveyed:

* School board office seemed to be a logical extension of the women's direct involvement with the school system before joining the board. Male board members had primarily been involved in business and professional organizations and had sought school board membership out of a sense of duty to the community. Women board members had been members of youth, school, and school system organizations and advisory councils and had sought board membership primarily out of a personal interest in education and school affairs.

* Women board members have more personal involvement in the school than do their male counterparts, as well as more experience in running organizations. Many women held or had held the office of president or vice-president in service organizations. Their continued personal involvement in the school system appears to have made women more knowledgeable about schools and education than

many male board members. Holding prior office seems to have provided not only practice in leadership, but an expectation for effective and efficient leadership from the school superintendent.

* Organizations such as the P.T.A. , the League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women have become important training grounds for female board members. The leadership methods women demonstrate on school boards reflect the behavior norms and expectations sanctioned by these organizations. Such methods include an emphasis on problem finding (characterized by careful research and investigation) and problem solving (characterized by critical analysis).

Men, according to the article, although influenced by their organization memberships, are more involved in business and professional organizations, and their behavioral norms and expectations are oriented more toward management and efficiency.

* Men largely assume the board presidency and women generally assume the clerical role of board secretary.

* Societal orientation of women toward children and schools and of men toward business and professional interests is paralleled by their committee assignments and chairmanships. Women are most often members of the

education, public relations, legislative, policy and personnel committees. Men most often are members of the budget and finance, negotiations, and buildings and grounds committees.

Women board members are actively involved in long range goal development, public relations, and communications. Men tend to be involved with long-range budgetary and financial issues.

* Female board members tend to give priority to the content and quality of the education program and the public relations program. Men tend to leave the education decisions to the administration. Involvement by women in the decisions affecting the education program includes a strong emphasis on superintendent evaluation and board self-evaluation.

* Nearly 80 percent of the women in the study did not have full-time employment outside the home. Of those who are or had been employed, more than 33 percent of the jobs involved education. Only 4 percent of the men's jobs, however involved education. Because of the schedule flexibility, women were more involved in specific activities related to the school board such as meetings with administrators, other board members, parents, and student groups, visits to classrooms, and community

contact.

* The study suggests that women are part of a low-key, informal network composed almost exclusively of women. This network is derived largely from such organizations as the PTA, League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women. This informal linkage provides a personal and professional support system for women, paralleled only by some of the formal organizations to which male board members belong.

* Women seem to be more political than male board members. The women are more aware of being elected by a constituency and of being responsible to it.

Women more frequently view the school board as a legislature, characterized by the creation of policies through open debate, rather than as a board of trustees of a corporation, characterized by general goal setting and periodic staff review. This difference is indicative of the women's involvement with legislation, community affairs, and public relations.

These differences raise questions about school boards of the future. Will board governance improve because of women's experience in organizational leadership? Will board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum? Will the community become more aware of what is happening in the

schools? Will relationships between male superintendents and female board members become strained?

Marshall and Heller hypothesized about probable changes as the balance of men and women board members becomes more equal.

1. School board members will demand greater participation in school system decisions.

2. Orientation programs for new board members will focus on the reasons members sought office and on the respective roles of boards and superintendents.

3. Administrators (especially superintendents) and board members will examine their perceptions of male/female role.

4. Boards and administrators will meet more frequently to evaluate the operation of the school board, its goals, and methods.

The conclusion was that a new spirit of cooperation between boards and administrators are essential if schools are to handle this power shift sensibly and well.

Marshall in the February, 1984 issue of Education Digest, reported, regarding this same study, that neither men nor women school board members can be regarded as homogeneous. However, it is also clear that in many cases the degree of differences among male and female board

members outweighed the similarities. The differences between men and women board members found in this research are subtle, but nevertheless discernible.

There appears to be, according to Marshall, a "new breed" of board member developing which is characterized by active participation in decision-making, sensitivity and involvement in the community, a diminished reliance on one authority for decision-making, and a strong desire for staff and program accountability. At this point in time, women seem to be in the forefront of this "new breed".

Stephanie Marshall, in a presentation at the American Association of School Administrators Convention, in February, 1986, in San Francisco, discussed further her survey findings.

In studying the profiles, roles, and behaviors of men and women board members, she noted that the trends observed in 1983 are even more evident in 1985. She feels that a new type of board member emerging is represented by both men and women despite the fact that the focus of the study was on women board members.

Marshall (1986) described the new breed of board member as younger, tending not to have roots in the community, upwardly mobile, do not patronize the public, and do not want to be patronized. They are moving, action

people. She says that given the opportunity, they will take over the administration, feeling that they could do a better job. They will fill in the vacancy when there is a superintendent who is a weak leader. This new breed is according to Marshall verbal, open, and is shifting the power bases. They accept very little on faith, asking a lot of questions until they feel comfortable. And women are clearly in the vanguard of this new breed. (p. 2)

Marshall lists several key issues involving this new breed of board member.

1. Shifting power bases - They want shared power, to move from a monopolistic to pluralistic power structure.

2. Information access - They want it all. No longer is information privy of administrators. Information is power.

3. Probing behavior - They deal with problem finding and problem solving.

4. Increased communication - This should be between boards, superintendents and administrators.

She quotes one superintendent from Pennsylvania as saying, "Women board members were less concerned with macho and sports and are more concerned with solid education. They are willing to pay for quality."

Women want information. Women question why and if, men ask what and how; men tended to leave the educational decision-making to the administration, women had an intense degree of involvement.

Some implications of the increase in women on boards reported in Marshall's paper: (pp 22-26)

1. Board procedures may change, and improvement in governance may result.

2. Administrators and boards may devote more time and attention to the curriculum and instructional program because females will keep it in the forefront.

3. Women may take a far more active role in educational policy-making, demanding greater participation in decision-making and a change in the decision-making process.

4. Increased availability of time and the fact that many are teachers may cause women to become more involved in and knowledgeable about school district activities.

5. The increased involvement of women could result in a diminishing of the first-line between policy-making and policy-administering.

6. The administration may become more aware of and responsive to community needs which may result in greater citizen and community awareness of and participation in

school board activities and school district affairs.

7. The increase in women on school boards may shift the focus to the representation of community values and interests.

8. The propensity of women toward legislative initiation, open discussion, dialogue, and community representation may decrease the unanimity that has typically characterized trustee school boards in the past and foster a more grass-roots approach to local educational policy-making; this also has the potential of lessening administrative control, which is threatening.

9. More tension may be created between superintendents and female board members; stress caused by lack of predictability and lack of control and women asking more questions. Probing questions, - the superintendent is no longer the expert. The superintendent becomes more of an administrative consultant to the board.

10. Women administrators may have greater access to the superintendency. The preference for men has been a preference for power. This is no longer true.

Marshall closed in saying, it is critical that new avenues of working with the changing membership of boards be developed. We need to find ways to accept and balance the unique contributions of men and women to school

governance. Whether male or female, administrator or board member, we enter the educational environment to provide schooling for children. We must find ways of working together so this purpose now becomes secondary to factional and personal agendas. (p. 35).

SUMMARY

The review of the literature provided information about the historical role of female board members. Most of the major studies concerning female board members were done at a state level.

To establish the prevailing stereotype of female board members, some articles were reviewed stating the opinion of the writer. These had no data base, but helped to establish the perception of female board members.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology of this study, explain the sampling technique, describe the data collection instrument and the administration of the questionnaire, and provide an explanation of the statistical procedures used to analyze the data.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research methodology was utilized in this study. The data described were obtained through a survey. Mouly (1970) points out that the purpose of survey or descriptive research is to establish the status of the phenomenon under investigation. (p. 234) Kerlinger (1973) has clearly stated that survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, and behavior. (p. 411) Survey research provides a quick and confidential method of gaining this information.

This study surveyed a nationwide sample of school board members by means of a mailed questionnaire

(Appendix A). Mouly (1970) lists several inherent advantages of survey methodology over other methods of collecting descriptive data, namely: (1) it permits wide coverage at a minimum expense, (2) it has the ability to reach persons who are difficult to contact, and (3) it elicits more candid and objective replies because of the impersonality of the survey. The greater coverage as well, as the other advantages, makes for greater validity in the results through promoting the selection of a larger and more representative sample. (p. 242)

Gilbert Sax (1979) lists as another advantage for the questionnaire that each respondent receives the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way, as they are on standardized tests. Questionnaires are, then, supposed to yield more comparable data than do interviews. (p. 245)

For these reasons, the researcher selected descriptive-survey procedures to determine the attitude of local school board members concerning the relationship of the sex of school board members on school system operation and school board policy.

SAMPLE

The critical elements of a survey include the

selection of the sample, development of the instrument, implementation of a successful response strategy and doing an analytical summary of the results.

Regions of the United States, as identified by The American School Board Journal, were used (Table 1). The technique of stratified random sampling was used because of the wide variance in the number of school board members from region to region. Stratified random sampling, according to L.R. Gay (1976), is the "process of selecting a sample in such a way that identified subgroups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in the population". (p. 71)

Sax (1979) lists advantages of stratified random sampling over simple random samples:

1. Stratification takes advantage of whatever information is known concerning the characteristics of the population.

2. It can be demonstrated that sampling errors arise only within strata, not between strata.

3. Stratified sampling allows selection of cases within each stratum in different ways and in different proportions. (p. 186)

The stratified random sample shown in Table 2 was

TABLE 1

Regions of the United States
According to National School Board Association Membership

NORTHEAST REGION
(Membership: 5,601)

Connecticut	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
Delaware	New Hampshire	Rhode Island
District of Columbia	New Jersey	Vermont
Maine	New York	Virgin Islands
Maryland		

CENTRAL REGION
(Membership: 8,379)

Illinois	Kentucky	Missouri
Indiana	Michigan	Ohio
Iowa	Minnesota	Wisconsin

SOUTHERN REGION
(Membership: 4,239)

Alabama	Mississippi	Texas
Arkansas	North Carolina	Virginia
Florida	South Carolina	West Virginia
Louisiana	Georgia	Tennessee

WESTERN REGION
(Membership: 3,319)

Colorado	Nebraska	Oklahoma
Kansas	New Mexico	South Dakota
Montana	North Dakota	Wyoming

PACIFIC REGION
(Membership: 3,137)

Alaska	Hawaii	Oregon
Arizona	Idaho	Utah
California	Nevada	Washington

TABLE 2
Population and Sample by Region

Region	School Board Member Subscribers	Number sent 18% Sample
Northeast	5,601	1,008
Central	8,379	1,508
Southern	4,239	763
Western	3,319	597
Pacific	3,137	565
Total	24,675	4,441

prepared from the list of subscribers of The American School Board Journal. Superintendents, professors of education, librarians, etc., were deleted from the list of subscribers so that only local school board members would be surveyed.

