

A NATIONAL STUDY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL
BOARD MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS, MANAGEMENT
CONCERNS AND OPINIONS ON CRITICAL ISSUES
IN EDUCATION

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Educational Administration

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October, 1982

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DEDICATION

To my family,
whose encouragement and support
have helped to make this project worthwhile

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted to his dissertation advisory committee; Dr. Lawrence McCluskey, Dr. Jim C. Fortune, Dr. James A. Mecklenburger, Dr. Kenneth E. Underwood and Dr. Wayne M. Worner; for their assistance and friendship over the "long haul." Thanks are also extended to Dr. A. P. Johnston, who served on this committee prior to assuming a position at another university.

The National School Boards Association is owed gratitude for their sponsorship of the 1977 National Survey of Local School Boards.

The author's friend and fellow graduate student, the late Julia V. Oertel, is remembered for her spirit and comradeship. Recognition is due her for development of the 1977 National Survey of Local School Boards questionnaire and collection of data upon which this study is based.

Gratitude is also expressed to Ms. Linda Burden, Mr. Dale Davis, Ms. Jennifer Nicol and Ms. Jan Watkins for their diligent typing of the tables and manuscript.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the focal governing bodies in communities throughout the nation is the local school board. This board is a collective of individual elected or appointed members whose responsibility is to establish policy and provide guidance for educational endeavors within the community and under the auspices of state and Federal statutes and regulations. Such responsibility is basic to the development of an educated society. Murrill described the educated society as one that:

. . . acts dispassionately, votes intelligently, respects cultural and literary excellence, rejects yahoos, abhors bigotry and admires scholarship. It perceives richness in leisure as well as in work, understands the past, transmits a sense of human decency and compassion to a new generation, and knows enough about freedom to protect it.¹

Certainly such responsibility vested in a local school board is vital to a community. Such responsibility, however, also has its problems. Zeigler suggested that:

The role of school board member is perhaps the most ill-defined in local government. The individual board member has no legal power, though the board itself is considered a corporation. The board's rights and responsibilities are rarely spelled out by the state except in the most general terms, and the board rarely undertakes to define them itself. The board's entire role and that of

its individual members is simply an accretion of customs, attitudes, and legal precedents without much specificity. Many school board members . . . move in a sea of confusion about their powers.²

Within these parameters the individual school board member, and subsequently the school board as a collective, has been entrusted to represent a community in educational matters. Jacobsen, in a foreword to Goldhammer's 1964 treatise on school board responsibilities, suggested that such representation is not without its problems.

The state has legal responsibility for the school but it refers most of this responsibility to the local board. People in the community therefore, think of school boards as their representatives. They believe that it is the board member's function to effect the community will in the administration of local schools. As a consequence, a school board member may find himself in a dilemma over what the community wants and what the state requires. This dilemma has never been entirely resolved.³

Additionally, Jacobsen noted that:

. . . there are three dominant ways in which board members tend to relate themselves to the broader community: first, board members attempt to reflect the community will; second, they may hear appeals when an individual feels that his interests are being adversely affected; third, they act as the conservator of financial resources of the school district.⁴

It is within this context that the role, responsibility, representativeness, and dilemma of educational governance by school boards have been concerns of researchers for approximately 65 years.

Generally speaking, systematic study of school boards and board members began with a review by Nearing in 1917, which concluded that school board members were somewhat dissimilar from the general population. Several researchers since then have attempted to clarify the profile of the school board member through various studies.⁵

White, in a 1959 study, analyzed the organization and practices of school boards and significant previous research on school board problems. He recommended that it should be important to periodically collect and analyze demographic data about school board members.⁶

More recently, in 1977, Oertel surveyed a national sample of school board members in cooperation with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to ascertain the influence of board member gender with regard to opinions about certain educational issues. The data were collected and compiled but were never analyzed, and the study was not completed.⁷ This study analyzes the data collected by Oertel and, in addition, reviews relationships among demographic, management concern and educational issue variables.

Additionally, the information collected is reviewed with respect to studies collected over a 65-year period. Based upon this longitudinal analysis, recommendations are

made for improvement of research studies and surveys of school board members.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given the breadth of school board member studies over the past 65 years on a statewide, regional, and national basis, several recommendations of researchers have stood out. The need for concentrated and coordinated research, the suggestion that research be longitudinal and comparative, the interest in investigating how school board members act, and the dilemma of understanding the policy making process of school boards have been among the concerns expressed by researchers.

Therefore, an overriding concern of this study was to aid in improving the foundation for concentrated and comparative periodic study of school board members and school boards as collectives. It was hoped that such a foundation would enable others to more productively investigate the attitudes and behavior of board members and boards.

A longitudinal analysis of past studies was conducted whereby demographic characteristics, management concerns and opinions on educational issues over the years were investigated. This review is reported in Chapter 2.

Following this longitudinal analysis, a general review of the survey data is reported. Four general research questions were posed in order to more thoroughly examine the reported data. These research questions are:

1. What are the relationships among demographic characteristics of school board members? Specifically, the study reviewed each demographic characteristic with respect to each other demographic characteristic. Analysis and reporting included only those relationships which showed statistical significance and which provided insight into the profile of the school board member. A specific example of such a potential relationship is provided by the following: What is the relationship between sex of school board member and region of the nation?
2. What relationships exist between management concerns and demographic characteristics of school board members? Specifically these relationships were investigated by reviewing the ranking of management concerns (as determined by frequency of response to each concern) with respect to each of several selected demographic characteristics. A specific example of such a potential relationship is provided by the following: Does method of selection of board

member (elected or appointed) have a relationship with the priority of management concerns as expressed by board members?

3. What relationships exist between opinions on critical education issues and demographic characteristics of school board members? Specifically, these relationships were investigated by reviewing the opinion response to education issue statements (by level of agreement or disagreement) with respect to each of several selected demographic characteristics. Again, only those relationships which showed statistical significance and provided insight into the profile of the school board member were reported. A specific example of such a potential relationship is suggested by the following: Does school board member age have a relationship with level of agreement about lack of confidence in the school administration being a primary reason for the defeat of school budgets?
4. What relationships exist between management concerns of board members and opinions on critical education issues? Specifically, these relationships were investigated by reviewing the ranking of management concerns (as determined by frequency of response to

each concern) with respect to opinion response (by level of agreement or disagreement) to selected education issue statements. Only the top-ranked management concerns were investigated with regard to those issue statements which appeared to be contextually related to each of these management concerns. A specific example of such a potential relationship is provided by the following: Does the priority of management concern about collective bargaining relate to the level of agreement of school board members on whether teachers should have the right to negotiate class size?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The central purpose of this study was to determine the profile characteristics of school board members throughout the nation and to ascertain their thinking on several of the issues confronting public education. Additionally, an effort was made to longitudinally analyze past research in order to provide comparisons about such profile characteristics and thinking on educational issues. Since Counts recommended the further study of school boards in 1927, several researchers have added to the body of knowledge about

school board members. It has been difficult in many respects for researchers to establish historical profiles of school board members in both of the areas of demographics and opinions on educational issues due to the many dissimilarities in content and direction of previous studies. Given an analysis of demographic data of school board members, opinions on educational issues, management concerns and similar information from previous studies, an effort was made to provide recommendations for periodic study on a concentrated and comparative basis in order to more readily investigate opinions of school board members and subsequently school board behavior.

Specific purposes of this study were to provide a stronger foundation for conducting longitudinal studies of school board members throughout the nation and in specific states and regions as appropriate, and to establish recommendations for modification and development of Oertel's "National Survey of Local School Boards" (NSLSB) questionnaire.

With such a stronger foundation and added understanding of school board members, it was hoped that many of the research tasks recommended by the NSBA Research Symposium on School Board Research might be accomplished. Specifically, given the characteristics and opinion profiles of

school board members, is it possible to suggest implications for how school board members will actually make decisions, operate and interact with respect to contemporary issues?⁸

U.S. Secretary of Education Terrel S. Bell, in a U.S. News & World Report interview, suggested that the mediocre quality of public schools was due to the ". . . decline in quality of leadership on many city school boards in the last ten years. . . , and failure to set high standards and make these standards known."⁹ If in fact the quality of leadership on school boards is declining, an understanding of board decision making and policy development might help to improve the leadership of school boards as well as the formulation and and communication of higher standards for public education.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The total population of the study included approximately 28,000 school board members throughout the nation who were subscribers to the American School Board Journal (ASBJ) as of Spring 1977. This population represented about 30% of total school board members in the nation. The sample was determined through a systematized random sampling procedure and provided a list of 3,211 individuals. This list was

composed of approximately 80% men and 20% women school board members, in general concurrence with the proportion of men and women school board members as estimated by the NSBA. In addition, regional proportions of sample size versus total population appeared consistent with NSBA statistics.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to school board members who subscribed to the ASBJ as of Spring 1977. In some instances, it was possible that several individuals from the sample were not actually school board members. Due to the lack of certifying title on the ASBJ mailing list at the time the sample was drawn, there was no way to eliminate inappropriate respondents from that sample. Generalizations from this study should be made only to school board members subscribing to the ASBJ at that point in time rather than to school board members at large. Taken in concert with previous studies, however, several longitudinal generalizations can be made. Some possible bias due to non-response of individuals surveyed could have occurred. Responses generally seemed to conform to expectations, but such bias must be noted.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to clarify the intent of the study and particularly the NSLSB questionnaire, the following definitions are provided:

Demographic characteristics - The term "demographic characteristics" refers to those descriptors of the school board member's environment and personal status as noted by the individual school board member. Demographic characteristics are divided into 2 subsets; personal characteristics and board characteristics. Personal characteristics include those descriptors of individual board members such as age, sex and number of years of service. Board characteristics include those descriptors of school boards such as term of office, method of selection (elected or appointed), and school district size.

Management concerns - The term "management concerns" as used in this research refers to those problems that respondents actually face in performing their duties as board members. These are the "real world" concerns that must be dealt with in operating school districts. Examples of such management concerns

include collective bargaining, public apathy, curriculum reform, and discipline.

Educational issues - The term "educational issues" as used in this research refers to those problems that occur to board members in general, but which may or may not be bothersome to a particular board member. Thus, the collective bargaining management concern may not be a "real world" concern to a board member in a state where collective bargaining by public employees is prohibited by law; however, this fact would not prevent a board member from having an opinion (expressed by level of disagreement or agreement) on an issue statement related to some aspect of collective bargaining.

Longitudinal analysis - The term "longitudinal analysis" as used in this research refers to the historical and cross-sectional review of demographic characteristics, management concerns and opinions of public school board members. The term is not meant to imply study of the same groups of school board members over the time period investigated.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 presents a review of foundation information about school board members and studies of them, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study and the definition of relevant terminology.

Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature on school board members including longitudinal commentaries and tables on previous school board surveys and studies.

Chapter 3 presents the methods and procedures of the study including sections on questionnaire development, sample selection, questionnaire distribution, and data collection and methods of data analysis.

A presentation of the data solicited by questionnaire response is presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, extensive analysis of interrelationships among these data elements is addressed.

Chapter 5 includes the summary and concluding statements as well as implications for further development of the NSLSB questionnaire and recommendations for periodic research of school boards and school board members on a longitudinal and comparative basis.

CHAPTER 1 FOOTNOTES

¹Paul W. Murrill, "To Thine Own Self...On
Shepherding the Mavericks," National Forum, Vol. LX, No. 4
(Fall 1980), p. 40.

²L. Harmon Zeigler and M. K. Jennings, Governing
American Schools: Political Interaction in Local School
Districts (North Scituate, Massachusetts: Duxbury Press,
1974), p. 148.

³Paul B. Jacobsen, "Foreword" in The School Board,
by Keith Goldhammer (New York: The Center for Applied
Research in Education, 1964), p. v.

⁴Jacobsen, p. vi.

⁵Scott Nearing, "Who's Who on our Boards of
Education," School and Society, Vol. V, No. 108 (January 20,
1917), pp. 89-90.

⁶Alpheus Lee White, "A Summary and Analysis of
Significant Research Findings on Selected School Board
Problems" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of
Virginia, 1959)

⁷Julia V. Oertel, "Perceptive Differences of
Female and Male School Board Members of Current Issues in
Public Education," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation pro-
posal, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University,
February, 1977)

⁸National School Boards Association, What Do We
Know About School Boards? Research Report 1975-3 (Evanston,
Illinois: National School Boards Association, 1975)

⁹Terrel H. Bell, "How to Improve our Public
Schools," U.S. News and World Report (interview with T. H.
Bell, June 8, 1981), pp. 61-62.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of selected school board studies and documentation on school board activities covering approximately 65 years since the publication of Nearing's study in 1917. The chapter is divided into 3 sections. Section 1 is a chronologic presentation of school board studies, research and general documentation on school board activities and issues which have been considered relevant to this study. Each citation presents the major thrust of the study or commentary as well as major conclusions. Section 2 presents narrative and table summaries of these research studies on school boards which have been conducted over the past 65 years. Such summaries are confined primarily to board characteristics and personal characteristics, whereas the commentaries on attitudes and opinions of board members are presented in Section 1. These 2 sections should provide a longitudinal analysis of board member characteristics, board characteristics and board member attitudes over the past 65 years. Section 3 presents a general summary of the chapter and, inasmuch as possible, provides a profile of the "typical" school board member.

SCHOOL BOARD STUDIES

Scott Nearing, in one of the first school board studies generally cited by researchers, sought to investigate occupations of school board members by surveying superintendents of 104 school systems in cities of over 40,000 population in December, 1916. He also investigated the sex of board members and the size of boards (number of members). Smaller boards, that is 10 or less members, tended to predominate with only the larger cities having larger boards. Women constituted about 7% of school board membership, and women board members were more common in the larger cities. Occupations were categorized into 3 classes: business - including merchants, manufacturers, capitalists, contractors, corporate officers, real estate and insurance; professional - including doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, authors, editors, scientists, social workers and artists; and miscellaneous - including home keepers, clerks, sales people, skilled and unskilled workers and the retired. 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.¹

Board member efficiency and effectiveness were the primary thrusts of Struble's 1922 study of city school board members. School superintendents in 169 school districts, representing 959 board members, documented board characteristics, board member personal characteristics and opinions as to individual school board member influence, efficiency and effectiveness. Struble thereby inferred relationships between such characteristics and board member effectiveness. With regard to board member occupation, the professions ranked fairly high in terms of valuable service to the board and leadership on the board. Those board members with the most children were considered to be more valuable to school board activities. Middle-aged board members were considered to be more effective than younger or older members. The value of school board members with respect to policy development did not necessarily increase with years of service on the board. 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 did devote more time to school activities and did help out some in educational policy development.²

In 1926, Counts investigated the characteristics of school board members in an effort to shed more light on the issue of whether board members were more representative of the employing classes than labor. He surveyed 1,654 school boards throughout the nation serving counties, rural communities and cities (which were of primary interest). Also studied were several state boards of education and boards controlling state colleges and universities. The general organization of school boards was characterized by such statistics as number of members, method of selection, terms of office, tenure in office, time devoted to duties and compensation. Social composition of board members was characterized by age, sex, education, occupation and representation by parents on boards of education. Counts attempted to typify the American school board member while at the same time explaining the difficulties in using averages for such descriptions. This profile was provided for county boards of education, city boards, state boards and boards controlling state colleges and universities and generally suggested that these boards had not developed in any particular pattern over the years.