Because of an increased number of subscribers to the Journal, the researcher chose an 18 percent random sample of the population, a one percent increase over past studies of this type. The sample selected for survey purposes from this list totaled 4,441.

INSTRUMENTATION

The questionnaire used in this study was developed in cooperation with the editors of The American School Board Journal. The study of school board members throughout the nation was designed to measure differences of male and female school board members toward current issues in public education.

The National Survey of School Board Members consisted of a cover letter and three major sections. Section I included questions to determine the demographic characteristics of school board members and their most pressing concerns. These concerns were compared to the

18th annual Gallup Poll on public schools. Section II dealt with personal information such as sex, age, and race, and Section III included questions on policy-related issues which was further divided into personal views/opinions, school board role, curriculum/instruction, board involvement in personnel, the effect of women serving on school boards and personal information regarding school system responsibilities.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

The questions and educational issues were identified through a review of recent literature, and issues identified by previous surveys. Table 3 shows items used for each research question. The questions were compiled for review by a panel of experts consisting of representatives from the National School Boards Association familiar with such issues as well as selected Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University professors experienced in educational administration and school board studies. In order to validate the questionnaire, it was field tested with two different groups, 1) graduate students in educational administration at Virginia Tech, and 2) Board members not

TABLE 3

List of Survey Items for Each Research Question

Question	Items
Will Board Emphasis Shift from Finance to Curriculum?	3, 11, 18, 20, 30 7 (part II)
Will Women Change Board Involvement in the Decision Making Process or Administration of the School System?	7, 29
Do Male and Female Board Members Have Different Ideas as to the Operation of the School System?	9, 13, 31

selected as part of the sample.

This same panel of experts as well as selected school board members reviewed the completed questionnaire in total and made recommendations for modification to final form. In addition, each group was asked to evaluate the questionnaire with regard to the following areas: 1) clear directions, 2) relevant questions, 3) questions that were not embarrassing to the respondents, and 4) were the questions designed in such a way as to answer the basic research questions. Responses from the field test subjects were analyzed for possible misinterpretation and appropriate revisions made.

Questions 1-7 in part I of the survey gathered demographic information about the school board member's school district and the pressing management concerns of the same districts. Part II, questions 1-16, provided personal information about school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal. Part III sought information about personal views, opinions, and involvement of female school board members as seen by both male and females.

Part A of section III focused on the board member specifically, not the board as a whole. These questions dealt with the financial issues, involvement in and

assistance needed in selected categories, and influence of specific groups.

Part B addressed the role of school board in day to day functions of the school system usually done by school administrators. Curriculum and instruction were the topics in part C. Part D measured the board involvement in personnel and part E measured the effect of women serving on school boards. The board members were asked to indicate the ways in which they believed board operations would change as more women gained seats on school boards. Part G data dealt with personal information regarding board members' opinions and characteristics.

DATA COLLECTION

A total of 4,441 school board members within the United States were identified and requested to participate in this study. In order to increase the return rate, a post card (Appendix B) was mailed to those selected for the survey. Questionnaires accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix C) and a self-addressed, postage paid return envelope were mailed to each person selected for

the sample. According to the standard procedure of the NSBA in all surveys of this nature, an anonymous survey was conducted. The forced anonymity is one weakness of the data collection. The questionnaires were not coded in any manner, and no follow-up for non-response was conducted.

Responses to mail questionnaires are generally poor. Returns of less than 40 or 50 percent are common according to Kerlinger (1973) (p. 414). Previous national studies of school board members reported returns of less than 30 percent (Meyer 1982) (p. 77). The questionnaire mailing occurred in February, 1986 . Of the 4,441 questionnaires mailed, 1,525 were returned giving a response rate of 34 percent.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The returned questionnaires were examined for correctness and completeness. Any questionnaires with one or more parts incomplete were discarded. A total of 1525 questionnaires were received with 43 being discarded for one or both of the above reasons. The total usable returns was 1482 or 33 percent. This was the number used

for the demographic data analysis, However, 9 respondents did not indicate their sex. Therefore, on the male and female data analysis, the total number used is 1473.

All data from the surveys were coded for computer analysis. The data were coded and entered on a computer terminal with three records per questionnaire. The data were analyzed through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer routines. All questions from the survey instrument were analyzed using frequency distributions. Relationships between selected survey items and the sex of the respondents were analyzed according to crosstabulation procedures with the calculation of a Chi-Square statistic for significance.

Responses to survey questions 3, 11, 18, 20, and 30 in Part III and question 7 in Part II were analyzed with frequency distribution and crosstabulation procedures to provide answers to research question I, "Will Board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum." Responses to survey questions 7 and 29 in Part III were analyzed to provide answers to research question II, "Will women change the board involvement in the decision making process or administration of the school system." Responses to survey questions 9, 13, and 31, were analyzed using frequency distribution and crosstabulation

question III, "Do male and female board members have different ideas as to the operation of the school system."

Summary findings for each research question was prepared in tabular as well as narrative form for chapter four. Other questions in the survey were used to support the conclusions of the dissertation.

The computer facility at the Northern Virginia Graduate Center of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University was utilized to process the data.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology of this study, the development of the instrument, the data collection procedures, and the statistical methods used in analyzing the data.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description of the response data and the applied statistical techniques. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the demographic and personal variables of the respondents involved in the survey. The second section presents the findings with respect to each research question, and the third section presents a summary of the chapter.

DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION SAMPLE

The total population of subscribers to The American School Board Journal was 41,700. Of that number 24,675 were board members. From this population, a stratified random sample of 18 percent (4,441) was chosen from the five National School Board regions of the United States. After ten weeks, 1525 of the survey forms were returned. Because some of the surveys were incomplete, a final sample of 1482 or 33 percent of the board member's surveys were analyzed. The distribution of returned surveys by

region is reported in Table 4, with a range of 13.9 percent from the Southern region to 40.6 percent from the Central Region. From this table, it is apparent the percentage of returns from the Pacific, Southern, and Western regions were similar with over two thirds of the responses coming from the Central and Northeast sections of the country.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL DATA RELATIVE TO RESPONDENTS

ENROLLMENT

The distribution of returned surveys by school system enrollment is reported in Table 5 along with the national figures from the Digest of Educational Statistics 1983-84. Just under three fourths (72.2 percent) of the respondents indicated their student enrollment was less than 5,000. More specifically, over half of the respondents reported a student enrollment of between 1,000 and 4,999 students, which is a deviation of 16.6 percent from the national data. Only 20.9 percent reported a student enrollment of less than 1,000 students which is 32.2 percent less than the national data. When comparing the percentage of all returns with the

percentage of all systems, all categories are well represented except that of less than 1,000 pupils; however, this representation is not proportional. Therefore, there may be a proportional bias when comparing districts with a student enrollment of less than 1,000 because respondents are more heavily loaded to larger schools than the National Profile. As stated by Dodge (1981), "The reason for this bias may be that larger systems may devote more financial resources toward membership in national organizations and journals from which this sample was drawn".

CLASSIFICATION

The frequency and percent of responses by community description from each sample group is reported in Table 6. The largest percentage of respondents indicated that their community was classified as small town with 29.3 percent of the total.

In the Eighth Annual Survey of School Board Members conducted in 1985, the school board members described their community as suburban (31.8 percent), small town (27.5 percent), rural (24.7 percent) or urban (13.0 percent).

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNED
SURVEYS BY REGION

Region	Total Number of subscribers	Sample Size	Number Returned	Percent Response By Region
Central	8,379	1508	602	39.9
Northeast	5,601	1008	337	33.4
Pacific	3,137	565	167	29.6
Southern	4,239	763	206	27.0
Western	3,319	597	170	28.5
TOTALS	24,675	4,441	1482	33.4

TABLE 5
 DISTRIBUTION OF RETURNED SURVEYS
 BY ENROLLMENT WITH NATIONAL
 INDICATORS**

Enrollment	Surveys Returned	Percent of All Returns	School Systems National	Percent of All Systems
Fewer than 1,000	310	20.9	8,421	53.1
1,000-4,999	760	51.3	5,501	34.7
5,000-9,999	218	14.7	1,012	6.4
10,000-24,999	130	8.8	457	2.9
More than 25,000	52	3.5	163	1.0
No Response	12	0.8		
TOTAL	1482	100.0	15,858	98.1*

*There are 304 or 1.9 percent of systems nationally that do no operate schools.

**National School Systems data/figures were obtained from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Directory, Public School Systems, 1983-84

TABLE 6
CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Urban	134	9.0
Suburban	396	26.7
Rural	409	27.6
Small Town	434	29.3
No Response	109	7.4
TOTAL	1482	100.0

As shown in Table 6, respondents from suburban, small town, and rural classifications were nearly equal, whereas urban district returns came from only 134 or 9.0 percent of the respondents.

PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS

Nationally women represent 31.6 percent of the board membership (see Table 7). This is nearly equal to the 31.4 percent reported by the American School Board Journal in 1985 and an increase over the 28 percent reported by Alvey in 1986.

METHOD OF SELECTION

Of the 1482 respondents, 9 did not indicate their sex. The total number used to report the differences in males and females is 1473. Of this number, 1399 or 95 percent reported that they were elected to serve on local school boards while 67 or 4.5 percent were appointed to their positions (see Table 8). The percentage of women appointed is nearly the same as the percentage of men appointed to this position.

TABLE 7
NATIONAL PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS

Sex	* Reported Frequency by Respondents	Percent
Male	6794	68.4
Female	3146	31.6
TOTAL	9940	100.0

* Total number of board members reported on the surveys

TABLE 8
METHOD OF SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elected	513	95.5	886	94.9	1399	95.0
Appointed	22	4.1	45	4.8	67	4.5
No Response	4	0.4	3	0.3	7	0.5
TOTAL	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

* Of the 1482 respondents, 1473 indicated their sex.

SEX OF RESPONDENTS

The frequency and percentage of responses by sex is reported in Table 9. Males comprised 934 or 63.4 percent of the 1473 local school board members indicating their sex. Females comprised 539 or 36.6 percent of the respondents.

RACE OF RESPONDENTS

Most of the respondents both male (95.9 percent and female (93.9 percent) were white. The Black, Hispanic, Oriental, and American Indian categories comprised 4.6 percent. (Table 10) Women were better represented in the Black racial category (4.1 percent) than were men (1.4 percent). The Southern region reported the highest percentages of black board members as shown in Table 11. Black females represent 18.8 percent of the board population and black males represent 6.7 percent.

AGE OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Table 12 reports that 633 or 43 percent of school board members were in the 41-50 years of age range. This

TABLE 9
SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	934	63.0
Female	539	36.4
No Response	9	.6
TOTAL	1482	100.0

TABLE 10
RACE OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White	506	93.9	896	95.9	1402	95.2
Black	22	4.1	13	1.4	35	2.4
Hispanic	2	0.4	13	1.4	15	1.0
Oriental	0	0.0	2	0.2	2	0.1
American Indian	5	0.9	9	1.0	14	1.0
Other	6	0.6	0	0.0	3	0.1
No Response	1	0.2	1	0.1	2	0.1
* TOTAL	539	100.1	934	100.0	1473	99.9

*Total percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 11

REGIONAL PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY RACE

Sex	White	Black	Hispanic	Oriental	Indian	Other
NORTHEAST						
Male	98.6	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0
Female	94.2	3.3	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.8
CENTRAL						
Male	97.9	0.8	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.0
Female	98.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
SOUTHERN						
Male	88.9	6.7	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Female	79.7	18.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
WESTERN						
Male	95.7	0.9	0.9	0.0	2.6	0.0
Female	98.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
PACIFIC						
Male	92.9	0.0	4.7	1.2	1.2	0.0
Female	92.6	3.7	0.0	0.0	2.5	1.2

* Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

is similar to the 44.9 percent of female board members and 41.9 percent of male board members in this age bracket. Only 0.5 percent reported being under 25 with no females reporting to be in this age bracket. Other percentages were similar with the exception of over 60. Almost 13 percent (12.8) of the males reported being in this age group as compared to only 8.5 percent of the females.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESPONDENTS

The educational attainment of respondents is reported in Table 13. Of the total respondents, almost two thirds reported having a four-year college education or more. Only 0.7 percent reported having less than a high school diploma. The major difference between male and female board members was the percentage having advanced college degrees. The percentage of females was 11.3 percent less than the males with advanced degrees. More females had post high school training and four year college degrees. Table 14 shows that the Southern region had the highest percentage (39.7) of females with advanced college degrees.

TABLE 12
AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 25	0	0.0	7	0.7	7	0.5
26-35	30	5.6	74	7.9	104	7.1
36-40	100	18.6	153	16.4	253	17.2
41-50	242	44.9	391	41.9	633	43.0
51-60	121	22.4	189	20.2	310	21.0
Over 60	46	8.5	120	12.8	166	11.3
* TOTAL	539	100.0	934	99.9	1473	100.1

* Total percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 13
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than High School	2	0.4	9	1.0	11	0.7
High School Graduates	81	15.0	138	14.8	219	14.9
Post High School Training	113	21.0	163	17.5	276	18.7
Four-Year College	206	38.2	284	30.4	490	33.3
Advanced College Degree	134	24.9	338	36.2	472	32.0
No Response	3	0.6	2	0.2	5	0.3
* TOTAL	539	100.1	934	100.1	1473	99.9

* Total percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 14

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF RESPONDENTS BY REGIONS

Sex	Less than High Sch.	High Sch.	Post High School	College Degree	Adv. College Degree
NORTHEAST					
Male	2.3	10.7	15.4	32.2	39.3
Female	0.0	20.7	19.0	30.6	29.8
CENTRAL					
Male	0.5	18.3	18.8	24.9	37.4
Female	0.5	15.2	22.6	41.0	20.7
SOUTHERN					
Male	0.0	11.9	16.4	37.3	34.3
Female	0.0	2.9	7.4	50.0	39.7
WESTERN					
Male	1.7	16.4	20.7	34.5	26.7
Female	0.0	14.0	26.0	38.0	22.0
PACIFIC					
Male	0.0	10.6	14.1	35.3	40.0
Female	1.3	17.5	28.8	33.8	18.8

* Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

FAMILY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

Table 15 shows that the largest percentage of respondents, 270 or 18.3 percent, reported having a family income range of \$30,000 to \$39,999. The largest percentage of males (20.0) reported having an income in the \$40,000 to \$49,999 category where females had the largest percentage (18.9) reported in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 income bracket. However, more females reported a family income above \$50,000 than did the male respondents. Of the total respondents, 930 or 63.1 percent reported having an income over \$40,000 which represented a 5.8 percent increase over the same combined income categories cited by Alvey in his 1985 study. A new income bracket was added this year (\$150,000 and over) and almost 3 percent of the respondents were in this category.

OCCUPATION CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

Table 16 reports the occupational categories of the respondents. The total of both sample groups had the largest percentage belonging to the Professional category (33.9 percent). The Managerial category comprised 21.6 percent of the total responses. The combined Managerial

Professional categories comprised 55.5 percent of the responses. Females (40.5 percent) reported Homemaker as an occupation and males had the highest percentage (39.5) reported in the Professional category.

YEARS SERVED BY RESPONDENTS

Both of the sample groups reported the largest percent of years experience in the 1 to 4 years category (see table 17). More male respondents reported serving 13 years or more than did the female.

MARITAL STATUS

The total number of married respondents was 1360 or 91.8 percent. Of the female respondents, 475 or 88.1 percent are married.

CHILDREN ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOL (K-12)

According to the male respondents, 919 or 62.0 percent have at least one child attending public school. This is nearly the same percentage reported by females (62.2 percent).

TABLE 15
FAMILY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than \$20,000	32	5.9	50	5.4	82	5.6
\$20,000 - \$29,999	62	11.5	129	13.8	191	13.0
\$30,000 - \$39,999	102	18.9	168	18.0	270	18.3
\$40,000 - \$49,999	77	14.3	187	20.0	264	17.9
\$50,000 - \$59,999	77	14.3	129	13.8	206	14.0
\$60,000 - \$69,999	55	10.2	87	9.3	142	9.6
\$70,000 - \$79,999	24	4.5	36	3.9	60	4.1
\$80,000 - \$89,999	18	3.3	35	3.7	53	3.6
\$90,000 - \$99,999	28	5.2	31	3.3	59	4.0
\$100,000 - \$149,999	30	5.6	38	4.1	68	4.6
\$150,000 and over	18	3.3	25	2.7	43	2.9
No Response	16	3.0	19	2.0	35	2.4
TOTAL	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 16
OCCUPATION CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Managerial	66	12.3	252	27.0	318	21.6
Professional	130	24.1	369	39.5	499	33.9
Skilled Worker	11	2.0	49	5.2	60	4.0
Homemaker	218	40.5	0	0.0	218	14.8
Retired	32	5.9	79	8.5	111	7.5
Agricultural	7	1.3	98	10.5	105	7.1
Other	66	12.2	75	8.0	141	9.6
No Response	9	1.7	12	1.3	21	1.5
TOTAL	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 17

YEARS SERVED BY RESPONDENTS

Category	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 - 4 years	267	49.5	453	48.5	720	48.9
5 - 8 years	171	31.7	255	27.3	426	28.9
9 -12 years	72	13.4	111	11.9	183	12.4
13-16 years	17	3.1	54	5.8	71	4.8
17-20 years	3	0.6	30	3.2	33	2.3
over 20 years	9	1.7	31	3.3	40	2.7
TOTAL	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

SERVICE TO PRESENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Table 18 reports Board Member service to their districts. Over 60 percent of the respondents (61.4 percent) reported being a member of a parent-teacher organization. Females showed a greater percentage (78.3) than males (51.7) in this type of service. Nearly fifty percent (49.5) reported serving the district as a volunteer. Again females (70.3) reported a greater percentage of involvement as a volunteer than did the males (37.3). Only 7.7 percent of the males reported being employed in a professional capacity with the school system as opposed to 19.1 percent of the females. A total of 25.2 percent of females have been employed by the school system in some capacity as opposed to 9.4 percent of the males.

Table 19 reports that the Southern region showed the highest percentage of both male and female board members serving as a professional employee in a school system. Males were 3.4 percent above the 7.7 national average with 11.1 percent serving in a professional capacity. Of the female board members in the Southern region 45.5 percent reported working in a professional capacity for the school system, which is 26.4 percent above the national average.