At certain points here the study reveals a representation on the board of various interests and groups. In the case of age, for example, the ordinary board is drawn from a fairly wide range. Both the younger and older members, of the mature generation are represented. With respect to sex, education

and occupation the board shows a tendency to be narrowly selective. It is composed, for the most part, of college and university men who occupy favored positions in society.³

An extensive nationwide survey was conducted of school boards by the National Education Association (NEA) in 1946 to determine board status and practices. This survey focused on 1,608 noncity and 1,460 city school boards, where most of the respondents were superintendents rather than board members. The following findings of board status were documented. As in the case of Struble's study, female membership occurred more frequently in larger cities, and on the average approximately 10% of the members were women. Higher educational achievement was also noted more frequently in larger cities. It was observed that 60% of the members had children, wards or grandchildren currently attending the public schools, while fewer than 15% had no direct personal interest of this nature in the schools. The smaller districts tended to keep board members for a longer time, and the median service of board members was 6.7 years. Overall, 85% of the boards were elected by popular vote while 15% were appointed. Politically, 86% of the boards were selected on a nonpartisan basis, while 4% were selected on a bipartisan and 10% on a partisan basis. Board size was most frequently 5 members, but size varied from 3 to 21 members.⁴

In a 1951 survey, Brown sought to compare boards of education at that time with boards who had responded to Counts' survey in 1926. His survey was national and included responses from cities (with populations of 5,000 to 300,000) from all states. From a distribution to superintendents, 563 questionnaires were completed by board members. In order to determine if boards of education were unique or similar in their composition to other public boards, 221 other city boards from 32 states were solicited. Brown wanted to determine what changes had occurred in board social status over the preceding 25 years and to examine the implications of any such changes. He presented social status statistics which at that time compared findings from Counts, NEA and Brown over the 25 year period. Several conclusions of Brown's study are noted. It was found that women were more likely to serve as board members in larger cities, and in addition, also in smaller communities. Brown noted that his findings invalidated Counts' prediction that the increase in numbers of women school board members would continue and control eventually would pass to women. Occupational classification was found to be quite similar to Counts' findings, but Brown was not as extreme in suggesting that board membership from elite occupations was necessarily bad. In summary he noted that changes in social composition

were relatively small; that there was a general concensus in peoples' minds as to what type of board members they wanted; and that membership on school boards was somewhat different from other public boards in urban communities.⁵

In 1954, Charters sought to critique the past research on school board social characteristics, attitudes and qualifications which had appeared in the educational literature. He raised the question, "What empirically grounded conclusions concerning school board personnel exist today which did not exist twenty-five years ago?"⁶ and concluded that the results were disappointing. Charters classified these studies into status studies, which described board member characteristics or attributes at a certain time and place, and analytical studies, which sought to show "empirical relationships between two sets of variables"⁷ about school board members. His findings suggested that many of the more than 75 surveys of school board member social characteristics which had been reported since the earliest in 1904 were inspired by Counts' study in 1927; that "aside from the service the (status) studies performed for historical description or for polemical debate, their value to a science of education seems to be seriously limited";⁸ that a few status studies might be considered analytical due to the methods of analysis of board member

characteristics, but this rarely served any research purpose; and that when comparisons were possible (such as in nationwide studies) methodological considerations, particularly sampling bias from mailed surveys, created inadequacies in the research. Charter's suggestions for further research included the description of policy decisions, the description of decision processes of boards and the description of board member role, motivation and influence.⁹

In 1954, Woods surveyed West Virginia school board members to identify personal and board characteristics and to make comparisons with other studies. The legal term for board service statewide was 4 years, and 5 members served on each of the 55 county boards within the state.¹⁰

In a treatise on the status, functions and activities of public school boards in 1954, Reeves charted the development of the local board system of school control and made several comments and recommendations regarding board membership. He suggested a board size of 5 to 9 members, with an odd number of members preferred in order to minimize strife. He further suggested that 2 to 3 years should be the length of term with overlapping terms for different board members. He noted that Virginia (which, at that time, appointed all board members) had the most undemocratic method of selection. He further noted the distinction

between autonomous and dependent school boards as influential in the governance process and described fiscally independent (autonomous) boards as having financial control and the right to levy taxes, whereas fiscally dependent boards required financial approval by municipal or other authorities.¹¹

In a follow-up to his earlier critique of school board studies, Charters, in 1955, recommended areas in which further school board research needed to be focused. He suggested "the pressing problems of education call for research which explains how our schools and school boards function."¹² He further recommended exploring whether or not school programs differed as the composition of boards changed; how school boards reached decisions relative to internal and external relationships, influence and the effort of school administrators; and the development of a thorough understanding of board member motivation in seeking office.¹³

In a 1956 "Opinion Poll," The Nation's Schools magazine conducted a national survey of school superintendents to determine their opinions on whether school board members should be selected under qualifications established by law. Of the superintendents who responded, 78% favored such minimum qualifications and suggested the following: eighth

grade education (8%); high school graduation (40%); college graduation (7%); property ownership (23%); and parents of children now in the public schools (22%). Election of school board members by nonpartisan vote was favored by 98% of the superintendents.¹⁴

In contrast to the earlier studies cited above, Caughran, in 1956, investigated the socio-economic backgrounds and attitudes of Illinois school board members on pertinent educational issues. He further investigated relationships among those variables and found that no single significant relationship existed between attitudes and social class, tenure, membership in organizations or sex. Additional findings included opposition to Federal financial aid to education and support for increased state or local revenues. Gender was not considered to be a significant factor with regard to school board member effectiveness. Support for compulsory education beyond the eighth grade and the latitude for schools to try new methods and materials in their programs were also reported.¹⁵

In an effort to aid in the improvement of school board administrative practice, the Midwest Administration Center collected school board studies relating to school board effectiveness, selection of superintendents, provision of external services to school board teams and related

responsibilities of boards in the middle western states (Stapley, 1957). M. E. Stapley's summary of these studies showed that:

. . . school board effectiveness is related to the board member's formal education, length of service on the board (up to 6 years), the member's own economic success and the amount of time he can devote to public service. Sex, age and the fact of parenthood have little or no relation to effectiveness as a school board member.¹⁶

This summarization of studies also noted that critical areas in the evaluation of effective board behavior included board unity, informed leadership, executive relations, personal relations, staff and group relations and courage and principle.¹⁷

In a follow-up study, Stapley identified several procedures to improve school board effectiveness.

1. The possibility of securing qualified candidates for board office could be enhanced through sound public relations programs, the existence of community caucuses and the use of citizens committees within the community.
2. The importance of orientation and training of new board members by the superintendent, former school board members, school board associations and state departments of education was noted.
3. The improvement of administrative relationships by the establishment of written policies by the school board was suggested.¹⁸

In 1957, Hall surveyed state school statutes and summarized the factors affecting membership on local boards of education. He noted particularly that the local boards

of education were agencies of the state and the instruments through which local control was maintained over the public schools; that boards usually consisted of 5 or 7 members (except for very small districts); that 3 to 6 years were the most common terms of office; that there were practically no limitations as to the number of terms members could serve; that more than 95% of all boards were elected by popular vote (of the 48 states, 33 were exclusively elective, 6 were exclusively appointive and 9 utilized both methods of selection); that candidates were usually nominated by a petition of qualified voters; that compensation for members was at that time the exception rather than the rule; and that 22 states had no provisions for compensation of school board members.¹⁹

In 1958, Gross published a monograph based upon interviews of superintendents and school board members in Massachusetts. He was particularly concerned with the motivation of individuals who became school board members and the governance issues and influences upon these individuals. He viewed motivation to become a school board member as either "good" or "bad." Good motivation was seen as being related to a desire for civic duty, whereas bad motivation was related to the representation of some interest group or the gaining of political experience. He noted

that the factors of income, education, occupation, sex and marital status had no relationship to the good motivation of board members whereas the following had some positive relationship to good motivation: parenthood of members, members with no religious identification, older board members, length of service, satisfaction with service and smaller school systems. Neal Gross also noted that educational traditionalism was somewhat related to the board members' length of service on the board, whereas progressivism in board philosophy was related to higher educational attainment, higher income and greater time spent on school board activities. His recommendations focused on the problem of school board member motivation, the improvement of educational leadership and the positive measures that could be taken to deal with special interest pressures and financial problems. It was suggested that the public should be aware of motivation of board members and take care to elect only those members with good motivation; that boards should establish procedures to preclude malpractice by individual members; and that boards should take care to clearly specify responsibilities of the superintendent and the board in order to eliminate potential conflicts. It was noted that the board had a major responsibility for the formulation of procedures to aid the public in becoming better informed

about the cost, benefits, activities and drawbacks of a sound and well-supported public school district.²⁰

In a 1959 study, Albert reported a survey of school boards throughout the United States from cities with populations greater than 30,000. A 27% response (727 board members) identified demographic characteristics and opinions about negative criticisms of public education. Additionally, Albert made comparisons with the NEA survey published in 1946. Geographic region, age and sex appeared to be the 3 primary characteristics which had a relationship to significant differences in attitudes about unfavorable criticisms of education. Mid-Atlantic board members tended to agree more with negative criticisms of the public schools than did midwest and far west board members. Older board members also tended toward greater agreement with negative criticisms, and male board members agreed more with negative criticisms than did female board members. Albert's study also showed a noteworthy increase in the percentage of women board members but suggested that occupational classification of board members had changed little in the preceding 13 years.²¹

In 1959, White compiled 73 published and unpublished school board research studies and attempted to summarize major issues and critiques in the areas of school board

member characteristics, school board organization, school board relationships and school board functions. He noted particularly that the conclusions of some similar studies differed significantly when attempts were made to attach importance to personal characteristics of board members vis-à-vis their attitudes. He concluded that personal characteristics of board members had not been studied to the extent that much significance could be attached to their relationship with attitudes or decision making behavior. Major recommendations included the suggestion that increased concentration should be placed on studying school boards on a national basis, and that efforts to coordinate and focus such research on school board problems was of great significance. Thereby more general interpretations might be made from such studies and longitudinal comparisons might also be facilitated.²²

In 1961, Michael reported a study dealing with educational attitudes and demographic characteristics of school board members in Michigan cities. His major concern was with the difference in opinions between working class and middle class opinion leaders as compared with opinions of school board members regarding certain educational issues in Michigan. Federal aid for school construction, teacher strikes for unjust dismissal, disapproval of merit ratings

for salaries and competition among children in school assignments were generally favored by the working class, whereas middle class groups generally opposed these views. Board members and opinion leaders from working class and middle class groups did not differ significantly on attitudes toward school purpose, curriculum, dropouts, certain expenditures, teaching methods, promotion or discipline. Michael also noted that as with earlier studies, it appeared that educational policy development was largely controlled by persons of the higher social classes, but there was little evidence to substantiate differences in educational attitudes of different classes.²³

In 1962, Tiedt surveyed members of 23 school boards in Oregon to investigate the social composition of these members, their general values and educational values, their curriculum beliefs and the interrelationships among these variables. He noted that Oregon school board members were relatively high on morality and authoritarian scales and tended toward conservatism on the liberal-conservative scale. He also noted that these members tended to be fairly evenly distributed along the traditional versus progressive scale of educational values. Regarding curriculum beliefs, Tiedt suggested that these members considered the development

of a well-rounded educational program most vital to the existence of the school systems.²⁴

In a 1962 study, Conley investigated demographic characteristics and attitudes of school board members in 317 districts from 10 states in the southern region. The only variable which consistently related to the attitudes of board members was participation in in-service activities by board members. These in-service participants generally reacted more favorably to attitudinal questions than did others. Conley noted that there was less agreement among school board members in the area of superintendent-board relationships than in any other area. He predicted that desegregation would be more easily effected in cities than in counties with more delaying action likely to take place in counties. Board members with private or parochial school backgrounds more often favored higher standards for public education. Regarding good school practices, board members with at least some college, above average incomes or from larger districts showed greater awareness. Board members with high school or less education and public school backgrounds were more favorably disposed toward Federal aid to public education. Conley suggested increased attention to in-service activities for board members by school districts, regional and state associations and requested further

research in this area. Additionally, he suggested the study of superintendents' attitudes with comparison to board attitudes and the study of differing problems facing city and county districts with respect to desegregation.²⁵

In a 1962 follow-up to the recommendations of several previous researchers, Cunningham conducted a case study of a single school board with an eye toward the review and classification of school board decision making. He classified such decisions as either housekeeping, administrative or policy decisions and noted that administrative decisions (those initiated when boards took action on matters representing some terminal action such as buying a land site) represented the vast majority of decisions. Policy decisions were relatively infrequent and included those administrative guidelines or rules and laws of the board of education. Housekeeping decisions generally consisted of some standard operating procedure, such as acceptance of a report. Of particular note was the fact that administrative decisions occupied the vast majority of school board time and energy during meetings.²⁶

In a 1962 article, White discussed a national survey of school superintendents conducted in 1959-60 about school board member characteristics and activities. Findings were

stratified by region, size of district and method of selection. Of particular note were that election of school board members was less frequent in the south than in any other region; that larger school systems and appointed boards generally had longer terms for their members; that larger boards were more common in larger school districts (greater than 25,000 students); and that approximately 60% of boards had some form of compensation for their activities. He also investigated characteristics related to school board committees and meetings and noted that the most frequent school board problems concerned development of school board policy, selection of members, board-superintendent relations and school board meetings.²⁷

Through interviews and a mailed survey, in 1963, the NSBA produced a profile of the school board member and related these demographic characteristics to construction and purchasing activities in local school districts. The investigators looked at region, district enrollment and whether or not current school construction was in process as major factors on which to base conclusions. It was noted that there was a higher percentage of laborers and farmers in the smaller districts and a higher percentage of professional and business people in the larger districts. There was a low incidence of housewives being school board members

except in New England (14.1%). A composite of the survey indicated an average budget of approximately \$2.5 million. Approximately 68% of the boards were currently engaged in building projects and approximately 80% of board members became actively involved in product demonstrations preceding purchase. Selection of textbooks occupied the most time relative to the purchase of any other educational products.²⁸

The NEA Research Division, in a 1964 poll of 385 school boards with district enrollment greater than 12,000 students, investigated the selection process of school board members as well as the size of school boards. It found election on a nonpartisan basis to be the most frequent selection process (for 65.2% of the boards) and determined the median board size to be 7 members and the most frequent board size to be 5 members.²⁹

Goldhammer's 1964 treatise, The School Board, has been one of the more frequently cited publications on the functions, responsibilities and environment of the school board member. This book provides a synopsis of the historical and legal foundation of the American school board, school board and community relationships, school board and superintendent relationships, school social structure,

school board decision making processes, certain characteristics and attitudes of the board member and interpretations as to the anticipated future of the American school board. From an analysis of the origin of the school board, Goldhammer suggested 5 authority levels relevant to board operation: the State Constitution, statutory law, State Board of Education regulations, court decisions and societal demands. According to Goldhammer, board members are constantly pressed to operate within these bounds. He concluded that personal values of board members influenced decisions more than did the search for effective educational policies. He additionally noted that the continuing dilemma of the board member satisfying local community demands while at the same time properly assuming legal responsibilities will most likely never be resolved. Suggestions for alleviation of this problem included the necessity for board members and school administrators to continually seek to broaden their power base in the community by such procedures as maintaining a widely representative decision making structure. Goldhammer noted that the most important relationship the board member establishes is with the superintendent of the school district, and to be effective this relationship requires a concise definition of responsibility. A clear understanding by all parties of "discretionary

authority" (or the power to act if so decided) versus "ministerial authority" (or the responsibility to act as provided by state mandate) and the establishment of guidelines for the superintendent and school staff were deemed necessary for efficient functioning of school operations. Noteworthy within this context was the need to improve upon decision making through effective use of the deliberative process by gathering and consciously weighing all empirical evidence and alternatives.³⁰

Goldhammer also attempted to establish parameters for the future of school board functions by reiterating the major areas of board responsibility.