TABLE 18
TYPE OF SERVICE TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Service	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Member of parent/ teacher organization	422	78.3	483	51.7	905	61.4
School Volunteer	379	70.3	348	37.3	727	49.4
Professional employee	103	19.1	72	7.7	175	11.9
Classified employee	33	6.1	16	1.7	49	3.3
Other	102	18.9	156	16.7	258	17.5

* Percentages do not equal 100% because of multiple responses

Female respondents = 539

Male respondents = 934

TABLE 19

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY REGIONS
EMPLOYED BY THEIR SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Sex	Professional Employee	Classified Employee	Total % Employed
NORTHEAST			
Male	7.5	0.0	8.4
Female	9.1	6.6	15.7
CENTRAL			
Male	6.8	0.5	7.3
Female	18.3	5.0	23.3
SOUTHERN			
Male	11.1	3.7	14.8
Female	45.5	2.9	48.4
WESTERN			
Male	5.2	4.3	9.5
Female	18.0	8.0	26.0
PACIFIC			
Male	9.4	1.2	10.6
Female	16.0	9.9	25.9

BOARD COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

The largest percentage of respondents (29.9) reported serving on the negotiations committee (see Table 20). The percentage of males (32.8) was greater than that of females (24.9) on this committee. The largest percentage of female respondents, (26.5) reported serving on the curriculum committee as opposed to only 16.8 percent of males. Almost one third (31.6 percent) of the male respondents reported the highest percentage as serving on the budget committee as opposed to 22.6 percent of female respondents. More males served on facilities and transportation committees and more females served on the public relation and textbook committees.

FINDINGS FOR EACH RESEARCH QUESTION

The next section presents the finding with respect to each research question. Three research questions guided this study. Each is addressed in turn, summarizing the findings of the study.

TABLE 20

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING
BOARD COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

Committee	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Curriculum	143	26.5	157	16.8	300	20.4
Budget	122	22.6	295	31.6	417	28.3
Facilities	90	16.7	196	21.0	286	19.4
Personnel	106	19.7	170	18.2	276	18.7
Public Relations	113	21.0	107	11.5	220	14.9
Transportation	32	5.9	104	11.1	136	9.2
Textbook	52	9.6	36	3.9	88	6.0
Computer	24	4.5	49	5.2	73	5.0
Negotiations	134	24.9	306	32.8	440	29.9
Other	142	26.3	179	19.2	321	21.8

*Percentages do not equal 100% because of nonresponses and multiple responses.

RESEARCH QUESTION I

Will board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum?

Table 21 reports that the largest percentage of the respondents (86.8) feel that they have access to enough information to deal with school financial issues. The percentage of male respondents (87.7) and female respondents (85.2) were close to the total percentage of 86.6. Table 22 shows that the largest group reporting that they did not have enough access to financial information was females in the Southern region at 20.3 percent.

The 64.7 percent of female respondents who visit school on a regular basis was 14.4 percent greater than the 50.3 percent of male respondents who reported regular visits (Table 23). Of the total respondents, over half reported regular visits. The male (53.3 percent) and female (56.4 percent) respondents were nearly the same in their responses of not suggesting changes after a visit to the schools as shown in Table 24.

In response to the question, "In which area do you feel most qualified?", table 25 shows that 73.5 percent of the females said curriculum/instruction. Most of the male respondents (68.7 percent) reported financial issues

TABLE 21

BOARD MEMBERS REPORTING ENOUGH
ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Answer	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	459	85.2	819	87.7	1278	86.8
No	76	14.1	113	12.1	189	12.8
No response	4	0.7	2	0.2	6	0.4
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 22

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Sex	Northeast		Central		Southern		Western		Pacific	
	N/% yes	N/% no	N/% yes	N/% no	N/% yes	N/% no	N/% yes	N/% no	N/% yes	N/% no
Male	186 86.9	28 13.1	350 91.6	32 8.4	115 85.2	20 14.8	94 81.0	21 19.0	74 87.1	11 12.9
Female	100 84.0	19 16.0	190 87.6	27 12.4	55 79.7	14 20.3	42 85.7	7 14.3	72 88.9	9 11.1

TABLE 23

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS VISITING
SCHOOLS ON A REGULAR BASIS

Answer	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	349	64.7	470	50.3	819	55.6
No	183	34.0	450	48.2	633	43.0
No response	7	1.3	14	1.5	21	1.4
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 24

RESPONDENTS SUGGESTING CHANGES IN OPERATION
OF SCHOOL AFTER VISITS
TO SCHOOLS

Answer	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	175	32.5	312	33.4	487	33.1
No	304	56.4	498	53.3	802	54.4
No response	60	11.1	124	13.3	184	12.5
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 25

AREA OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITY IN WHICH
RESPONDENTS FEEL BEST QUALIFIED

Area	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Curriculum/Instruction	396	73.5	278	29.8	674	45.8
Financial Issues	132	24.5	642	68.7	774	52.5
No response	11	2.0	14	1.5	25	1.7
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 26

AREAS OF BOARD RESPONSIBILITY IN WHICH RESPONDENTS
FEEL BEST QUALIFIED REPORTED BY REGIONS

Sex	Curriculum/Instruction	Finances
NORTHEAST		
Male	29.4	70.6
Female	70.7	29.3
CENTRAL		
Male	28.1	71.9
Female	75.3	24.7
SOUTHERN		
Male	34.8	65.2
Female	88.2	11.8
WESTERN		
Male	31.6	68.4
Female	72.9	27.1
PACIFIC		
Male	32.9	67.1
Female	70.4	29.6

as being the area in which they were most qualified. Table 26 shows the percentage (88.2) of women answering curriculum and/or instruction was higher in the Southern region than in the other regions.

Table 27 reports that the respondents were nearly the same in their answers regarding reviewing instructional materials before use in the classroom. The total was 49.8 percent saying yes and 48.6 percent saying no. Female respondents reported a similar percentage (51.8) saying yes to reviewing materials as did the male respondents with 48.7 percent saying yes.

The majority or 63.8 percent of all respondents thought more time should be spent on basics such as reading, math, writing, and spelling (see Table 28). The male respondents had 68.4 percent answering that more time should be spent on the basics compared to 55.5 percent of the female respondents.

RESEARCH QUESTION II

Will Women change the board involvement in the decision making process or the administration of the school system?

Table 29 and Chart 1 show the level of involvement of

TABLE 27

SHOULD INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL BE REVIEWED
BEFORE CLASSROOM USE?

Answer	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	279	51.8	455	48.7	734	49.8
No	230	42.7	467	50.0	697	47.3
No response	30	5.5	12	1.3	42	2.8
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

TABLE 28

SHOULD MORE TIME BE SPENT ON BASICS?

Answer	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	299	55.5	639	68.4	938	63.7
No	229	42.5	278	29.8	507	34.4
No response	11	2.0	17	1.8	28	1.9
Total	539	100.0	934	100.0	1473	100.0

the respondents. Over two-thirds of both sample groups reported the greatest area of involvement was in policy making. Over half of the female respondents, 61.2 percent reported being very involved in planning and goal setting as compared to 49.8 percent of the males responding. A larger percentage of the male respondents, 42.2 percent, reported involvement in finance and business management as compared to only 26.2 percent of the females responding to this questionnaire. Males showed more involvement in facilities and finance and budget development than did the females. Over half of the female respondents reported involvement in community relations. Only about one-third of the males reported being very involved in this area.

Chart 1 shows the greatest difference in involvement for females in curriculum, community relations, and planning and goal setting. Males showed greater amount of involvement than females in the area of finance/business management, facilities, and budget development.

Table 30 and Chart 2 report the effect of women serving on school boards. The only statement on which a majority (63.6 percent) of both male and female respondents agreed was that women members will spend more time in the schools. Although the majority of respondents

TABLE 29

Level of Involvement

Category	Very Involved		Somewhat Involved		Not Involved	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Finance/Business Management	26.2	36.6	50.6	42.0	18.6	10.7
Facilities	28.2	41.2	49.9	39.7	16.5	12.6
Personnel	34.7	30.2	45.6	45.6	14.7	18.0
Curriculum/Instruction	39.3	23.9	46.2	42.0	9.8	27.8
Community Relations	55.1	33.3	32.5	43.4	8.0	16.6
Student Problems & Issues	27.3	15.1	47.1	40.8	19.1	36.7
Collective Bargaining	25.8	36.9	31.4	24.4	33.8	29.1
Planning & Goal Setting	61.2	49.8	28.9	36.1	4.8	8.6
Purchasing	5.2	7.4	23.0	25.6	65.5	59.7
Policy Making	69.9	66.8	23.2	24.1	3.5	24.1
Staff Evaluation	17.8	16.1	35.1	39.5	41.6	37.4
Budget Development	33.4	41.8	46.8	37.2	15.0	14.7

* Percentages do not equal 100% because of non responses.

CHART 1

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Heavy Involvement in Categories of Board Responsibility

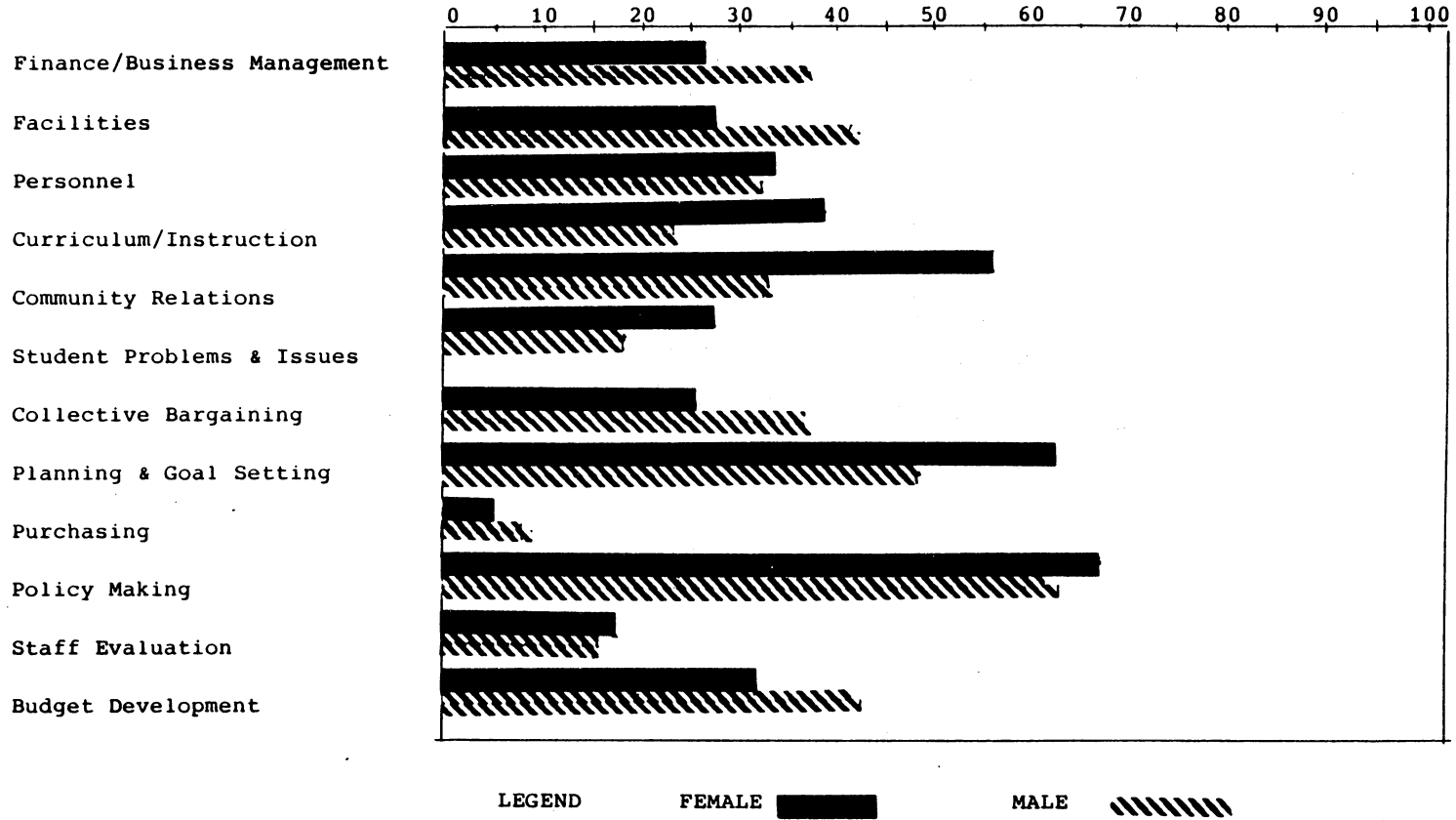


TABLE 30

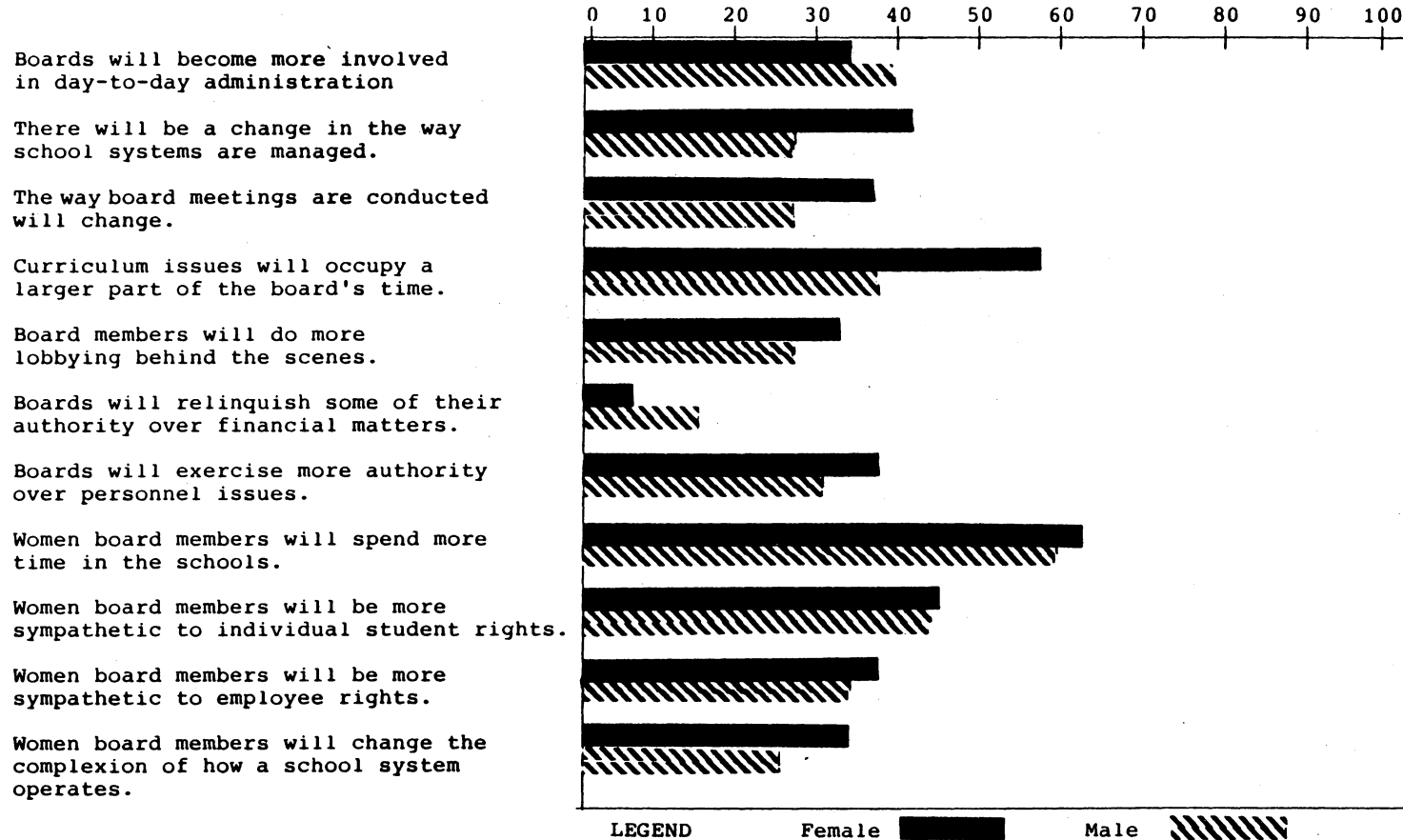
EFFECT OF WOMEN SERVING ON SCHOOL BOARDS*

Question	Female		Male	
	% yes	% no	% yes	% no
Boards will become more involved in day-day admin.	33.2	64.2	40.0	55.6
Change in way school systems managed	40.1	55.7	27.8	67.2
Change in way meetings are conducted	37.8	58.6	26.8	69.1
Curriculum issues will occupy more board time	59.4	36.5	38.4	57.2
Will be more lobbying behind the scenes	30.6	65.1	25.9	69.2
Boards will relinquish some authority over financial issues	7.6	89.1	13.3	82.2
Boards will have more authority over personnel issues	39.3	55.8	30.5	64.8
Women will spend more time in the schools	64.7	30.4	62.7	32.2
Women will be more sympathetic to student rights	46.6	48.4	45.4	49.8
Women will be more sympathetic to employee rights	37.8	57.9	35.0	60.1
Women will change the complexion of how a school system operates	33.6	59.9	26.0	68.5

*Percentages do not equal 100% because of nonresponses

CHART 2

Effect of Women Serving on School Boards



agreed on this statement, Table 23 showed that 64.7 percent of females and 50.3 percent of males reported visiting schools on a regular basis. More than half of the female respondents, 59.4 percent compared to 38.4 percent of the male respondents, felt curriculum issues will occupy a larger part of board time. Other differences included 40.1 percent of female respondents felt that there would be a change in the way school systems are managed. Only 27.8 percent of the male respondents agreed with this statement. Of the female respondents 33.6 percent believed that women will change the complexion of how a school system operates compared to only 26.0 percent of the male respondents.

In comparison to the national percentages, more women (45.6 percent) in the Southern region felt that boards will become more involved in day to day administration. Fewer women (28.0 percent) felt this way in the Western region. Both the Western and Southern regions were above the national average of 40.1 percent for females regarding a change in the way school systems are managed. In the Southern region, 54.5 percent of the females and only 28.8 percent of the males felt this would be a change. In the Western region, the percentages were 26.5 percent for men and 54.2 percent for women.

Again the Southern and Western regions did not agree with the national average concerning curriculum issues. Table 31 reports that 73.1 percent of females in the Southern region and 81.3 percent in the Western region felt more time would be spent on curriculum issues. Both males (16.1 percent) and females (12.2 percent) in the Western region were above the national averages in answering yes to the statement that boards will relinquish some authority over financial issues. Female board members from the Southern region had the highest percentage (80.6) agreeing that women will spend more time in schools.

RESEARCH QUESTION III

Do male and female Board Members have different ideas as to the operation of the school system?