1. the determination of major goals . . . ,
2. general formulation of operating policies
. . . ,
3. the selection of key personnel . . . ,
4. resource procurement and allocation . . . ,
and
5. evaluation.³¹

Relative to the alleviation of the problem of local control versus centralized control, he suggested:

1. A new definition of the relationship of local control to centralization needs to be established.
2. . . . a broader perspective of what constitutes the school districts needs also to be established.
3. . . . there needs to be a broader public participation in the affairs of the school.
4. . . . additional citizens groups within the community should be incorporated within the decision making structure of the school board.

5. The decision making techniques of school boards need to be studied . . .
6. Board members should constantly seek to improve their ability to perform their duties, both as members of the school board and as citizens of the community.
7. . . . it is necessary for the board to maintain proper definition of the shared responsibilities which exist between the citizen board and the professional staff. ³²

In a 1966 study, Strayer analyzed personal characteristics, school board data and educational philosophy of school board members in selected school districts throughout the United States. Several general conclusions regarding board membership were identified. Success in personal life appeared to be a major criteria for the election to board membership by the public. Strayer suggested that unless greater proportions of women were selected for board membership, a significant portion of the adult population would remain unrepresented. Also noted was the suggestion that perhaps one of the reasons for a low representation of Negroes on school boards was the lack of sufficient motivation for seeking board office as well as possible bias. Voters tended to prefer highly educated professional men for board service, whereas appointing authorities were somewhat less discerning. In this same vein, Strayer noted that professional people did not identify with political parties as much as did other occupational groups, and therefore, selection methods which use a bipartisan basis may continue to

discriminate and deprive school boards of highly qualified individuals. A slight tendency toward more liberal views by board members suggested a preference toward moderate change and reform in school operations. It was also noted that board members generally had low incidences of previous educational experience, and this perhaps reflected voters' and appointing authorities' preference for lay representation on school boards.³³

In 1966, DeBeer reported the results of a geographically limited study (St. Louis, Missouri suburbs) and focused on demographic characteristics of school board members, factors influencing board service, board organization and attitudes, financial opinions and improvement efforts. With respect to motivation to run for board office, he suggested the primary reasons were the need for better schools and community or civic service. Regarding organization and attitudes, two thirds of the responding board members approved of professional negotiations by teachers, and also two thirds approved of merit pay for teachers. A concern relative to Federal aid was noted, and two thirds of the respondents feared that such aid would reduce local control but considered aid necessary in special cases in order to benefit certain population groups. In an analysis of which characteristics related to opinions and attitudes, DeBeer

cited the level of education as the most influential characteristic with respect to differences in opinion. Income level and occupation were also significant personal factors in several instances.³⁴

Manz, in 1967, reported a study of personal characteristics of school board members and opinions on educational issues confronting their boards. Relationships between these variables were investigated. The educational issues included school plant, pupil personnel, staff personnel and financial issues as well as other general issues addressed at board meetings. The highest concern for school plant issues was exhibited by those individuals with relatively short tenure on the board, low income and higher education levels. In several instances income appeared to be a significant personal factor, in that lower income level individuals appeared more intensely concerned about issues than higher income individuals. Higher income individuals were generally regarded as more effective board members by their peers. Age generally did not appear to influence reaction of board members to educational issues, and board members in smaller school districts generally tended to be more intensely concerned with educational issues before the board.³⁵

In a study similar to Caughran's 1956 Illinois study, Stabile, in 1968, investigated personal characteristics and attitudes of Ohio city school board members. Educational issues in the areas of finance, negotiations, school reorganization, local control and Federal aid identified by Ohio school superintendents were presented to school board members for their opinions. School board members indicated generally positive attitudes toward all issues with the exception of Federal aid to education. Stabile noted that city school board members tended to be older than suburban and rural board members, and both city and suburban members were significantly more educated than rural board members. Income, education, political preference and occupation appeared to be significant personal factors as related to attitudes toward the aforementioned educational issues. Political liberals had positive attitudes toward negotiations, state support of education and Federal aid, whereas more highly educated and higher income groups tended to have positive attitudes toward reorganization. More highly educated groups tended to have a somewhat negative attitude toward local control of education, perhaps reflecting an understanding of the state responsibility for educational operations.³⁶

In an analysis of whether local governing boards should be considered assets or liabilities, Hahn in 1968 reviewed the general history of boards of educational governance and analyzed aspects of responsibility and involvement for contemporary lay boards of education. He noted that since 1940, there had been more of a team approach to educational administration problems, and board responsibility had subsequently increased. A positive appraisal of board operations was observed by the suggestion that the board was representative of the total population; that the board could be more effective than a single individual; that the board minimized power abuse, political influence and program disruption; and that the board provided an effective means for economic management. Negative appraisals of board operations included the suggestion that selection to membership was not representative of the population; that the board's work was not insulated from social forces; that the board's work was only part time; and that local control was not necessarily good for the goals of the greater society. Recommendations cited by Hahn included: that relative to board composition, specified board qualifications should be established and the number of members should generally be increased; that increased non-board participation reflecting community, professional and political resources should be

created through groups of advisers; that boards should develop an increased political awareness; and that time and expense money for board activities should generally be increased.³⁷

In a 1969 seminar paper, Campbell reviewed the historical perspective of city school boards and examined new constraints and future directions forecast for these boards. He noted how the industrialization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had influenced the development of city school districts funded by industrial tax bases. During the 1950s and 1960s, a nationwide decrease from over 100,000 to about 20,000 school districts had occurred. Subsequent population shifts, decentralization of industry, differences in student response to the educational process and changes in the view of local educational control had also forced changes on city boards. Campbell viewed the city school crisis of national concern even though the Federal government had seen fit to support states more than major cities in the educational process. His forecast as to future directions of city boards included: that boards would tend to become a more representative body; that there would be greater citizen involvement suggesting subsequent decentralization of city school systems; that the board would function more fully as a political force in the community;

and that boards would have to deal more fully with the purposes, procedures and results of public education. Board members would also need to listen more, deal more with policy than procedure, and lead constituents more than in the past.³⁸

Politics in the educational governance process was the focus of a 1970 treatise by Iannacone and Lutz. Primarily of concern were the issues and results of change in governance or direction of school districts as brought about by division at the polls over school board elections, defeat and replacement of incumbent board members, conflict between new and old educational values and involuntary turnover and replacement of superintendents. It was suggested that school board members and superintendents in many cases did not change fast enough or lead to suit the represented community. Several suggested reasons for change in educational governance were that taxes and levies had been inadequate to support mounting costs; that greater involvement in the search for increased state and Federal funds had created more complex decision and organization structures; and that education in general was more and more a crucial political issue (since 1954 particularly in the case of integration). In addition, more and more individuals were becoming

involved in educational issues, this creating more diversity of thought and potential conflict for communities.³⁹

A 1971 study by Hurwitz reported the personal characteristics and attitudes of New Jersey school board members. Hurwitz was interested in the investigation of opinions about Federal aid to education, accountability, negotiations, student unrest, local control of education and school district reorganization. He also investigated relationships among district type, district size, board member selection method and regions in New Jersey with respect to board member attitudes on the above issues. Regarding Federal aid to education, he found that board members feared such aid would decrease local control, and that they preferred general rather than categorical aid. Board members also expressed opposition to mandated reorganization of school districts and supported student self-inquiry rather than the maintenance of strict discipline. Opposition was also expressed toward the use of professional negotiators by boards of education and toward governmental aid to nonpublic schools. It was also generally noted, as had been the case with many previous studies, that school board members represented the so-called "elite" of the society. New Jersey school board members also had a high turnover and resignation rate, expressed general confidence in the current governance of

education and supported negotiations processes with staff personnel under current procedures.⁴⁰

From a 1971 poll conducted at the NSBA convention, the American School Board Journal reported the likes and dislikes (regarding educational issues) of school board members and school superintendents. The issue of accountability was regarded with high favor by both board members and superintendents, whereas both groups held busing to achieve integration in significant disfavor. Among dislikes, both groups were generally in agreement; however, superintendents expressed a significant dislike for vouchers whereas school board members appeared not as concerned. Among favorable items, board members and superintendents held somewhat different priorities. Whereas both groups generally favored Sesame Street, sex education, and year-round schools, superintendents were generally in favor of higher teacher pay while board members expressed strong support for Federal revenue sharing and performance contracting.⁴¹

In a 1972 study, Harden surveyed Illinois school board members to investigate social composition of boards; motivation, selection and orientation processes used by board members; and the attitudes and opinions of board members toward certain board procedures, functions and educational issues. He noted that the social composition of

boards had changed little in the past 45 years in the State of Illinois. Also of note were that board members generally sought office to contribute a community service, and they employed aggressive campaigning and the expenditure of funds in these efforts. Harden stressed the fact that as board issues had become more complex, so had the orientation of new members become more frequent. Finance was regarded as the area of primary concern by most board members, followed by the issues of school board policy development and employment of a superintendent.⁴²

In a speech before the NSBA in 1972, Kamman was highly critical of the make-up, performance and effectiveness of local school boards. He noted that:

A school board is likely to be a collection of diverse individuals with no criteria to define excellence, no specific goals to focus its work upon, no broad policies to define its stance on critical issues, little or no knowledge of employee motivation, ineffective board committees, distrust of each other and the superintendent, time wasting inefficiency, and no training for the job.⁴³

As alternatives to that practice he suggested the institution of one or more of the following procedures: organizational development programs for board members and key administrators, management training courses for board members and superintendents (established by the state), state governed evaluation teams for the assessment of district programs, and the appointment of professional paid boards

(as regional school councils overseen by the State Department of Education). He also suggested that the board president should be the key leader in reversing ineffective processes.⁴⁴

In a 1973 article, Hottleman reported on a survey of school board members from 141 "representative" nationwide school districts. His data suggested that:

The American schools, whose constituencies are primarily the poor, are governed primarily by upper middle class, propertied, moneyed, white, middle-aged, Republican men.⁴⁵

He additionally suggested that the disparity between self interest of board members and the needs of school clients might be explanatory of some of the major conflicts which had occurred in public education.⁴⁶ He noted in conclusion that "school board governance . . . has been a system dominated by a narrow range of citizens," and regarding educational programs, that the "entire focus has been to create a narrow and general group program and then to blame children for their failure to accommodate themselves to the established program."⁴⁷

In a refutation of Hottleman's criticism of school governance, the ASBJ took issue with his assertion that:

School board members lack sympathy and understanding . . . because they are more conservative and wealthier than their constituencies and simply do not represent the communities they serve.⁴⁸

Instead, the Journal criticized Hottleman's logic, survey sample size and representativeness, historical context and the notion of board member self interest. In addition, the Journal questioned the self interest of teacher groups (such as the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the NEA) which supported Hottleman's study, since teacher salaries were the major drain (approximately 70% or more) on the educational dollar.⁴⁹

Dyer reported a nationwide survey of school board members in 1973 which investigated how board members were dealing with their responsibilities and how the climate of these responsibilities had changed in the recent past. She concluded that board members generally had begun to "junk their rubber stamp image"⁵⁰ and make their opinions and voices heard. She contended that educators and their schools had held sway for too long and that now board members were suggesting that they should "honestly reflect the attitudes and beliefs of people who elected us . . ."⁵¹ She noted that educators were finding boards and the public increasingly requiring questions to be answered about the educational process and schools. Additionally, Dyer suggested that superintendents' terms were becoming shorter and middle management continued to be resistant to change. She suggested a challenge to board members to take charge and

recommended that board members become informed and involved in state and national educational matters, develop effective communications with the superintendent, accept responsibility for policy decisions, and exhibit courage by leading (not following) the education process.⁵²

In a follow-up to the ASBJ 1971 review of the likes and dislikes of school board members and administrators, a similar poll was conducted at the 1973 NSBA convention. School board members and administrators generally appeared to concur on their likes and dislikes; however, some divergence appeared in the areas of higher pay for teachers and full state funding for education. The trend of board member and administrator opinion showed a positive change from 1971 to 1973 in the areas of general favor toward sex education and Federal revenue sharing. At the same time, accountability seemed to be losing some of its favor. Formal training for board members and accountability headed the list of school board member likes, whereas formal training for board members and higher teacher pay constituted the major likes of school administrators. Both groups disliked busing, cuts in Federal aid, binding arbitration, parochial aid and teacher unions.⁵³

In a 1973 unpublished draft report the NSBA compiled 70 school board studies since Nearing's review in 1917. An

attempt was made to ascertain what had and had not been accomplished through these studies and what trends were developing (if any) in different areas. Of the studies reviewed, most were descriptive studies and attempted to answer the question, "Who Serves on School Boards?"⁵⁴ It was suggested that:

. . . these seventy studies . . . do not represent orderly scientific inquiry . . . most were one time efforts . . . studies varied dramatically in sample size, investigative method, quality of questionnaire, rate of response, data analysis, clarity of reporting, and overall sophistication. Therefore comparison is difficult . . . and generalizations and conclusions from these studies must be taken as indicative rather than precise.⁵⁵

It was additionally suggested that many of these studies were limited, in that they presumed that if you knew who the school board members were, you could assume how they would behave. However, it was noted that board members served in groups and such assumptions about behavior could not logically be made strictly from personal characteristics. Additionally, a survey conducted by NSBA of school board members in 1973 was cited. It suggested that these members believed attitudes, capabilities and people skills would be much better behavior predictors than general characteristics; having rejected sex, race and income as influential behavior predictors.⁵⁶

An ad hoc NSBA Commission on the Role of Women in Educational Governance reported a survey in a 1974 NSBA Research Report on the role and characteristics of women on school boards. This study reconfirmed that approximately 12% of all school board members were women and that the proportion had not changed significantly over the preceding half century. The basic thrust of the study was to investigate what impeded women from serving on boards and what might be done to overcome such impediments. Major findings included:

. . . male and female school board members share many characteristics . . . women exceed men in time devoted to school board service and have more leadership experience prior to school board service . . . and attitudes about women appear to be a major impediment to women seeking school board office.⁵⁷