Table 32 and chart 3 report results of the section of the survey indicating agreement as to the operation of the schools. Both male, 94.1 percent and female, 95.5 percent, of the respondents agreed overwhelmingly that problems with the principal should be dealt with by the Superintendent. Of the female respondents, 81.1 percent

TABLE 31

Percentage of Respondents by Region
Regarding the Effect of Women on School Boards

	Northeast		Central		Southern		Western		Pacific	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Boards will become more involved in day-to-day administration.	38.6	34.5	40.6	33.0	44.9	45.6	47.0	28.0	43.8	30.4
There will be a change in the way school systems are managed.	29.1	36.3	28.1	35.7	28.8	54.5	26.5	54.2	40.5	48.1
The way board meetings are conducted will change.	31.9	45.7	23.8	36.0	27.9	35.8	32.1	45.8	31.6	37.2
Curriculum issues will occupy a larger part of the board's time.	38.2	56.1	40.0	59.3	40.0	73.1	48.7	81.3	35.0	55.7
Board members will do more lobbying behind the scenes.	22.5	23.5	24.8	37.0	31.5	24.6	33.6	37.5	35.0	33.8
Boards will relinquish some of their authority over financial matters.	15.8	8.6	13.3	7.6	13.3	4.5	16.1	12.2	10.0	7.6
Boards will exercise more authority over personnel issues.	32.5	49.1	29.7	41.1	29.5	35.9	39.8	43.8	35.0	33.3
Women board members will spend more time in the schools.	60.4	54.0	68.1	66.3	65.5	80.6	69.0	72.0	67.5	79.5
Women board members will be more sympathetic to individual student rights.	46.0	41.2	44.4	50.2	62.5	60.9	48.2	56.3	42.5	42.9
Women board members will be more sympathetic to employee rights.	36.5	38.9	34.2	39.7	40.9	59.1	40.7	52.1	37.5	30.4
Women board members will change the complexion of how a school system operates	23.7	30.4	27.8	33.8	25.0	48.5	31.0	43.8	35.0	33.8

*Totals do not equal 100 percent because of nonresponses

TABLE 32

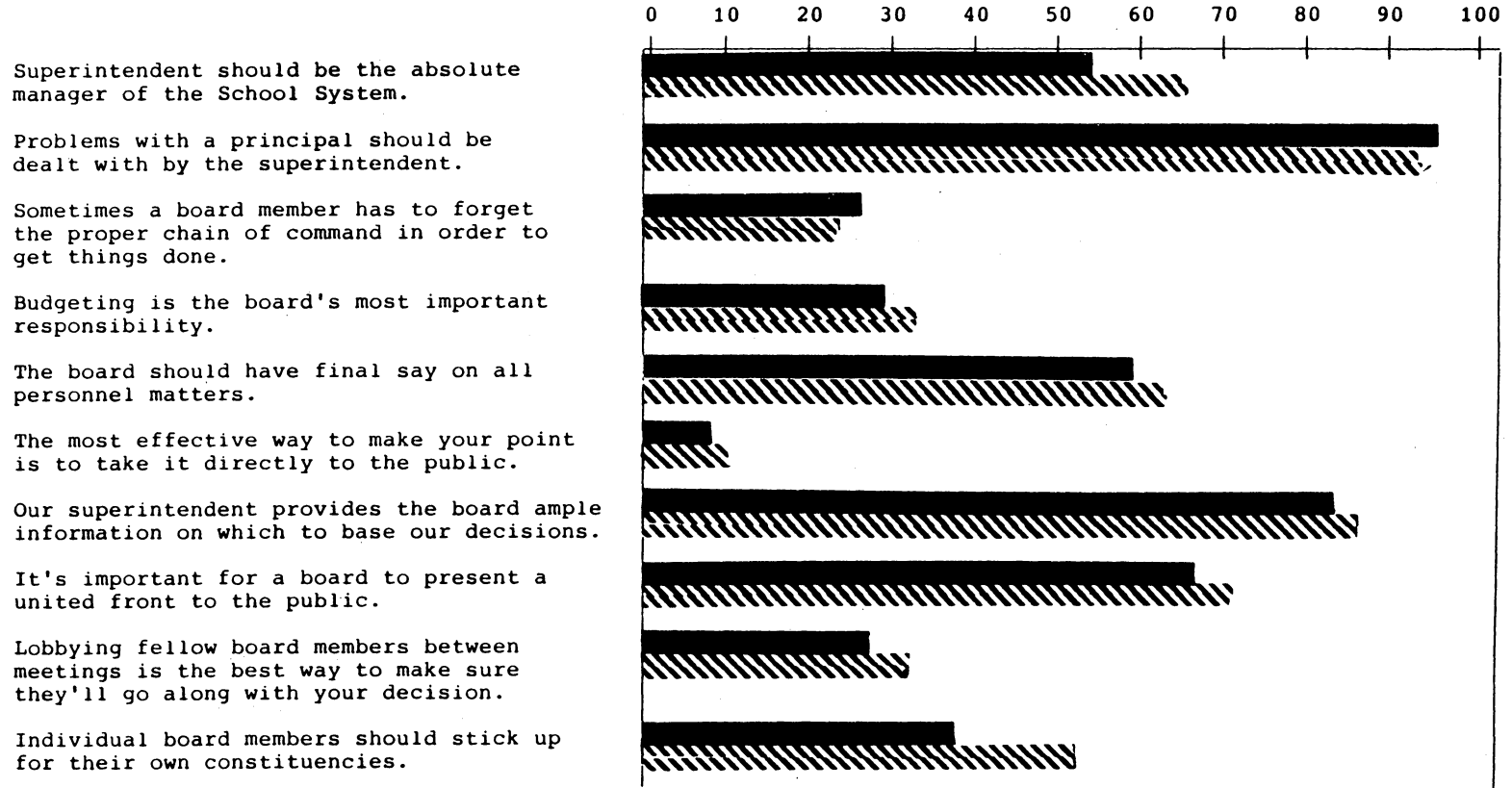
BOARD MEMBERS AGREEMENT AS TO THE
OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Statement	Female		Male	
	% Yes	% No	% Yes	% No
Supt. should be absolute manager	53.8	44.3	64.9	34.0
Supt. deals with problems with a principal	95.5	3.5	94.1	4.8
Forget chain of command	25.8	72.2	24.0	63.3
Budgeting most important responsibility	28.8	66.4	32.5	64.8
Board has final say on personnel matters	59.0	38.2	62.2	36.0
Take point directly to public	8.2	87.8	9.4	87.7
Supt. provides ample information	81.1	16.3	82.4	15.1
Board should present unified front	64.9	29.7	69.8	27.0
Lobbying fellow board members	25.0	71.1	28.7	67.6
Stick up for own constituencies	36.2	54.0	47.2	47.2

* percentages do not equal 100% because of nonresponses

CHART 3

Male and Female Board Members Agreement as to the Operation of the School System



LEGEND

Female Male

Percent answering yes

agreed that the superintendent supplies ample information on which to make decisions. Of the male respondents 82.4 percent responded yes to this statement. The male and female respondents showed a 11.1 percent difference on the statement that the Superintendent should be the absolute manager of the school system. Females reported a 53.8 percent agreement and males reported a 64.9 percent agreement. When asked if individual board members should stick up for their own constituencies, 36.2 percent of the female respondents agreed and 47.2 percent of the males agreed.

Table 33 reports that almost 39 percent (38.9) of the male respondents named serving the community as the primary reason for seeking membership on the board. Female respondents, 34.0 percent, also listed this as the primary reason. Reporting that the primary reason for seeking membership was dissatisfaction with the operation of the schools, were 22.8 percent of the female and 18.7 percent of male respondents. More male respondents, 16.3 percent, than females (10.9 percent) reported being encouraged by incumbents.

A total of 82.7 percent of the male respondents reported spending 1-10 hours on school board business per week. Of females responding, 70.7 percent reported

TABLE 33

PRIMARY REASON FOR SEEKING
BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Reason	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraged by incumbents	59	10.9	152	16.3	211	14.3
To gain political experience	5	0.9	10	1.1	15	1.0
Dissatisfied with schools	123	22.8	175	18.7	398	20.2
Personal Challenge	111	20.6	147	15.7	258	17.5
Personal prestige	2	0.4	7	0.7	9	0.6
Represent community group	16	3.0	24	2.6	40	2.7
To serve Community	183	34.0	363	38.9	546	37.1
To gain influence	2	0.4	11	1.2	13	0.9
Children in School	76	14.1	134	14.3	210	14.3
Others	60	11.1	79	8.5	139	9.4

TABLE 34

HOURS SPENT ON SCHOOL
BOARD BUSINESS PER WEEK

Hours	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 - 5	203	37.7	486	52.0	689	46.8
6 - 10	178	33.0	287	30.7	465	31.6
11 - 15	62	11.5	71	7.5	133	9.0
16 - 20	50	9.2	47	5.3	97	6.6
No Response	46	8.5	43	4.6	89	6.0
*Total	539	99.9	934	100.1	1473	100.0

*Total percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

spending 1-10 hours per week. (Table 34) Over half of the males reported 1 - 5 hours. Females were consistently higher in reporting more hours spent on board business.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented descriptions of the demographic characteristic of school board member respondents. Also included were reports of the findings with respect to each research question.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the study that was conducted. This summary will include a review of the need and purpose of the study, a restatement of the research questions, a summary of related literature, the research methodology employed, and the conclusions derived from the analysis of the data. Also, recommendations for further research will be made.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to report on the effect of female board membership and their differences with male board members on the roles and responsibilities of school boards. Women, in the past, have been stereotyped into different categories than have men. Women have been seen as having different perceptions of board responsibility than men. Information regarding the difference in school board operation was obtained. In addition, the study focused on female board members versus male board members in their views on policy questions.

SUMMARY OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the literature provided information about the historical role of female board members. Most of the major studies concerning female board members were done at a state level.

The common points among the studies were that females had a higher level of educational attainment, that they devote more time to school board duties, that women feel that superintendents exercise more authority than is assigned to them, and that females are more interested in curriculum issues than in the financial matters in a school system.

A 1974 report by the National School Boards Association states that a larger percentage of women than men have served on the board of at least one other organization before becoming school board members. An Illinois study found that women have more involvement in the schools than their male counterparts. It also found that women had held the office of president or vice president in service organizations more often than men.

This study was designed to investigate the relationships of the sex of school board members on the operation of the school systems. It's central purpose was

to consider whether differences which exist will impact the school system operation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESTATED

1. Will Board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum?
2. Will women change the board involvement in the decision making process or the administration of the school system?
3. Do male and female board members have different ideas as to the operation of the school system?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized descriptive research methodology and survey technique to gather data from school board members about the role of females on boards of education.

The sample was drawn from the population of school board member subscribers to The American School Board Journal. The population was stratified by regions of the United States and a random sample of 18 percent was drawn.

The survey form used to collect the data was divided

into three parts. Part I collected demographic information about the respondent's school district and community. Part II collected data relative to the personal characteristics of the school board member, and Part III gathered data about school board policy in selected areas. A return rate of 33 percent was achieved.

The method of analysis and statistical treatments applied to the data were identified. The research questions were analyzed by means of frequency distributions and crosstabulations. The researcher analyzed the data for significance between policy changes and the personal variable of sex to determine the relationship that existed.

SUMMARY

Three research questions guided this study. Each is addressed in turn, summarizing the findings of the study.

1. Will board emphasis shift from finance to curriculum.

School board members were asked if more time should be spent on basics such as reading and math. The males

had a higher percentage answering yes than did the females. The sexes were fairly evenly divided regarding the board's action on reviewing instructional material before use in the classroom.

Both male and female respondents felt they had access to enough information to deal with school financial issues. However, females overwhelmingly answered curriculum and instruction when asked the area of board responsibility in which they felt best qualified. Males indicated finances as the area in which they felt best qualified.

Many school systems do not have committees. Of those who do, the curriculum committee had the highest percentage of females. Males had the highest percentage serving on the negotiations committee and budget committee.

A larger majority of female respondents visit schools on a regular basis. Over half of both males and females reported that they do not suggest changes after a visit.

2. Will women change the board involvement in the decision making process or the administration of the school system?

The school board members were asked to indicate their

level of involvement in these categories: finance/business management, facilities, personnel, curriculum/instruction, community relations, student problems and issues, collective bargaining, planning and goal setting, purchasing, policy making, staff evaluation, and budget development.

The extent of female involvement was highest in the areas of policy making, planning and goal setting, community relations, and curriculum and instruction. With the exception of policy making, female involvement was much higher than male involvement. Male involvement was highest in the areas of policy making, budget development, collective bargaining, facilities, and financial and business management.

Board members were asked to respond to statements regarding the effect of women on school boards. More women than men felt there would be more emphasis on curriculum. The majority of both sample groups felt women will spend more time in the schools as indicated by their responses to this statement.

3. Do male and female board members have different ideas as to the operation of the school system?

Both groups overwhelmingly agreed that the

superintendent should deal with problems with a principal. Slightly over half of the females agreed that the superintendent should be absolute manager of the school system. Almost two thirds of the males agreed that the superintendent should be the absolute manager.

The majority of the female respondents reported being very involved in planning and goal setting, and over half reported heavy involvement in community relations. Males cited more involvement with facilities and finance than the females. More females than males responding felt that there would be a change in the way school systems were managed.

Females were consistently higher in reporting more hours spent per week on school board business. Both males and females had the highest percentage responding that the primary reason for seeking the board seat was to serve the community. More females than males cited dissatisfaction with the schools as a reason. More males reported being encouraged by incumbents to run for the board.

CONCLUSIONS

On the issue of board emphasis changing from finance to curriculum, this study supports the popular stereotype

of the female board member. Although the respondents indicated there was enough information to deal with financial issues, the overwhelming majority of women, nearly 74 percent, felt best qualified in curriculum and instruction as compared to only about 30 percent (29.8) of the men.

The female respondents again fell into a typical female stereotype when they indicated their level of involvement in different areas. A higher percentage of females than males said they were not involved in finance and business management, and facilities.

These results lead to the conclusion that females would change the emphasis of the board to curriculum given the assumption that they will work in the area in which they feel most qualified. Females overwhelmingly answered "curriculum and instruction" (73.5 percent) when asked to indicate the area of board responsibility in which they felt best qualified. This compares to only 29.8 percent of males feeling best qualified in this area.

With regard to the issue of women changing the board involvement in the decision making process or administration of the school system, it would seem that women perceive themselves more powerful than men perceive them to be. More women than men felt there

would be a change in the way school systems are managed. More men agreed that boards will become more involved in day to day administration.

If, as the survey indicated, women will spend and do spend more time in the schools, then one conclusion can be that they will be more involved and knowledgeable about what occurs. This would seem to lead to more involvement in decision making and administration of the school system.

Males seemed more comfortable with the idea of the superintendent as absolute manager as indicated by the responses reported in Table 26. Both groups agree, however, that the superintendent should deal with problems regarding the principal.

Female board members are more heavily involved in planning and goal setting and community relations than are the males. Saiter's study found that female board members tended to give priority to the public relations program, also. This could indicate an area where changes can be made by female board members.

Males are more involved in facilities and financial issues than are women. This study indicates that if women gain more seats in the future then the emphasis will shift to curriculum and more involvement with the community.

More females responding felt that there would be a change in the way school systems are managed. The following conclusions from this study contribute to an understanding of the effect of female board members on school boards:

* A large percentage of female respondents were homemakers. There were about 36 percent reporting in the professional or managerial occupational categories and almost 41 percent reporting being homemakers. This does not support Mullins' opinion which was stated in her 1972 that the typical female board member was a professional businesswoman. The male respondents reported almost 67 percent in the managerial or professional categories.

This supports the conclusion of the study by Marshall and Heller that women will be able to schedule more time to spend in the schools and on board business.

* Significantly more women are involved in parent/teacher organizations, have worked as a school volunteer, and have been employed by the school system. This confirms Saiter's Ohio study in which the women polled felt that women had better insight into children's needs and that female board members had the edge in being able to stay in contact with parents.

* More female respondents have held the office of president or vice president in community organizations. The literature says that women have more leadership training through offices held in organizations than do men. This survey supports the literature that states women have more leadership training within the community prior to board membership than do men.

* Women visit the school more often. This finding supports the viewpoint expressed by the Ohio School Board Journal survey that board duties occupy a higher priority and that women will visit the schools while they are in session.

* Women feel that they have more effect than men feel that they do in the areas of school management, curriculum, and the school operation.

* Although women are more involved in community relations, they feel less compelled to "stick up for" their own constituencies than do the men.

* Women seem less compelled to allow the superintendent absolute control of the school system. According to NSBA's 1985 survey results, women tilt the scales more toward the board than do their male colleagues because they feel the superintendents take more authority than is assigned to them.

* Females feel stronger about not lobbying fellow board members and presenting a unified front than do the men. This supports Blanchard's study in which he reported that board members with less than two women on their board were much more likely to report that the board voted unanimously on an important issue, despite disagreement among board members.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Based on the results and conclusions of this study of opinions of local school board members regarding the effect of female school board members on policy, administration, and operation of the school system, the following recommendations are made for further study:

* A follow up study should investigate the role of female board members on a case study basis. NSBA surveys over the past three years indicate that the increase in female board members has not been significant. Future study should determine if this is a trend.

* The Western and Southern regions of the United States often showed differences from the national average. A study of these regions could reveal the reasons for these differences.

RESEARCHER'S COMMENTARY

The increase in female board members seems to have slowed in the past three years. There has not been a significant rise since 1984. While the percentage of women board members remained at 12 percent from 1927 until 1975, later studies showed an increase.

This 1986 survey indicated that nationally, women represent 31.6 percent of the board membership. This is nearly equal to the 31.4 percent reported in 1985. If women continue to make up only about one third of the board members, change will occur only gradually.

Almost 41 percent of the females reported being homemakers. While it is acknowledged that this is a demanding and time consuming job, a few of the respondents remarked that women not employed outside of the home would have more freedom and authority over their own schedules and be able to spend more time in the schools.

Although this 41 percent seems a considerable percentage of female board members reporting as homemakers, it is a dramatic decrease from the 76 percent reported by the National School Boards Association in 1974.

It is the opinion of the researcher that women's

perceptions may not stay the same as their occupation orientation changes. Women will change as their job perceptions and responsibilities change.

Women spend more time on board business each week, but have not had as many years experience as men have had. As their responsibilities in professional occupations increase then they may also be more willing to delegate authority to the superintendent.

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APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

1986 National Survey of School Board Members

Part I -- Demographic Information

DIRECTIONS: Please respond with the following information:

1. In what state is your school system located? _____
2. What is your school system's enrollment? (check one)
 fewer than 1,000 1,000-4,999 5,000-9,999
 10,000-24,999 more than 25,000
3. What kind of community does your school system serve?
 (check one) urban suburban rural
 small town other
4. How many members of your board are men? women?
5. Are members of your board elected? appointed?
6. Does your school board have a student member? yes no
7. From the following list, please rank the three most pressing concerns in your school system. (**DIRECTIONS:** Write 1 next to your most pressing concern, 2 next to your second most pressing concern, and 3 next to your third most pressing concern.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Integration/busing	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents' lack of interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of respect for other students/teachers
<input type="checkbox"/> Declining enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of proper financial support
<input type="checkbox"/> Large schools/overcrowding	<input type="checkbox"/> Collective bargaining
<input type="checkbox"/> Crime/vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Management/leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' lack of interest/truancy	<input type="checkbox"/> State mandates
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor curriculum/poor standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum development
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty of getting good teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____

Part II -- Personal Information

DIRECTIONS: Please respond with the following information.