It was suggested that women 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. In a review of board member occupations, findings suggested that fully 76% of women school board members were either full time or part time housewives (61.6% of the women were full time housewives). Men school board members, on the other hand, reported a very high proportion of business and professional endeavor.⁵⁸

In a 1974 monograph, Ziegler and Jennings analyzed the governing process and functioning of school boards and individual members with respect to a study they had conducted in 1968. They were interested primarily in the process of selecting members to the board, linkages between boards and their constituencies and the conflict and cooperation between boards and their superintendents. From their findings, the authors concluded that the "self perpetuating nature of school boards is subversive to the notion of lay control."⁵⁹ The authors additionally raised the question, "Should the representatives represent the interest or the will of the represented?"⁶⁰, and suggested that "With respect to representation within the local educational governments . . . we may conclude that representation is best achieved through the school board rather than through the superintendent."⁶¹ The essence of school boards operating within a democracy and also within a political framework was noted, and the authors suggested that:

Political decisions are . . . logically superior to technical decisions. If we are going to maintain the trappings of democracy in education, then the realities of democracy should be achieved. School boards should govern or be abolished.⁶²

A concern was expressed with the issue that although school boards assumed formal authority over school districts, in

many cases educational policy rested more with the superintendent than with the board. "This disparity between authority and leadership violates a fundamental principle of democratic institutions."⁶³ Along this vein, Zeigler and Jennings also suggested that board members and superintendents differed in their sensitivity to the racial issue, and they noted in several cases that a political perspective was taken by boards as opposed to an educational perspective by superintendents.⁶⁴ It was also suggested that ". . . district governors perceive and respond . . . in a very vague and general fashion."⁶⁵

Regarding attitudes and behaviors of school boards, the authors suggested that it was a "well established fallacy" to make inferences from the characteristics of public officials, but that such characteristics were important in the following ways:

1. Inclusion or exclusion of certain strata has symbolic value, particularly for upwardly aspiring minority groups.
2. Public leaders do serve their class interests, most visibly among minority group officials.
3. Specific decisions may be attributable to certain composition factors.⁶⁶

Several references to earlier studies were made, and the disagreement among authorities regarding the relationship between decision making behavior and characteristics was

emphasized. A significant point of discussion was the suggestion that a

. . . major consequence of the reform movement was to place board position beyond the grasp of the lower classes and into the hands of the classes with the greatest sympathy for the professional role of the superintendent.⁶⁷

Table 1, as drawn from the Zeigler and Jennings study, suggests the concern with the uniqueness of board member status vis-à-vis representation of the general public. In conclusion, the authors noted that

Boards are the mechanisms whereby schools can be made more responsive to their constituents. Whatever the perils that more responsive schools may bring, the costs of insulation from the community are greater.⁶⁸

In a 1974 article, Wiles and Conley examined 3 modes of school system governance: 1) legal-based upon authority given by the legislature to local citizens, 2) philosophical-based upon the balance between community representatives and education professionals and 3) the professional subordination of lay board members. Their primary concern was with the issue of professional "control of local policymaking, particularly in the urban environment."⁷⁰

It was noted that despite the legal and philosophical commitment to lay control, the professionals nevertheless maintained the real power. The authors recommended improving board policymaking relevance through the institution of

Table 1
Social and Economic Comparison between
Board Members and General Public (1968)

Characteristics	General Public	Board Members
Sex:		
Males	48%	90%
Females	52	10
Race:		
Whites	89	96
Nonwhites	11	4
Age:		
Under 40	37	24
40-59	39	63
60 and over	23	13
Years Lived in Community:		
0-5	25	2
6-15	22	18
16-35	26	35
36 and over (incl. all life)	26	45
Education:		
Less than 12 grades	41	7
12 grades	32	22
1-4 years college	23	47
Graduate and professional school	4	25
Income:		
Under \$7,500	56	10
\$7,500-19,999	39	54
\$20,000 and over	6	36
Occupation:		
Professional and technical	16	34
Managers, officials, and proprietors	14	32
Farmers	5	13
Clerical and Sales	11	9
Craftsmen and foremen	19	8
Operatives	16	2
Service workers and laborers	11	2
Other	8	-
Home Ownership:		
Yes	66	93
No	34	7
Religious Preference:		
Protestant	74	85
Non-Protestant	26	15
Church Attendance:		
Weekly	38	61
Less than weekly	62	39
Political Party Identification:		
Democratic	46	40
Independent	30	16
Republican	24	44

SOURCE: L. Harmon Zeigler and M. K. Jennings, Governing American Schools: Political Interaction in Local School Districts (North Scituate, Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1974), page 28. (based upon a national study the authors conducted in 1968 and information from the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan)

smaller, more homogeneous jurisdictional units, the simplification and limitation of policy tasks, and the countering of professional expertise by a political monitoring system. Furthermore, it was suggested that board members become full time representatives of educational systems.⁷¹

In a 1974 series of articles sponsored by the New Jersey School Boards Association, Keyek provided a follow-up to Hurwitz' 1971 survey of New Jersey school board members dealing with personal characteristics, attitudes and school board member needs and concerns. Keyek noted several changes in that 3 year period including an increase in the proportion of women board members and an increase in the representation by occupational groups with advanced degrees and higher earnings. He noted also that the majority of board members were still middle aged and salary earners.⁷² Keyek reported more agreement in attitudes by board members than might have been expected. It was noted that men and women board members generally agreed except with respect to government responsibility for education, the need for a state income tax (men were against), and voting on school budgets. Democrats and Blacks favored state funding, state intervention and Federal involvement. More highly educated school board members tended to be more favorable toward student rights. More experienced school board members were

also found to be more conservative regarding educational policy.⁷³

In a 1975 study, Powell examined whether elected school board members in Kentucky were more representative of their constituency than appointed school board members in Virginia. He defined representation as the exhibition of similar personal characteristics by school board members relative to those characteristics of their constituency (the general public). Such characteristics included occupation, family income, education, race, sex, place of work, age and the attribute of being native born to a state. Only the native born characteristic exhibited representativeness in both states. Additionally, Kentucky exhibited representation in the race category. It was noted that in the exclusively appointive state (Virginia), a higher proportion of white collar workers, a higher income level, and a higher level of educational attainment occurred than in the elective state (Kentucky). Kentucky had a higher proportion of white and male school board members than Virginia.⁷⁴

Varner examined the personal characteristics and relative importance assigned to selected educational problem areas by school board members in the State of Virginia in a 1975 study. 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. Older board members appeared more concerned with public relations and superintendent-board relations than younger members. Farmers and retired individuals appeared more concerned with superintendent-board relations than other occupational groups. Non-Caucasian members appeared more concerned with racial relations. Higher income individuals appeared less concerned about financial and equal educational opportunity issues. Virginia school board members ranked teacher performance and effectiveness as their predominant concern. This concern was followed by planning for quality education, educational finance and equality of educational opportunity issues, and school community relations. No relationships were noted between level of education or years residence in the school system and opinions.⁷⁵

In a 1975 NSBA Research Report and also a 1975 monograph by Cistone, a symposium analyzing the research activities and needs related to school board responsibilities and school governance was summarized. It was suggested that, although school boards appeared to behave in certain styles, researchers did not know how these styles of management

related to policies and operations of the schools. Additionally, researchers did not agree on who controlled public school governance but suggested 4 possibilities: the administrative staff; members of the community; state and Federal authorities, statutes, and the courts; and the school board itself.⁷⁶

In an essay from Cistone's book, Usdan suggested that "the viability of school boards is very much in question" and due to the emergence of complex issues such as collective bargaining and student activism, school boards had become very highly politicized.⁷⁷ He further suggested that school boards should become more influential and responsive to rapid community changes and urged the need for a broadened base of support and expanded "citizen participation in the shaping of educational policy."⁷⁸

Zeigler examined prior research into school governance and suggested that

The school board should be considered in concert with other decision-making units, the case study should be abandoned, studies should be longitudinal and comparative, and the board as a whole should be the unit of analysis.⁷⁹

He noted also the need to study how policy generated by boards varied as a result of governance or influence structures.⁸⁰

Cistone noted the dearth of research into recruitment and socialization processes and in follow up to Charter's comments in 1955, he concluded that studies of social profile did little to clarify or explain the dynamic notion of socialization. Further research into the relationship between recruitment and decision making was recommended.⁸¹

Conversely, Boyd recommended that the key variables of "community characteristics, personal characteristics of school authorities, school government characteristics, school system characteristics, type of issues dealt with, and relevant resources" needed to be studied in order to determine the balance of power and the division of labor within school system management.⁸²

In a summary to the presentations by educational researchers, the NSBA Research Report identified the following research needs: study of school board socialization, ways of predicting behavior, study of rural school boards, the longitudinal and comparative analysis of board functioning and study of the board as a collective rather than of individual board members.⁸³

In a 1976 study, Wilkinson examined the simulated voting behaviors of Pennsylvania school board members and

superintendents in the areas of finance, teaching, innovation and other educational issues. He was concerned with comparing non-educator and educator board members; board members and superintendents; and the influence of sex, age and tenure on voting behavior. He found that the characteristic of sex greatly influenced voting behavior and that female board members showed some indecisiveness in voting when compared to male board members. The variables of age and tenure reflected little relationship to voting behavior of members. Additionally, non-educator and educator board members showed only minor differences in voting. Board members did differ somewhat from superintendents in voting behaviors, and Wilkinson suggested these issues may be noteworthy for superintendents when similar issues arise in their school districts.⁸⁴

In a 1976 study, Hamilton examined the attitudes, opinions, and social characteristics of California school board members. He was primarily concerned with how these factors might influence future generations in the public schools. He suggested that:

. . . present-day boards are more representative of minorities and women, there is a glaring lack of confidence in the quality of public instruction, and employer-employee relations is emerging as a major concern of the future.⁸⁵

He further suggested that year-round schools, use of para-professionals, advisory committees, alternative schools, the elimination of tenure, and merit pay had potential for providing improvement in individual school districts. Additional efforts were recommended for providing financial support to local educational programs.⁸⁶

In a 1976 article, Goodrich reported a survey of a Massachusetts school board and its community regarding attitudes toward educational issues. Areas of opinion investigated by this survey included: problems and characteristics of the local schools, educational changes, student successes and attitudes in the schools, curriculum and methodology, costs and financing and responsibilities of school board members. The survey questionnaire was administered twice to school board members; first prior to community administration and again afterward. It was noted that agreement of school board members with community individuals increased from 78% to 85% over the 2 surveys. It was recommended that other districts might similarly investigate community opinion in order to minimize possible community conflicts.⁸⁷

An NSBA study was undertaken in 1976 to help improve the effectiveness of school board meetings. Four types of boards were identified based upon their decision making processes:

1. Status-congruent boards, wherein there was general agreement,
2. Factional boards, wherein there was general dissension and split voting,
3. Boards dominated by an individual board member, and
4. Sanctioning boards, wherein the superintendent was dominant.⁸⁸

The study recommended that a board "should consciously consider its . . . meeting behavior, thinking about the kind of board it is and the kind it wants to be," and that meeting procedures should be structured to relate to goals and priorities of board operations.⁸⁹ Additionally, it was suggested that meeting procedures should generally be written and cognizant of current research, but that such procedures should suit the individual boards and be constantly evaluated and updated in order to promote effectiveness.⁹⁰

In 1977, Scribner compiled a series of essays exploring political issues in education. He noted in the foreward that "clearly, the predominant process for educational change is political."⁹¹ Englert and Scribner suggested in the first essay that the education profession had sustained the myth that education and politics were separate. However, the 1950s and 1960s had been characterized by an increasing Federal role in educational governance, and greater importance had been assigned to the world influence of education, the academic analysis of educational change and community power structures and influence.⁹² Tyll Van

Geel intimated that 2 models of Supreme Court behavior over the preceding years had had a great influence upon school politics. He suggested that the Warren Court had been exemplified by restraint and the minimization of costs, whereas the Burger Court had been characterized by activism and the maximization of benefits. This conflict had subsequently presented a dilemma for educational governance in many instances.⁹³ Hawley concluded the examination of politics in education by asking the question "so what?," and noted that although researchers had studied process and policy, they still did not know much about the outcomes or the effect of such policy decisions. Such investigation was recommended as the focus of future research.⁹⁴

In 1977, Brodinsky examined school board operations by analyzing the board member as an individual on a team constrained by guidelines from state and Federal authorities as well as pressures from within the school district and community. He noted the board's link with its superintendent and staff and suggested that the development and maintenance of a communicative policy manual should be one of the board's most important tasks. He recommended tools for guiding the effective school board member:

. . . asking questions and requesting reports, initiating program audits, making budgetary decisions, assuming responsibilities for effective public information efforts, and assuring an appropriate

balance between staff responsibilities and board-community concerns.⁹⁵

In a survey at the 1976 NSBA convention, board members and administrators were assessed regarding their knowledge and attitudes toward standardized testing. Of all participants, 84% were school board members and 76% were male. Standardized testing had highly influenced educational policy since World War I, and 75% of the respondents reported that their school systems currently had district-wide testing programs. It was estimated that these programs served 80-85% of all students in the nation. Findings showed that more than 17 million students were tested each year at a cost exceeding \$34 million, and that district-wide testing appeared more prevalent in suburban and urban areas and in districts with greater than 1,000 students. Survey findings also noted that suggested reasons for testing included: diagnosis of learning needs, public information about the school system, staff evaluation and program evaluation. The board role regarding testing appeared to be primarily in the area of policy development, and board members indicated more concern with evaluation than with test scores themselves. Many criticisms of standardized testing were based upon the suggestion that results often had been misused and misunderstood and, in many cases, the tests had not appeared to contribute to learning. Also observed was the

movement toward criterion referenced testing, wherein students would not be measured against each other but against what they were supposed to be learning. This reform appeared somewhat slow due to the time required for development and the ongoing political necessity for evaluation. Generally, the survey indicated that boards and administrators were not sensitive enough to the criticisms and concerns of standardized testing, but that they did regard standardized testing as a very worthwhile process.⁹⁶

In addition to standardized testing, a separate survey on collective bargaining was conducted at the 1976 NSBA convention. Of these participants, 85% were board members, and 78% were male. It was reported that 75% of all school districts in the nation bargained with employees. This estimate would have increased to 80% if the southern region were excluded. A majority of survey participants held unfavorable views toward collective bargaining. These unfavorable feelings were based upon the lengthy time it took to negotiate a contract and the results of negotiation (including disproportionate dollars allocated into salaries, dollars allocated to services not for children, and an increased tax burden on citizens). Board members were also concerned about power shifting from management to teachers. Some favorable feelings toward collective bargaining were

also reported. In some cases board members became more informed through such processes; the school board became more aggressive in planning; there was a more effective management budgeting process; and collective decision-making was imposed upon areas which traditionally had been decided exclusively by administrators. Survey participants were approximately evenly divided in their choice of a negotiating team chief. Recommendations included a board member or the board president, an administrator or the superintendent, or an outside professional or attorney. The term of contract varied from 1 to 3 years with the average being 1.6 years. Impasse had been experienced by 43% of the represented school districts in the most recent contract negotiations and approximately half of these impasses had been resolved through fact finding. A very small proportion (5%) had been settled through binding arbitration. Factors such as sex of school board member, region and type of district held little sway regarding attitudes toward collective bargaining, but it was noted that those who had not bargained held more unfavorable views toward the process than those who had. Collective bargaining was also noted to be the primary management concern of school board members, except in the south where it was ranked relatively low. In urban regions and in states with no collective bargaining law,

collective bargaining was held to be a relatively high management concern.⁹⁷

In a 1977 NSBA report, statistics from state school board associations were reviewed. It was reported that during the 1973-74 school year, more than 45 million children were attending public schools in 16,738 school districts, served by 96,559 board members nationwide. Female school board members varied in proportion from 3% of the total board members in Arkansas to 43% of the total in New Hampshire. Virginia was noted to be the only state with 100% appointed school board members. Of the remaining states, 33 were 100% elected and 16 states varied from 7% elected (New Hampshire) to 99% elected (New York).⁹⁸