1. Are you male? female?
2. Are you white? black? Hispanic? Oriental?
 American Indian? Other (please specify) _____
3. What is your age? 25 or under 26-35 36-40
 41-50 51-60 over 60

4. What is your highest educational attainment?
 less than high school graduate high school graduate
 post high school training 4-year college degree
 advanced college degree
5. How many years have you served on your current board? _____
6. In what other ways have you served your current school system?
 (DIRECTIONS: Check all categories that apply.)
 Member of parent/teacher organization
 School volunteer
 Employed by school system in professional capacity
 Employed by school system in classified position
 Other (please specify) _____
7. Do you currently serve on any of these board committees?
 (DIRECTIONS: Check all categories that apply.)
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Textbook selection committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer/technology committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiations committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/community relations committee | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |
9. What is your current occupation?
 Managerial Professional Skilled worker
 Homemaker Retired Agricultural
 Other (please specify) _____
10. Are you married? yes no
11. Do you have children enrolled in public school (k-12) at this time? yes no
12. What is your current total family income?
- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-39,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000-79,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000-89,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000-99,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000-149,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or more | |
13. What is your political affiliation?
 Democrat Republican Other (please specify) _____
14. Please list any organization to which you belong, such as PTA, Lions Club, League of Women Voters, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

15. Please list any office held in these organizations.

16. Please list any organization for which you have done volunteer work in your community.

Part III -- Policy-related Issues

Part A: Personal Views/Opinions

The following questions deal with you specifically, not the board as a whole. (DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your opinion by checking the appropriate responses.)

1. Pay for performance (merit pay) can be practically applied in my school district. yes no
2. Public schools spend too much money on extracurricular activities, such as athletics, that benefit only a few. yes no
3. As a school board member, I believe I have access to enough information to deal with school financial issues. yes no

If not, why not? (check one response)

- I do not request financial information
- School administrators do not provide financial information
- Financial information is not kept in an easily accessible, up-to-date way

4. I plan to support a teacher salary increase in my district. yes no

If yes, I would support an increase of:

- under 3% 3% to 4.9% 5% to 6.9%
- 7% to 9.9% 10% or higher

5. In a budget crisis, the first spending category I would vote to cut would be: (check only one response)

- Central office administration
- Business services
- School building administration
- Instructional services
- Professional development
- Transportation
- Health and food service
- Maintenance and environmental needs
- Teacher salaries
- Administrator salaries
- Athletic programs
- Other (please specify) _____

6. In general, my views on education issues tend to be:
 ___ liberal ___ conservative

7. Indicate your current level of personal involvement in each of the following categories of board member responsibility. (DIRECTIONS: Using a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being "very involved," 2 being "somewhat involved," and 3 being "not involved," write in the appropriate number next to each category.)

___ Finance/business management	___ Collective bargaining
___ Facilities	___ Planning & goal setting
___ Personnel	___ Purchasing
___ Curriculum/instruction	___ Policy making
___ Community relations	___ Staff evaluation
___ Student problems and issues	___ Budget development
___ Others (please list) _____	

8. Indicate how much individual assistance or advice you require on each of the following categories of board member responsibility. (DIRECTIONS: Using a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 standing for "need the most assistance," 2 standing for "need some assistance," and 3 standing for "need no assistance," write in the appropriate number next to each category.)

___ Finance/business management	___ Collective bargaining
___ Facilities	___ Planning & goal setting
___ Personnel	___ Purchasing
___ Curriculum/instruction	___ Policy making
___ Community relations	___ Staff evaluation
___ Student problems and issues	___ Budget development
___ Others (please list) _____	

9. Please estimate the number of hours per week (average) that you spend on school board business. _____

10. Indicate how much influence each of the following people or organizations have on your views regarding school board policy decisions. (DIRECTIONS: Using a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 standing for "great influence," 2 standing for "some influence," and 3 standing for "no influence," write in the appropriate number next to each category.)

___ Superintendent	___ Board advisory committees and/or councils
___ Other board members	___ Family and/or children
___ Administrative staff	___ Friends and neighbors
___ Local elected officials	___ Students
___ Parent organizations	___ Local news media
___ Teacher associations	___ National news media
___ Other employee groups	___ Education journals
___ Advocacy groups	___ Taxpayer or citizens groups
___ Religious groups	

11. Do you visit schools/classrooms on a regular basis? yes no
 If yes, how often? (check one response)
 Once a week Once a month Once every 6 months
 Once a year Other (please specify) _____
12. Do you suggest changes in the operation of the individual school during or after your visit? yes no
 If yes, to whom do you make these suggestions?
 Principal Superintendent/staff
13. Why did you seek membership on the school board?
 (DIRECTIONS: Write 1 next to your primary reason and 2 next to any others that apply.)
- Encouraged by incumbent board member(s)
 - To gain political experience
 - Dissatisfied with the operation of the schools
 - For personal challenge and satisfaction
 - For personal prestige
 - In order to represent a specific community group
 - Wanted to serve the community
 - Wanted to gain influence in the community
 - Because my children were in school
 - Others (please list) _____

Part B: School Board Role

The following questions address the role of school boards.

14. The school board should decide on community use of school building facilities on a case-by-case basis. yes no
15. The school board should decide which staff members report directly to the board. yes no
16. The school board should write the job descriptions of central office administrators. yes no
17. The school board should write the goals for the school system. yes no
18. The school board should review instructional materials such as textbooks and workbooks before they are selected for use in the classroom. yes no

Part C: Curriculum/Instruction

19. The curriculum in my school system should place more emphasis on the moral and values development of the student. yes no

20. In my school system, more time should be spent on the basics, such as reading, math, writing, and spelling. yes no
21. The recent nationwide decline in standardized test scores was caused by poor instruction in the classroom. yes no
22. The recent nationwide decline in standardized test scores was caused by lack of parental involvement/concern. yes no
23. Please rate the curriculum in your school district.
(check one response in each category)

Elementary (overall)

- 1 Excellent
 2 Above average
 3 Needs improvement

Secondary (overall)

- 1 Excellent
 2 Above average
 3 Needs improvement

24. Selection of a building principal should be primarily based on his/her ability as (check one response)
- an instructional leader a disciplinarian
 an administrative/business manager

Part D: Board Involvement in Personnel

The following questions deal with the board as a whole.

25. The board should serve on the negotiating team for the school system at contract talks. yes no
26. The board should recruit and interview the following:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| coaches for major sports | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| principals | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| central office administrators | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no |
27. Currently employed teachers should be given competency tests to see if they are qualified to teach. yes no
28. Teacher applicants should be given competency tests to see if they are qualified to teach. yes no

Part E: Effect of Women Serving on School Boards

29. Indicate the ways in which you believe board operations will change as more women gain seats on school boards.
(DIRECTIONS: Check either yes or no for each statement.)

As more women gain board seats. . .	YES	NO
. . . boards will become more involved in day-to-day administration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	YES	NO
As more women gain board seats. . .	_____	_____
. . .there will be a change in the way school systems are managed.	_____	_____
. . . the way board meetings are conducted will change.	_____	_____
. . . curriculum issues will occupy a larger part of the board's time.	_____	_____
. . . board members will do more lobbying behind the scenes.	_____	_____
. . . boards will relinquish some of their authority over financial matters.	_____	_____
. . . boards will exercise more authority over personnel issues.	_____	_____
. . . women board members will spend more time in the schools.	_____	_____
. . . women board members will be more sympathetic to individual student rights.	_____	_____
. . . women board members will be more sympathetic to employee rights.	_____	_____
. . . women board members will change the complexion of how a school system operates.	_____	_____

Comments _____

Part G: Personal Information

30. In which of the two following areas of board responsibility do you feel the best qualified? (check one response)

_____ Curriculum/instruction _____ Financial issues

31. Indicate your agreement with the following statements.
 (DIRECTIONS: Check either yes or no for each statement.)

	YES	NO
The superintendent should be the absolute manager of the school system.	_____	_____

	YES	NO
Problems with a principal should be dealt with by the superintendent.	_____	_____
Sometimes a board member has to forget the proper chain of command in order to get things done.	_____	_____
Budgeting is the board's most important responsibility.	_____	_____
The board should have final say on all personnel matters.	_____	_____
The most effective way to make your point is to take it directly to the public.	_____	_____
Our superintendent provides the board ample information on which to base our decisions.	_____	_____
It's important for a board to present a united front to the public.	_____	_____
Lobbying fellow board members between meetings is the best way to make sure they'll go along with your decision.	_____	_____
Individual board members should stick up for their own constituencies.	_____	_____

32. Indicate which of the following descriptions best fits your style as a board member. (DIRECTIONS: For each of the following pairs of descriptions, check the one that best describes you.)

- _____ Outspoken or Quiet _____
- _____ Compliant or Aggressive _____
- _____ Directive or Collegial _____
- _____ Results oriented or Process oriented _____
- _____ Informal, cordial or Brisk, businesslike _____
- _____ Assertive or Nonassertive _____

33. Based on my experience, the most effective board members are _____ men _____ women.

Please add any comments you would like to make on the back of this page.

Thanks for your cooperation. Look for the results of this survey in an upcoming issue of The American School Board Journal.

APPENDIX B

Postcard

Dear Colleague:

From among the 90,000 school board members in the United States, you have been selected to take part in a special annual survey that will advance local control of education and improve the quality of our schools.

You will soon receive a special questionnaire designed to reveal the attitudes and characteristics of school board members throughout the nation. Please fill it out and return it as soon as possible. Your response will be included in a special Journal report.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**The Editors
The American School Board Journal**

APPENDIX C
Cover Letter

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD
JOURNAL®

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314/

Dear Subscriber:

You have been selected to play a pivotal role in your magazine's annual, nationwide survey of U.S. school boards.

This continuing study of the characteristics and attitudes of school board members is the most comprehensive and widely quoted poll of its kind. It highlights the dynamic, evolving nature of school board leadership...it underscores the significance of local control in education.

And it's success depends on you.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire. We'll tabulate the results and report the significant findings in a major article in an upcoming issue of The American School Board Journal. A self-addressed, postage-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you for your help.

Cordially,

The Editors

**The vita has been removed from
the scanned document**