In a 1977 article, Zeigler, Tucker and Wilson presented an historical overview of school district control and categorized such control into 4 basic phases: Phase 1, representing the period from approximately 1835 to 1900, was viewed as the period of "lay control," wherein boards had maximum influence and power over schools; Phase 2, from 1900 to 1968, represented the period where professionals took greater charge and influence over school affairs, and board control of schools became somewhat responsive to this professional influence; Phase 3, from 1968 to 1975, represented that period when school control became increasingly

nationalized by the imposition of Federal and state mandates; and Phase 4, from approximately 1975 on, represented that period where there was increasing concern about local, state and/or Federal control. The authors expressed concern about issues arising from this latter phase, such as major policy questions about school control and divergence in the courts and legislative bodies regarding school governance.⁹⁹

Doran noted the increase in the proportion of female school board members from 1974-1976 as reported by 2 NSBA national surveys. Based upon the input of several researchers, she suggested reasons for such growth. The general influence of the women's movement, the proposition that women had more time and in some cases more governance experience than men, the influence of contemporary school board policy on women and the proposition that women tended to be more student oriented than men were cited as primary reasons for the apparent growth in the proportion of women school board members.¹⁰⁰

In a 1977 article, Blanchard examined sex discrimination as it related to school board membership. He cited the "under-representation" of women on school boards, as referenced by the 1972 NSBA Commission on the Role of Women in Educational Governance, as well as several school board surveys. He suggested that such discrimination could be

combated by attempting to change the "attitude of key individuals and groups." Blanchard also recommended that local and state educational groups should begin to confront the issue directly in communications about school board governance; colleges of education should disseminate information about the worthiness of female school board members; and superintendents should be made aware of the need to encourage more women to seek school board office.¹⁰¹

In a 1977 study, Hurley reported on a survey of school board presidents in Missouri designed to determine whether board presidents' opinions on educational issues varied as a function of age, district enrollment or education. He noted that the age of participants significantly influenced their perceptions concerning industrial arts and food services programs. Educational level appeared to influence the value assigned to foreign languages. School enrollment influenced the value assigned to school work programs, foreign languages, transportation and janitorial services, curriculum development, school nursing and several sports. In contrast to several earlier researchers, Hurley suggested that it should be possible to predict the desires of school district residents from characteristics when it became necessary to change school programs.¹⁰²

A 1978 research report prepared by the NSBA examined the back-to-basics movement in public education through a survey conducted at the 1977 NSBA convention and several research documents prepared by scholars in the field. The survey findings suggested that most school districts had been affected by back-to-basics and that 98% of the represented boards had conducted at least some discussion of the issue. It was also suggested that reasons for the back-to-basics movement included the hypotheses that education standards had deteriorated, and that many teachers themselves did not know the basics. It was observed that back-to-basics was the most written about topic in public education in 1977, and that the movement culminated in minimal competency testing. Federal legislation had been introduced to require state standards of basic educational proficiency, and many school districts had revised their curricula to correspond with the basics movement. The movement was linked to dissatisfaction with schools in the areas of test score decline, financial problems, enrollment decline and public awareness of declines in language and math abilities. Also, it was suggested that the relative value of a high school diploma had decreased and graduation had become almost meaningless. School board members generally favored the back-to-basics movement, which was consistent with the

public viewpoint as represented in Gallup polls. There was, however, some concern among school board members as to whether such programs should be mandated of the schools; what could be required of all students; and the limitations in dollars, time, and resources.¹⁰³

In follow-up to the review of the back-to-basics issue, the NSBA conducted a mailed survey of school leaders nationwide regarding minimal competency testing. Findings suggested that board members were sympathetic to the goals of minimal competency testing, but were in some disagreement about the conduct of such testing. They suggested that it was more important to improve education than to improve testing programs. It was also noted that concerns about testing ranked significantly lower than concerns about collective bargaining, the quality of teaching, curriculum reform, education of the handicapped and several other educational issues. Concerns also existed relative to the problem of Federal interference and the need to gain concurrence among educational leaders as to the parameters of minimal competency testing. Participants suggested that writing and language skills, math, practical knowledge skills, job seeking skills and government/citizenship issues should be included in minimal competency testing programs (in that rank order of priority).¹⁰⁴

In a 1978 study, Konick examined the characteristics and attitudes of elected board members in the State of New Jersey. He was particularly concerned with political issues relative to board membership and noted that a plurality of board members were Republicans; that ballot position did not particularly relate to success in an election; and that more than 50% of board members were elected from slates of candidates. Additionally, he reported the regional influence within the state on opinions of board members regarding financial support for the schools. An examination was made of the political processes involved in the recruitment and election of school board members. Factors cited to be critical for success in elections included support by public officials and current board members. Regarding the pluses and minuses of board membership, members suggested that duration of meetings was the most negative concern, followed by conflict within the board and pressure by interest groups. Improving education was their primary positive concern.¹⁰⁵

In a geographically limited 1978 study within a region of Tennessee, Ward examined the personal characteristics and ranking of educational problems by board members. Age of school board members, years residence in the school district, and children currently enrolled in public schools

were characteristics which showed some relationship to problem areas in education. It was noted, however, that personal characteristics should not be used in these instances to predict the importance of educational issues.¹⁰⁶

In a 1979 NSBA research report, Blanchard examined the stages of eligibility, campaigning, and socialization into boards of education by new school board members. He reported that the political process was involved since approximately 95% of all school board members were elected. He further suggested that there was some absence of competition in the elective process by individuals seeking board membership. The role of other board members, superintendents, and state associations was stressed in the process of training and orientation for effective board service. He suggested that past experiences did not necessarily prepare board members for service, and that there was a need for more systematic training of new board members. Informal, indirect, and inexpensive campaigns appeared to be the general rule, and board members appeared to be developing as more politically active individuals in the campaigning and socialization processes.¹⁰⁷

Aleshire examined the opinions and characteristics of elementary district school board members in the State of California in a 1979 study. He reported that "most early

researchers agreed that age and experience of board members has a relationship to attitudes" and focused on tenure of board members as one of the major influencing characteristics.¹⁰⁸ Personal characteristics appeared to vary with the tenure of board members. Characteristics of board members also appeared to be changing. More women, more racial minorities, and more professional educators were becoming board members. The number of board members representing business occupations appeared to be declining. Experience of board members was influential in attitudes regarding teacher salaries, financial support, student placement, superintendent performance and evaluation, and collective bargaining. Educational attainment, occupation, political preference and philosophical beliefs were also factors that showed significant influence upon opinions on several selected education issues.¹⁰⁹

Antrim examined the attitudes and characteristics of selected midwestern school board members in a 1979 dissertation. He was concerned with criticisms of public education and found that district size, education, income, and occupation were the characteristics which related significantly to certain criticisms of education. Tenure did not appear to influence attitudes of board members toward such criticisms.¹¹⁰

Utilizing a survey instrument and addressing a nationwide school board population similar to other surveys previously sponsored by the NSBA, Underwood and others reported the American school board member portrait in a 1980 ASBJ article. This study examined school board member demographics, management concerns and perceptions of issues related to special education legislation. The top 5 ranked management concerns identified by board members included declining enrollment, collective bargaining, cutting educational programs, curriculum reform and discipline.¹¹¹

Similarly, the NSBA sponsored a 1980 study of school board members throughout the nation focusing on personal characteristics, management concerns and opinions regarding vocational education issues. This was briefly reported on in a January 1981 ASBJ article by Underwood and others and more extensively by Pace in a 1982 dissertation. Board member management concerns identified through this study included in order: declining enrollment, the high cost of energy, collective bargaining, cutting educational programs and declining tax base.¹¹² Additionally, Pace reported that regional influence and election or appointment to school boards were significant factors relating to the opinions of board members toward vocational education. The

existence of a vocational education program in a school district, as well as the presence of a vocational director, and the level of education of school board members positively influenced opinions about vocational education.¹¹³

In a series of articles during the Spring of 1981, Newsweek magazine examined several current problems in education relating to the migration of students out of the public schools and into private schools, the flight of teachers from public school teaching and several exemplary schools which had been successful with innovative efforts. The problems and issues addressed therein related in many respects to those issues identified by school board members as being of major concern. Concerns about busing, discipline, the ideology of Christian thought, costs, and personal attention for children were identified as major issues fomenting the migration of students to private schools. It was noted that

. . . what private schools offer that public schools don't is control. Parents who have complaints do not need to fight city hall, the state capitol or Washington; if they are dissatisfied, they can take their money and their children elsewhere.¹¹⁴

In addition, concerns of teachers with student issues such as drugs and discipline, as well as the competency testing issue for (teachers and students alike), were cited as major problems leading to the migration of teachers from the

teaching profession. It was suggested that the problem of public like for and professional dislike for competency testing, as noted earlier, has been and will continue to be a dilemma of public education in the near future.¹¹⁵

On the other hand, educational problems were not the only issues which were making the headlines. Several exemplary and innovative school programs had been noted and reviewed, such as the "adopt-a-school" program by private business in Los Angeles, California. This program was also spreading to many other regions of the nation. It was suggested that

. . . successful schools, in fact, depend more on common sense than fancy theory . . . and . . . the role of money in shaping good schools is more ambiguous; more of it may help, but not necessarily - and less doesn't necessarily cripple, as parochial schools with their threadbare budgets can testify.¹¹⁶

Likewise, U. S. News and World Report magazine presented a series of articles in the Spring of 1981 addressing school problems and recommendations for improvement in the public schools. Of possible importance to school board members was the suggestion that ". . . critical characteristics (according to a National Institute of Education survey) . . . can make the difference between a good school . . . or a second rate school . . ." Such characteristics included "high expectations, strong leadership, emphasis on instruction, discipline and testing."¹¹⁷

Having noted the continuing concerns about discipline in the schools by the general public, as well as by school officials, a Phi Delta Kappa newsletter in the Fall of 1981 examined the extent of research and issues related to the discipline problem. It was suggested that research on discipline fell into the following categories: studies focused on classroom management issues, on school effect issues, on the search for a single solution, on the search for rules and strategies for good discipline, and those studies which recounted examples of problem cases and statistics. The authors concluded that such research suggested a lack of continuity in understanding discipline issues and noted that severe gaps existed in the knowledge about discipline. It was recommended that researchers look at the effects of discipline measures and invest in positive aspects of disciplining.¹¹⁸

In a 1981 study, McGinly examined research about selected school board topics over the period 1959 to 1979. Key issues identified in this investigation included board member selection, board member training and organization, and school board responsibilities. It was noted that personal characteristics of board members had remained relatively unchanged over the preceding 20 years. Certain exceptions, such as the apparent increase in women board

members and the increase in minority board members in certain regions, were observed. Research concerning tenure of membership appeared inconclusive as to its relevance to school board operations, and selection issues (election versus appointment) had not been studied to the extent that effectiveness questions could be adequately answered about either method of selection. The primary conclusion reached was that the significance of school board member characteristics, the importance attached to board member opinions, and general research about selected school board topics provided inadequate reference for the prediction of board member effectiveness and for improvement in school district operation.¹¹⁹

In a 1982 ASBJ article, Underwood, Fortune and Dodge described a nationwide survey of school board members focusing on personal characteristics, management concerns and opinions regarding the cutting of school budgets, programs, and services. Management concerns, in order of ranking, included: decreasing enrollment, declining tax base, cutting of staff, collective bargaining and teacher evaluation. In contrast to earlier studies and also the public's concerns about education, discipline and desegregation were relatively unimportant to board members and ranked at the bottom of the list. Priorities for budget cutting, as

necessitated by financial uncertainties in many school districts, included executive administration as that item which would be cut first. Transportation, health and food services, central business services, and maintenance followed in that order. Cuts in instructional services and the improvement of instruction activities were those areas least desired to be touched by school board members.¹²⁰

As a reference to previously discussed management concerns and educational issues, the "Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" should be noted. For the past 13 years, surveys of public attitudes toward educational issues have been conducted to provide a resource about public opinion for education personnel and other observers. Table 2 summarizes the ranking of problem areas identified by the general public over the past 13 years. In all but 1 of these years, lack of discipline has headed the list as the major concern of the public. Integration/segregation/busing and lack of proper financial support have also been very strong concerns with the public, and only in the past couple of years have these concerns been superceded by the issues of drug use and poor curricula. Based upon research reported from numerous school board member studies, there appears to be considerable contrast between board members and the general public about problem

Table 2

Public Opinion of Major Problems with which Public Schools Must Deal: 1969 to 1981

Problems by Rank Order in 1980	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Percent of Respondents Citing Problem													
Lack of discipline	26	18	14	23	22	23	23	22	26	25	24	26	23
Use of dope/drugs	NA	11	12	4	10	13	9	11	7	13	13	14	15
Poor curriculum	4	6	3	5	7	3	5	14	10	12	11	11	14
Integration/segregation/busing	13	17	21	18	18	16	15	15	13	13	9	10	11
Lack of proper financial support	14	17	23	19	16	13	14	14	12	13	12	10	12
Size of school/classes	NA	NA	NA	10	9	6	10	5	5	5	4	7	5
Difficulty of getting "good" teachers	17	12	11	14	13	11	11	11	11	9	10	6	11
Parents' lack of interest	7	3	4	6	4	6	2	5	5	4	3	6	5
Pupils' lack of interest	3	(1)	2	NA	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	4
Crime/vandalism/stealing	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA	4	2	2	4	4	4	3
Lack of proper facilities	22	11	13	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
School board policies	NA	2	1	NA	4	4	1	3	1	1	2	1	1
There are no problems	4	5	4	2	4	3	5	3	4	4	3	3	3
Miscellaneous	8	3	6	9	4	4	12	8	5	6	5	2	5
Don't know/no answer	13	18	12	12	13	17	10	12	16	12	16	17	12

NA: Not available

(1) Less than 1 percent

NOTE: Totals add to more than 100 percent because of multiple answers.

SOURCE: Phi Delta Kappa, Inc., A Decade of Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education 1969-78 and "Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, 1979, 1980, 1981. (As taken from N. B. Dearman and V. W. Plisko, The Condition of Education - 1981 Edition (Statistical Report, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1981), page 40), (for the years 1969-1980)

areas in education. Several noteworthy findings from the individual Gallup polls are summarized as follows. In the eighth poll (1976), two thirds of the responding public were in favor of a national test for graduation from public high schools.¹²² In the ninth poll, many of the public respondents felt that government should pick up the cost of mandated programs, and approximately two thirds of the respondents felt that localities should have autonomy in spending Federal dollars.¹²³ State and Federal regulation of local education was an issue in the tenth poll, and approximately one half of the respondents felt that such regulation hindered local schools. Approximately one fourth of the respondents felt that it helped.¹²⁴ In the eleventh poll, Gallup suggested that the schools must become more productive if they were to gain public support.¹²⁵ In the twelfth poll, regarding curriculum content, two thirds of the respondents suggested that local government should have the deciding influence about the curricula in local schools. With respect to collective bargaining, 52% were against strikes whereas 40% suggested that strikes should be permitted for public school teachers.¹²⁶ In reference to a major issue in the most recent presidential campaign, the thirteenth annual poll found that abolition of the U.S. Department of Education was favored by 49%, was

opposed by 29%, and 22% of the respondents held no opinion.¹²⁷ Following the first 8 annual polls, in 1977, Smith and Gallup summarized their findings. They suggested that the public had been generally confident in public education and consistent in their views, although it was noted that "a majority of the people are not well informed about their schools and would like to know more."¹²⁸ The public's opinions and those of school board members have not appeared to be closely related, perhaps due to the nature of the surveys themselves and also due to the apparent great difference in information about the public schools held by the two populations addressed.

Over the past few years, lay opinion has been compared to professional opinion on issues addressed in the Gallup polls. Following the twelfth poll, a survey of Phi Delta Kappa members (which included educators and educational observers of various responsibility) was conducted. It was found that whereas the lay public ranked lack of discipline, drug use, lack of financial support, and standards and the quality of education as their major concerns, professional education personnel considered financing of education, discipline, parental support and student motivation to be their primary concerns. In reference to Gallup's polls, it was suggested that the closer public individuals got to the

schools, the more they knew from first hand experience and the more favorable their attitudes were toward public education. It was also noted that a majority of public respondents felt that not enough attention was being given to instruction in the basics, whereas a minority of professional personnel held this viewpoint.¹²⁹

Likewise, Duea compared public and professional opinions on educational issues following the thirteenth annual Gallup poll. His professional audience included school board presidents, superintendents and school principals. He noted that ". . . public officials and the lay public are worlds apart in their perceptions of the major problems facing U.S. public schools."¹³⁰ Reference was made to the fact that school board presidents rated inflation and financial support, declining enrollment, and government interference as their most pressing problems. In comparison, the 1981 Gallup poll of the public reported the top concerns as lack of discipline, drug use, and poor curricula. In summary, Duea noted that the "lay public tends to see those school issues that have been widely covered by the mass media . . . as the major problems . . . whereas school officials tend to identify major problems from the perspective of school operations."¹³¹

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL BOARDS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

This section describes the characteristics of school boards and school board members as ascertained through 38 selected studies over the past 65 years. These studies were identified to represent a sufficient sampling of school board studies that deal with personal characteristics, board characteristics and board member attitudes and opinions as well as other related issues.

Summary of Board Surveys

A summary of the selected school board surveys is presented in Table 3. This table displays the publication year of each study, the author, the location of the study, the focus (as to population addressed), the sample size, the survey participants, and whether or not the survey addressed personal characteristics of board members and board characteristics. Additionally, note is made as to whether or not the survey addressed attitudes and opinions of respondents as well as other notes relevant to the thrust of these studies. Of the 38 studies reviewed, 19 are national, 16 are statewide (including several focusing on specific areas within a state), and 3 are regional in nature. Early studies in many instances focused upon school districts within

Table 1

Summary of Selected School Board Surveys (1917-1982)

Public Year	Author	Location*	Focus	Sample Size	Participants		Pers. Char.	Board Char.	Attitudes/Opinions	Other Issues
					Brd. Mbrs.	Admin.				
1917	Nearing		104 lrg. cities	967		x	x	x		
1922	Struble		169 cities	959		x	x	x		Effectiveness
1927	Counts		Schl. Brds. H.E. Brds.	1,654	x	x	x	x		
1946	NEA			3,068		x	x	x		
1952	Brown		Cities	563	x		x	x		Compares w/Counts
1954	Woods	West Va.	Counties	76	x		x			
1956	Caughran	Illinois		683	x		x	x	Education issues	
1957	Stapley	Midwest					x	x		Summary of studies
1959	Albert		396 lrg. cities	727	x		x		Education criticisms	Compares w/NEA
1961	Michael	Michigan	Opinion ldrs.	60	x	x	x		Education issues	Compares brds. w/opinion leaders
1962	Tiedt	Oregon		110	x		x		Education values, curr. beliefs	
1962	Conley	So. Region		1,058	x		x	x	Education issues	
1962	White			4,072		x	x	x		
1963	NSBA			250	x	x	x	x		Purch./Construct.
1966	Strayer			793	x	x	x	x	Education philos.	
1966	De Beer	St. Louis, Mo.		125	x		x	x	Education issues	
1967	Manz	Wisconsin		88	x		x		Education issues	
1968	Stabile	Ohio		404	x		x		Educ. problem areas	
1971	Hurwitz	New Jersey		2,681	x		x	x	Education issues	
1972	Harden	Illinois		360	x		x	x	Educ. issues, board proc.	
1973	Hottleman		Rep. Sample	925	x		x	x		
1974	NSBA		Convention	532	x		x	x		Role of women on boards
1974	Keyek	New Jersey		1,619	x		x		Education issues	Compares w/Hurwitz
1975	Varnier	Virginia		609	x		x		Problem areas	
1976	Wilkinson	Tenn.		711	x	x	x		Education issues	Voting behavior
1977	NSBA		Convention	1,022	x	x	x	x	Std. Achiev. Tests	
1977	NSBA		Convention	1,612	x	x	x	x	Coll. Bargaining	
1977	Parley	Missouri		132	x		x	x	Import. of prog. and serv.	
1978	NSBA		Convention	786	x	x	x	x	Back to basics	
1978	NSBA			878	x	x	x	x	Min. Comp. Tests	
1978	Konick	New Jersey		403	x		x			Politics, recruit., women
1978	Ward	Tenn.		73	x		x	x	Import. of educ. problems	
1979	NSBA (Blanchard)		Convention	1,800	x		x	x		New school brd. members
1979	Aleshire	Calif.		168	x		x		Education issues	Experience
1979	Antrim	Upper Mid- West		652	x		x		Education issues	
1980	Underwood/Underwood				x		x	x	Spec. Ed. issues	Mgmt. concerns
1981	Underwood/Boo				x		x	x	Voc. Ed. Issues	Mgmt. concerns
1982	Underwood/Dodge				x		x	x	Budget issues	Mgmt. concerns

*National study unless noted otherwise

cities. Dependent upon the location of the studies, other surveys addressed county school districts (as is the case in West Virginia; Wood, 1954). National studies generally focused upon proportionate samplings of urban, suburban rural and small town school districts. Several of the surveys were conducted at national conventions of the NSBA and therefore are likely to indicate information representative only of those individuals who attend such meetings. Sampling problems limited generalizability and reliability of information in several studies. Response to surveys (most of which were mailed questionnaires) varied from approximately 25% to 100% of the individuals addressed. Participants in these surveys in most cases were board members exclusively. Some studies addressed both board members and educational administrators (particularly those studies conducted at national conventions), and some of the earlier studies addressed school superintendents who responded as to characteristics of their boards and board members. Personal characteristics of board members were addressed in each of the 38 studies, and the majority of the studies also addressed such board characteristics as selection method, board size and term of office. Attitudes and opinions of board members have been addressed in the vast majority of surveys conducted since Caughran's Illinois study in 1956.

Additional issues which have been addressed on an individual basis in some of these studies have been: effectiveness of board members; the influence of members on board operations; the activities, responsibilities and roles of board members; voting and politics regarding board operations; officers; meetings; committees; and also comparison of one survey with another survey conducted previously (as is the case with Brown's study in 1952 compared to Counts' 1927 study).

School Board Survey Personal Characteristics

The personal characteristics of sex, race, age and level of educational attainment of board members are presented in Table 4. Some change in characteristics over time has been noted. In addition to actual change, certain factors affecting the variance of such characteristics over time include: the population addressed, the sample size, the type and ratio of response to surveys, and the timing of the survey. With respect to the gender of board members, the proportion of female board members has not grown to the extent predicted by Counts in 1927, and male board members still maintain a hefty majority on boards. In most recent years, however, primarily since the early '70s, it appears that the proportion of women school board members has been growing somewhat. White reported 90% male board members in

Table 4
Summary of School Board Survey Personal Characteristics (1917-1982)
(A) Sex, Race, Age, Education

Public. Year	Author	Location ^a	Sex % Male	Race (%)			Age Median Yrs. ^{**}	Education (%)				
				White	Black	Other		Less than H.S.	H.S.	Less than or = to College	College +	
1917	Hearing		93									
1922	Struble		91			40.4						
1927	Counts		85.7 city 88.3 cnty.			40.3	23	31	_____	46	_____	
1946	WEA		90			40.3	20	42	_____	30	_____	
1952	Brown		86.4			40.3	4.4	28.3	_____	67.1	_____	
1954	Woods	W. Va.				53.4	19.7	33.9	_____	26.3	_____	
1956	Caughran	Illinois	93.0	99.0	0.2	49.1	15.2	32.1	_____	19.5	_____	13.2
1957	Stapley	Midwest	86			46		Average = 15 + Years				
1959	Albert		82			40.6	4	24	_____	72	_____	
1961	Michael	Michigan	87.0			47	5.1	35.5	_____	59.4	_____	
1962	Tiedt	Oregon	91			42.0	_____	37	_____	63	_____	
1962	Conley	South	94.4			Modal Range: 40-49	13.9	24	_____	60.8	_____	
1962	White		90				7.6	_____	92.4	_____		
1963	NSBA (Purch.)											
1966	Strayer		87.1	98.7	0.3	0.0	Modal Range: 41-50	4.2	21.0	49.0	_____	24.2
1966	De Beer	Missouri	91.1				46.4	16.0	46.4	13.6	_____	24.0
1967	Manz	Wisc.					46.4	_____	39.0	42.0	_____	10.2
1960	Stabile	Ohio	92.1	97.5	0.0	1.0	46.0		Mean = 14.6 Years			
1971	Hurvitz	W.J.	85	95	3	2	45.0	3	22	37	_____	30
1972	Harden	Illinois	91	98	_____	2	43.9	0	39	10	_____	15
1973	Wottlemen		80	93	4	3	Modal Range: 41-50	_____	29	34	_____	37
1974	NSBA (Women)		88				39.7 M 42.2 F		Avg. = 15.7 M/15.4 F			
1974	Keyek	N.J.	76	94	4	2	Modal Range: 41-50	_____	14	_____	86	_____
1975	Verner	Virginia	85.4	85.4	12.3	2.3	Modal Range: 41-50	4.4	23.0	39.9	_____	31.7
1976	Wilkinson	Penn.	83.2	97	1.0	1.2	49.5	1.2	30.9	_____	59.9	_____
1977	NSBA (Std. Tests)		76									
1977	NSBA (Coll. Barg.)		70									
1977	Hurley	Missouri					42.6		Average = 13.7 Years			
1978	NSBA (Basico)		74				Modal Range: 41-50					
1978	NSBA (Min. Comp.)						Mean: 43.0	_____	30.0	_____	61.2	_____
1978	Konick	N.J.	72.3				Modal Range: 41-50	5.5	37.0	26.0	_____	31.5
1978	Ward	Tenn.	93.9	98.6	_____	1.6	_____					
1979	NSBA (New Bd. Mbr.)		70.0				Modal Range: 41-50					
1979	Aleshire	California	69.1	90	2	0	Modal Range: 41-50	2	35	_____	64	_____
1979	Antrim	Midwest	71.6				Avg. = 43.7		Average = 14.0 Years			
1980	Underwood/Underwood		72	91	2	7	Modal Range: 41-50					
1981	Underwood/Pace		72.3	90	4	6	Modal Range: 41-50					
1982	Underwood/Dodge		67.2	91.5	3.7	4.0	Modal Range: 41-50					

^a National study unless noted otherwise
^{**} Except as noted

his 1962 national study, whereas a 67.2% male board membership has been reported in a national study conducted in 1981 and reported by Underwood and others in 1982. Race of school board members has not been a frequently reported characteristic in the surveys reviewed. Caucasian individuals still appear to occupy the vast majority of board seats (approximately 90% in the most recent national surveys), and the location of the study has appeared to have an influence upon racial proportion of board seats. There does appear to be some evidence currently that the number of Black board members and other represented races (particularly Hispanic) are growing. The average age of board members has remained relatively unchanged over the years. The vast majority of studies show that the average board member age is in the late 40's. Some difficulty in comparison is noted due to the fact that in some surveys median age is reported, in others a modal range, and in still others a mean age. The 1974 NSBA study reported that women school board members were somewhat older than their male counterparts. The educational attainment of board members shows some change over the years, although due to reporting methods, comparison is difficult. The greatest change appears to be that a very small proportion of board members currently has less than a

high school education whereas in early studies this proportion approximated one fourth of total board members. The average level of educational attainment also appears to have increased particularly in the proportion of individuals who have completed college and gained advanced education beyond college.

Table 5 provides data on the marital status of board members, the percentage of board members with children in public schools, the average income and the religion of board members. The proportion of married board members has remained very high over the years, and essentially no change has been noted. The percentage of board members with children in the public schools has also remained fairly stable and fairly high. Comparison of average income is obviously difficult, due to the factor of inflation, but it has been noted in most studies that board members generally have significantly higher incomes than the average of those people that they represent in a community. Regional influence and occupational influence also appear to significantly affect the average level of board member income. Religion of board members has been an infrequently reported personal characteristic although the Protestant faith consistently has appeared to maintain a majority. Regional influence upon religious choice also appears noteworthy.

Table 5

Summary of School Board Survey Personal Characteristics (1917-1982)
 (B) Marital Status, Children, Income, Religion

Public. Year	Author	Location*	Marital Status % Married	Children in Public Schools % (ex. as ntd.)	Avg. Income	Religion			
						Prot.	Catholic	Jew	No Pref. or Other
1917	Nearing								
1922	Struble		99	Median # = 2.74					
1927	Counts			53-60					
1946	NEA			60	\$3,978				
1952	Brown			52.9	51% > \$9,000				
1954	Woods	West Va.	96.5		Med. = \$4,250				
1956	Caughran	Illinois	97.3	77.4					
1957	Stapley	Midwest		68	Med. = \$7,694				
1959	Albert			70	Med. = \$11,968				
1961	Michael	Michigan		71.8					
1962	Tiedt	Oregon	99	92	Mean: \$9,000	82	10	0	8
1962	Conley	South	96.7	74.4	93.7% > Avg. District In.				
1962	White								
1963	NSBA(Purch.)								
1966	Strayer		97.1	77.0	37.5% > \$15,000	83.9	11.1	3.5	1.5
1966	De Beer	Missouri			Modal Range: \$10-15,000				
1967	Manz	Wisc.			42.4% > \$7,000				
1968	Stabile	Ohio			Med. = \$13,030				
1971	Hurwitz	N.J.	96.0	74	Mean = \$19,001	56	26	8	9
1972	Harden	Illinois	96		Med. = \$17,300	75	15	2	8
1973	Hottleman				Avg. = \$22,700				
1974	NSBA(Women)								
1974	Keyek	N.J.	94	74	50% > \$20,000	49	32	8	7
1975	Varner	Virginia	97.4	60.9	49.1% > \$20,000				
1976	Wilkinson	Pennsylvania			65.9% > \$15,000				
1977	NSBA(Std. Tests)								
1977	NSBA(Coll. Barg.)								
1977	Hurley	Missouri							
1978	NSBA(Basics)								
1978	NSBA(Min. Comp.)								
1978	Konick	N.J.	95.5	69.2	62.7% > \$21,000				
1978	Ward	Tenn.	97.3	67.1	55.9% > \$25,000	97.3	1.4		
1979	NSBA(New Bd. Mbrs.)								
1979	Aleshire	California			Modal Range: \$21-30,000	65	20	5	10
1979	Antrim	Midwest	94+			66.4	21.6		12
1980	Underwood/Underwood				59% > \$30,000				
1981	Underwood/Pace				59% > \$30,000				
1982	Underwood/Dodge				67.2% > \$30,000				

*National Study unless noted otherwise

Occupational background of board members is summarized in Table 6. Due to the changes in the job market, including the growth of new occupations, the decrease of certain occupations, and the range of occupations to be reported, comparison over the years and among individual studies is somewhat difficult. However, occupational groups have been summarized into 3 major categories: business and management, professional and technical, and other. Within the other category, agricultural occupations and the occupation of homemaker have been reported as subsets due to the significant response in these categories in certain studies. The business and management group includes the occupations of business officials, managers, executives, proprietors, bankers, brokers, insurance, accounting and real estate. Doctors, dentists, psychologists, educators, lawyers, engineers, scientists and ministers are included within the professional and technical ranks. The other category of occupation includes sales, clerical, public relations, skilled workers, laborers, and retired individuals, as well as the agricultural and homemaker occupations previously noted. Business/management and professional/technical occupations have maintained a relative majority of board seats, and this proportion has remained fairly stable. Regional influence appears to have been significant in the reporting

Table 6

Summary of School Board Survey Personal Characteristics (1917-1982)
 (C) Prior Education Experience, Occupation

Public. Year	Author	Location*	% with Prior Education Exp.	Occupation (% per Group)**				
				a. Business and Management	b. Professional and Technical	c. Other	c.1. Agriculture	c.2. Homemakers
1917	Nearing			45	34	21		
1922	Struble		19	44	31	27	2	6
1927	Counts			26	29	45	30	
1946	NEA			33	15	52	27	7
1952	Brown			41.2	28.1	30.7	2.5	9.2
1954	Woods	West Va.		35.4	10.4	53.6	27.6	2.6
1956	Caughran	Illinois		50.7		49.3	38.9	
1957	Stapley	Midwest						
1959	Albert			31	27	42	1	15
1961	Michael	Michigan		53	34	13		
1962	Tiedt	Oregon		61		39		
1962	Conley	South	16.5	36.8	15.5	47.4	21.3	
1962	White							
1963	NSBA(Purch.)			43.2	21.5	35.9	14.0	5.0
1966	Strayer		19.3	29.1	30.8	40.1	8.9	9.2
1966	De Beer	Missouri		21.6	45.6	29.6		5.6
1967	Manz	Wisconsin						
1968	Stabile	Ohio		59.9		40.1	16.2	5.8
1971	Hurwitz	N.J.		31	32	36	2	9
1972	Harden	Illinois		26	20	54	28	5
1973	Hottleman			40.4	20	39.6		15
1974	NSBA(Women)							
1974	Keyek	N.J.		25	21	54		13
1975	Varner	Virginia		60.9		38.6	12.2	9.9
1976	Wilkinson	Penn.	12.8(current)	22.1	35.9	42	0.6	6.6
1977	NSBA(Std.Tsts.)							
1977	NSBA(Coll.Barg.)							
1977	Hurley	Missouri						
1978	NSBA(Basics)							
1978	NSBA(Min.Comp.Tstng.)							
1978	Konick	N.J.		29.9	38.4	31.7		17.1
1978	Ward	Tenn.		47.9		52.1	16.4	
1979	NSBA(New Brd.Mbrs.)							
1979	Aleshire	California		33	26	40		17
1979	Antrim	Midwest		75(Bus.,Prof.,Agric.,Self-Emp.)				15.8
1980	Underwood/Underwood							
1981	Underwood/Pace			50		50		
1982	Underwood/Dodge			61.1		38.9		10.4

*National study unless noted otherwise

**±100% due to rounding and reporting methods

of occupational categories by board members. As an example, 38.9% agriculturally occupied individuals were reported in Caughran's 1956 Illinois study, and Harden's 1972 Illinois study reported 28% agriculture. There appears to be some evidence that as the proportion of women school board members grows, so does the representation of homemakers as an occupational grouping.

Time devoted to duties by board members, number of years residence in community and political preference have been characteristics less frequently reported upon. These and average tenure on boards are summarized in Table 7. The average time devoted to duties by board members appeared to grow significantly over the first 50 years of surveys reviewed. Insufficient information is available to make any current comparisons. Years residence in community, although infrequently reported, appears relatively high and also relatively stable. Political preference of board members, although also infrequently reported, has in all cases (except Hottleman's 1973 review) been reported only on a statewide or regional survey. Therefore, inferences are difficult to draw, but it is noted that the Republican party, in all cases but one, maintained a plurality in the response of participants. The average tenure of board members (number of years of service) appears to have remained

Table 7

Summary of School Board Survey Personal Characteristics (1917-1982)
 (D) Time Devoted to Duties, Community Residence, Tenure, Politics

Public. Year	Author	Location*	Average Time Devoted to Duties (Hrs./Yr.)	Years Residence in Community	Avg. Tenure on Board (Median Years)	Political Preference		
						Republic.	Democ.	Other
1917	Nearing				4.24			
1922	Struble				City-4.1			
1927	Counts		City-51 hrs. County-46.4 hrs.		County-3.9			
1946	NEA				6.7			
1952	Brown		88.1		4.4			
1954	Woods	West Va.			Mean=8.5			
1956	Caughran	Illinois	106.8		6.5			
1957	Stapley	Midwest			4.0			
1959	Allart				6.0			
1961	Michael	Michigan			3.5			
1962	Fitch	Oregon			Mean=4.7	64	36	
1962	Conley	South	37% Participate in Inservice	94.5% > 6 Yrs.	Modal Range= 4-7			
1962	White				50% ≥ 5 Yrs.			
1963	NSBA (Purch.)		205+		Avg. = 8+			
1966	Strayer				Avg. = 5.9			
1966	De Beer	Missouri			77.9% < 10 Yrs.			
1967	Manz	Wisconsin			87.5% < 10 Yrs.			
1968	Stabile	Ohio				68.5	21.2	10.3
1971	Hurwitz	N.J.	209+		Avg. = 3.97	48	18	34
1972	Harden	Illinois			Avg. = 5.2			
1973	Hottleman			47% > 20 Yrs.		63		37
1974	NSBA (Women)			19.5 M/17.1 F				
1974	Keyek	N.J.						
1975	Varner	Virginia		61.1% > 20 Yrs.	Modal Range= 2-4	19.2	33.7	47.1
1976	Wilkinson	Penn.			Avg. = 5.4			
1977	NSBA (Std. Tests)							
1977	NSBA (Coll. Barg.)				78% < 7 Yrs.			
1977	Hurley	Missouri						
1978	NSBA (Basics)				60% < 3 Yrs.			
1978	NSBA (Min. Comp. Tstng.)				Mean=4.2	43.2	26.9	29.9
1978	Konick	N.J.		15.3 Yrs.	Mean=6.7	54.8	28.8	15.1
1978	Ward	Tenn.						
1979	NSBA (New Brd. Mbrs.)							
1979	Aleshire	California				50	41	9
1979	Antrim	Midwest			3.7	48	22.9	29.1
1980	Underwood/Underwood							
1981	Underwood/Pace							
1982	Underwood/Dodge				Avg. = 5.6			
					Avg. = 6.1			

*National study unless noted otherwise

relatively stable over the years, although some difficulty in comparison is noted due to the fact that means, medians and modal ranges have been reported to varying degrees in individual studies. Regional influence as well as selection method and type of school district may have some effect on the average tenure of individual board members. Most current surveys show that average tenure is approximately 6 years.

School Board Survey Board Characteristics

School board size, method of selection, term of office, and additional notes regarding characteristics of boards within districts are summarized in Table 8. Board size has been reported infrequently in surveys although the average number of board members appears to be in the neighborhood of 5 or 7 with an odd numbered board being predominant. Method of selection for board members has been relatively consistent over the years and the vast majority of board members are elected. Previous note was made of the number of states which had exclusively elected boards, exclusively appointed boards (Virginia), and a mix of the two. While reported infrequently, term of office of school board members appears to range in the neighborhood of 3 to 4 years. Additionally of note are several infrequently

Table 8

Summary of School Board Survey Board Characteristics (1917-1982)

Public. Year	Author	Location*	Board Size	Selection Method (%)		Term of Office (Years)	Additional Notes Compensation, District Size, District Type, etc.
				Elected	Apptd.		
1917	Nearing		Mode=6-10				Study of urban boards (cities greater than 40,000 population)
1922	Struble		Med.=6.16				Study of urban boards (cities greater than 2,000 population)
1927	Counts		City:Med.=6.4 Cnty:Med.=5.5	City:84.8 Cnty:69	15.2 31	City:Med.=3.8 Cnty:Med.=4.3	14% of board members compensated
1946	NEA		Mode=5	85	15	Avg.=3.6	26% of board members compensated
1952	Brown			73.9	26.1		23.3% of board members compensated
1954	Woods	West Va.	5 (all brds.)			4	All county districts
1956	Caughran	Illinois					Median student enrollment = 674
1957	Stapley	Midwest					27% of board members compensated
1959	Albert						Study of urban boards (cities greater than 30,000 population)
1961	Michael	Michigan	Avg.=7				Study of urban boards (cities greater than 10,000 population)
1962	Tiedt	Oregon					
1962	Conley	South		62.1	37.7		10 states (primarily city and county boards)
1962	White		95% gen.5,7,9	85.9	14.1	Mode=3-4	60% of board members compensated
1963	NSBA(Purch.)						
1966	Strayer		Mode=5	85	15	Mode=4	
1966	De Beer	Missouri					
1967	Manz	Wisconsin					
1968	Stabile	Ohio					
1971	Hurwitz	N.J.		91	9		
1972	Harden	Illinois	7 (all brds.)			3	
1973	Hottleman						
1974	NSBA(Women)			Men:81.6 Women:86.2	18.4 13.8		
1974	Keyek	N.J.					
1975	Varner	Virginia		0	100		
1976	Wilkinson	Penn.					
1977	NSBA(Std. Tests)						
1977	NSBA(Coll. Barg.)			89	5		
1977	Hurley	Missouri					Average enrollment = 2,554
1978	NSBA(Basics)						
1978	NSBA(Min. Comp. Tstng.)						
1978	Konick	N.J.					
1978	Ward	Tenn.		67.1	32.9		
1979	NSBA(New Brd.Mbrs.)						
1979	Aleshire	California					
1979	Antrim	Midwest					
1980	Underwood/Underwood			94	6		
1981	Underwood/Pace			93.7	6.3		
1982	Underwood/Dodge			94.2	5.8		

*National study unless noted otherwise

reported issues such as school board member compensation. Compensation of board members appears to have grown from an infrequent occurrence as reported in earlier studies to a fairly frequent occurrence as lately reported. District type and district size are additional factors which were considered in several of the national studies, and also in selected instances in statewide studies. These factors provide an additional reference for the attempt to determine more specific characterization of board members. The consolidation of school districts over the years has been previously noted, and there are subsequently fewer school districts. Coupled with the growth in population over the years, school districts have become somewhat larger. School district size has also been a factor in the stratification of surveys to determine the effects of size of school district upon board member characteristics and opinions.

SUMMARY

The previously reviewed school board surveys covering a period of 65 years (approximately half of which were conducted during the past decade) have been essentially status or descriptive surveys. Efforts have been made, however, to broaden these status studies into analytic reviews in certain

instances. By investigating school board member management concerns, attitudes and opinions as well as characteristics and by analyzing possible relationships among several of these factors, researchers sought to provide a basis for suggesting how board members might think, and subsequently act. This rationale has been criticized at various times by several researchers. On the other hand, it has been suggested that profiles of school board members can be helpful in providing an ongoing foundation for the examination of school board member behavior and school board decision-making and policy development. Additionally, longitudinal and comparative analysis of school boards has been suggested as useful and appropriate at various times.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to profile the "typical" school board member. However, the following characteristics are appropriate if such a typical board member were to exist. The majority of school board members are male, although there has been evidence in recent years of increasing membership on boards by females. Board members are also primarily Caucasian although some increase has also been noted in minority group representation. The vast majority of board members are married, their age is in the mid 40's, and a significant majority have children in public

schools. Most board members have at least some college education, and a great number have completed college as well as advanced study beyond college. The income of board members averages above the average income of the communities they represent. A primarily Protestant religious preference was noted in those few studies reporting on that variable, and additionally, individual board members have generally been a resident of their community for quite some time. They devote a significant amount of time to school board responsibilities, and their average length of service has generally been greater than 1 term. Occupation of board members continues to be primarily business or professional, although an increasing proportion of homemakers on boards has been observed as the proportion of female board members has increased. Board size has generally ranged from 5 to 7 members (most frequently an odd number), and the term of board membership has been approximately 3 to 4 years. Additionally, board members in the majority of cases are selected for office through election processes. Except as noted, board members' characteristics have not changed to any significant degree over the years; however, their characteristics continue to differ markedly from the characteristics of the community which they represent. This fact has been

criticized at various times over the years, but Brown's comments in 1954 should perhaps be noted. He suggested that it was not necessarily bad that board members were more representative of upper social classes than the lower classes, since perhaps these selected individuals might better be able to lead the educational programs than would a cross-section of community individuals. He further suggested that if such a cross-section of board members did exist, then undesirable gaps might be created between community groups and lead to friction in school district management.¹³²

In the review of individual studies and documents in the first section of this chapter, findings and conclusions noted by researchers indicated that certain personal characteristics of board members appeared to influence particular attitudes and opinions about educational issues, criticisms and management concerns. An overview of this research indicates that the personal characteristic of level of educational attainment appeared to be the one variable which most related to differences in opinions and attitudes. Occupation and age of board member were also noted as significant distinguishing characteristics in several instances, followed by length of service on the board, income, and sex of board member. In fewer instances, time devoted to duties,

political preference, years residence in the community, and educational philosophy were also noted.

Board size appeared to be the most significant board characteristic which related to differences in attitudes and opinions. District type, region and the extent to which individual board members had participated in in-service activities have also been noted as distinguishing variables in a very few instances. It should be noted however, that opinions have been analyzed very infrequently in relation to board characteristics. It should also be noted that in 1973, a survey of board members indicated that they felt attitudes, opinions and personal skills, much more so than individual personal characteristics, should be considered as significant variables with regard to actual behavior of board members on the job. The differentiation between these 3 levels of board member investigation; that is, board member social composition, board member opinion, and board member behavior; is an important distinction. Ultimately, researchers and practitioners are probably more interested in how boards will act and in making accurate predictions about these actions based upon social composition and opinions. However, social composition and opinions of board members have been shown to be related to behavior of board members and therefore legitimate topics of investigation.¹³³

A review of the issues investigated by researchers in these studies reveals several major issues that have been touched upon frequently and also several changes in attitude over the years. One issue that was noted in the earliest studies and continues to be suggested in frequent reviews is the need for continuing in-service and orientation programs for board members. Board members have suggested that they are spending much more time on board activities in recent times than earlier. In one instance it was noted that superintendents' terms of office are shorter today than several years ago, perhaps reflecting the increasing complexity of issues with which school districts must deal and the potential volatility of such issues. Additionally, a decrease in the number of school districts due to consolidation was noted with a consequent result of an increase in size of many school districts. As far as attitudinal issues are concerned, Federal funding and Federal involvement in local school programs has been noted in many cases over the past 25 years particularly. In the earliest instances Federal financial aid was opposed, whereas recently it appears that Federal aid is welcomed. However, regulation by the Federal government has been roundly criticized by most board members. In the early '70s, 2 NSBA studies showed an increase in the approval of sex education programs

for local schools. Women school board members most recently appear to be increasing proportionately, and in several instances over the years, researchers have addressed the need for more female involvement on school boards. The earliest studies showed some disapproval of women as board members. Collective bargaining continues to be an issue addressed in attitudinal reviews by board members since the early '60s. Although collective bargaining per se has been generally disapproved of by board members, it was noted that the more experience boards had with the negotiations process, the more mature their attitudes toward such processes become and the less their fear of collective bargaining. Curriculum reform and curriculum development, as well as testing programs, back-to-basics programs and standards of educational quality have been issues addressed in most reviews of board member opinion, and little change has been noted except in those instances where such programs became more generally utilized and entrenched in school district operations. Improvement of such programs has consistently been the goal, and concerns have been noted regarding the best use of testing programs so that educational services and subsequently children were aided rather than hindered. Also, since the '60s particularly, increasing attention has been given to political understanding and the balance of power of school

boards in relation to the community, the state and the Federal government. Along with this attention, the increasing influence of interest groups in the ongoing activities of school districts has been observed.

Note was made earlier of the relatively unchanging opinion of lay citizens regarding their ranking of educational problem areas as shown in the Gallup polls. Additionally, management concerns of board members have been investigated in several instances over the most recent past few years. Although it is difficult to make direct comparisons with the Gallup polls, board members appear to have somewhat different priorities of concern. Collective bargaining was noted as the primary concern in the earliest review (1977) followed by curriculum reform and declining enrollment.¹³⁴ Over the past 5 years, collective bargaining has steadily dropped in priority while declining enrollment has risen to the top as the main concern. The most recent review (1982) cited declining enrollment, declining tax base, cutting staff and collective bargaining as the top 4 management concerns of board members.¹³⁵

Several suggestions for continued research of school boards have been made over the years. The longitudinal analysis of school board composition and school board opinions has been suggested in several instances. Additionally,

investigation of the significance of school board member social composition with respect to school program effectiveness and decision processes of boards has been recommended and also criticized in some instances. Study of the motivation and influence of board members has been suggested in several instances. White in 1959 recommended that research on school board problems be "coordinated and concentrated" by educational research centers as well as the continuation of research on personal characteristics of board members.¹³⁶ Zeigler, in 1975, suggested that school board studies be longitudinal and comparative, that school boards be studied as collectives, and that variance in governance and policy issues of school boards be investigated in depth.¹³⁷ A continuing theme has been the suggested need to find ways to predict school board behavior.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The methodology and instrumentation used in the study is described in this chapter. Section 1 includes a description of the survey questionnaire and its development. Section 2 describes the sample selection, questionnaire distribution and data collection procedures. The methods of data analysis are reviewed in Section 3.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

The questionnaire used in this study was developed in the winter of 1977 by Julia V. Oertel in cooperation with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the American School Board Journal, (a publication of the NSBA). Her 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. Data from the survey were collected but not analyzed, and that study was not completed. This study analyzes the data collected in Oertel's survey and provides a broader contextual review of the questions raised by that survey. A

general description of the questionnaire and its development follows.

The National Survey of Local School Boards (NSLSB) questionnaire consisted of a cover letter and 3 major sections. Section 1 included questions to determine the demographic characteristics of school board members. These demographic questions were developed as a result of the general review of school board member surveys since the time of Counts' survey in 1926. In addition, several demographic questions were added over and above those mentioned in the literature in order to aid in the further description of school board members according to the needs of the Oertel survey. Several demographic variables, such as political affiliation and religious preference, were not considered due to the need for placing some limits on questions asked in the instrument. Demographic variables included: 1) state, 2) size of district by student enrollment, 3) school district classification by type of community, 4) method of selection (elected or appointed), 5) sex, 6) age, 7) ethnic origin, 8) current or 9) previous occupation, 10) family income, 11) marital status, 12) years of service on the board, 13) terms of service on the board, 14) level of educational attainment, 15) previous employment by a public school system, 16) number of male school board members and

17) number of female school board members. Items 1 through 4, 16 and 17 above were classified as board characteristics whereas the remaining were classified as personal demographic characteristics.

Pressing management concerns was the theme of Section 2 of the questionnaire. The inclusion of this section was at the behest of the NSBA and has been generally employed as a standard question in NSBA surveys of school board members for various research studies. The respondent was requested to check (not rank) the 3 most pressing management concerns in his or her school district. The list of management concerns included: 1) drug abuse, 2) curriculum reform, 3) outmoded facilities, 4) declining enrollments, 5) steady or declining tax base, 6) teacher militancy, 7) discipline, 8) desegregation, 9) cutting staff to balance budget, 10) public apathy, 11) collective bargaining with teachers, 12) Federal interference, 13) high cost of energy, 14) new legal rights of students, 15) coping with "accountability" and 16) cutting programs to balance budget. An open-ended "other" space was provided to allow further comment by respondents.

Section 3 of the questionnaire included 3 questions in each of the following 5 educational issue areas: discipline, curriculum, Federal involvement, quality of

instruction and financial support of public education. The respondent was asked to answer each question along a 5-point response format which ranged from strongly agree, through undecided, to strongly disagree. The questions and educational issues were identified through a review of journals published during the preceding year (1976) by the following organizations:

National Parent Teacher Association
American Association of School Administrators
National School Boards Association
National Education Association
American Educational Research Association

The issues and major questions identified in this manner were compiled, ranked according to frequency of presentation and reviewed for ultimate selection by a panel of experts consisting of representatives from the NSBA familiar with such issues as well as selected Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University professors experienced in educational administration and school board studies.

This same panel of experts reviewed the completed questionnaire in total and made recommendations for modification to final form.

A cover letter was prepared which requested the addressed school board member to cooperate in the study by filling in all responses according to his or her professed opinion or characteristic. A self-addressed return envelope

was enclosed for the convenience of the respondent. The cover letter and attached questionnaire is presented as Appendix A.

SAMPLE SELECTION, QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION
AND DATA COLLECTION

The sample selected for survey purposes was derived from a list of those subscribers to the American School Board Journal (ASBJ) as of Spring 1977. Only those persons whose names were sex identifiable and who appeared to be school board members according to their title and/or address were selected. This nationwide list totaled approximately 28,000, and a systematized random sampling procedure provided a list of 3,211 subscriber names. This sample list included 2,578 men (80.3% of total) and 633 women (19.7% of total) which represented the approximate proportions of men and women school board members in the United States according to NSBA statistics. The 28,000 school board members on the ASBJ mailing list represented approximately 30% of all school board members in the United States.

The NSLSB questionnaire, under cover letter to the addressed school board member, was mailed through the sponsorship of the NSBA. A self-addressed return envelope was

provided for the convenience of the respondent. According to the standard procedure of the NSBA in all surveys of this nature, an anonymous survey was conducted. Questionnaires were not coded in any manner, and no follow-up for non-response was conducted. The questionnaire mailing occurred in early May, 1977, and responses were received up to and including June 30, 1977. Table 9 presents a breakdown of the distribution and collection of questionnaires during that time period.

In addition to the 1,268 returned and usable questionnaires, 22 questionnaires which were returned were determined to be unusable. Of the women school board members contacted 52% responded, and 36% of the contacted men school board members responded. The total return of the questionnaire provided a 39.5% response rate for the survey.

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Upon receipt of completed and usable questionnaires, all data were recorded on computer data cards (1 card per case; 1,268 cases). These data were analyzed through use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) packaged computer routines.¹ Specifically, the data were broken into 3 categories corresponding to the 3 sections of

Table 9
1977 NSLSB Sample and Response by Sex

	<u>ASBJ Subscribers</u>		<u>Sample Mailed</u>		<u>Number Returned</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Men School Board Members	22,400	80	2578	80.3	940	74.1
Women School Board Members	5,600	20	633	19.7	328	25.9
Total School Board Members	28,000	100	3211	100.0	1268	100.0

the questionnaire, for purposes of analysis. Category 1 included 17 demographic variables. Category 2 included the 3 management concern variables selected by each respondent. Category 3 included 15 educational issue opinion variables. In addition, a variable was included to indicate whether or not the respondent made any open ended comments on any part of the questionnaire. Recoding and data reduction were employed in several cases to more appropriately provide for ease of data analysis in Category 1 (demographic variables). These cases were: 1) state response was recoded to correspond to 1 of 5 of the NSBA regions, 2) age response was recoded to correspond to 5 ranges of approximately 10 years each, 3) occupation was recoded to occupational category rather than the specific Dictionary of Occupational Titles format which had been used as the input basis, 4) years of service was recoded to 4 ranges of number of years of service rather than the discrete number of years, 5) previous education experience (wherein respondents named several job titles) was recoded to the categories of teaching, administrative, and nonclassified service (other).

The data analysis was conducted in 5 general categories, the first of which was a general report of findings from the survey response. This included a report on demographic characteristics, management concerns and educational

issue opinions. The second category included a report on the first research question, demographic characteristics versus demographic characteristics. In this section the data were statistically treated by use of chi square analysis to ascertain any relationship which might exist between any 2 demographic characteristics. The third category of data analysis included a report on research question 2, demographic characteristics versus management concerns. The data in this section were statistically treated by determination of rank order correlation or coefficient of concordance statistics, dependent upon the number of variables involved. The fourth category of analysis included an examination of research question 3, demographic concerns versus opinions on educational issues. The data in this section were also treated by use of chi square analysis. The last category of data analysis included the investigation of research question 4, management concerns versus opinions on educational issues. Chi square analysis was again employed for investigation of these data.

In evaluating these analyses of data, a statistical level of significance of 0.01 was utilized as a basis for reporting on relationships between and among variables.

A summary of these findings of statistical significance as well as practical significance is summarized and overviewed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 3 FOOTNOTES

¹Norman H. Nie, C. Hadlai Hull, Jean G. Jenkins, Karin Steinbrenner and Dale H. Brent, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975)

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

A review and analysis of data collected through the "National Survey of Local School Boards" questionnaire is presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided into 5 major sections. Section 1 presents a review of the explicit findings of the survey and is divided into 3 subsections dealing with demographic characteristics, management concerns, and opinions on educational issues presented in the survey instrument. Section 2 presents an analysis of each demographic characteristic with respect to each other demographic characteristic as provided for by general research question number 1. Section 3 presents an analysis of each demographic characteristic with respect to the ranking of management concerns as provided for by general research question number 2. Section 4 presents a review of each demographic characteristic with respect to individual opinions on educational issues as provided for by general research question number 3. Section 5 presents an analysis of each of several selected top ranked management concerns with respect to opinions on related educational issues as provided for by research question number 4.

CHARACTERISTICS AND OPINIONS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Demographic characteristics, management concerns, and opinions on educational issues, as requested in the survey instrument, are described in the following 3 subsections. Explanatory commentary and tables are also presented to represent these findings. The NSLSB questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Demographic Characteristics

State/Region - School Board members from each of the 50 states were surveyed, and the response rate varied from 16% to 100%, with a median rate and modal rate of 39%. Table 10 summarizes these responses and also reduces the 50 states into 5 regions as generally provided for by NSBA regional categorization. The response rate from each of the 5 regions varied from 34% to 48% with a total response rate of 39.5% from the 1268 survey participants. The greatest response was received from central states which represented 36.6% of the total survey, whereas southern states represented only 11.8% of the survey participants and had the lowest response rate.

District size - The questionnaire asked participants to identify the size of their school district in 1 of 5

Table 10

1977 NSLSB Response by State and Region

STATE	Response		REGION	Response		% of Total
	#	%		#	%	
Connecticut	20	51	NORTHEAST	326	40	25.7
Delaware	6	35				
Maine	20	46				
Maryland	8	50				
Massachusetts	40	38				
New Hampshire	10	32				
New Jersey	47	39				
New York	88	39				
Pennsylvania	76	38				
Rhode Island	8	50				
Vermont	3	30				
Alabama	12	40	SOUTHERN	149	34	11.8
Arkansas	8	22				
Florida	9	36				
Georgia	11	39				
Louisiana	9	27				
Mississippi	6	25				
North Carolina	17	31				
South Carolina	12	46				
Tennessee	13	54				
Texas	26	16				
Virginia	21	47				
West Virginia	5	28				
Illinois	118	57	CENTRAL	464	41	36.6
Indiana	46	43				
Iowa	56	44				
Kentucky	9	22				
Michigan	72	44				
Minnesota	35	38				
Missouri	23	29				
Ohio	47	48				
Wisconsin	53	41				
Colorado	22	37				
Kansas	27	39				
Montana	22	48				
Nebraska	24	39				
New Mexico	10	33				
North Dakota	10	50				
Oklahoma	13	28				
South Dakota	6	33				
Wyoming	9	36				
Alaska	9	45	PACIFIC	186	48	14.7
Arizona	12	24				
California	86	48				
Hawaii	1	100				
Idaho	11	58				
Nevada	4	50				
Oregon	26	31				
Utah	5	35				
Washington	32	42				
TOTAL	1,268	100.0				

categories according to student population (enrollment). This response is presented in Table 11 and indicates that school districts with enrollments of 1,000 to 4,999 were represented by approximately one half of all survey participants. The largest school districts (greater than 25,000 students) were represented by only 5% of the participants. A comparison of this response to the actual percentages of districts by size in the nation suggests that larger school districts may be more likely to be subscribers to the ASBJ. Although representativeness of response may be questioned, the great number of smaller districts in the nation enroll relatively few students.¹

District type - Board members were asked to supply information regarding the classification of their school district as either urban, suburban, rural or small town. If towns and cities of all sizes were grouped together, an approximately equal representation from towns and cities, suburban communities, and rural communities is observed. Other responses represented a combination of 2 or more of the above district types. Such is the case with county school districts which may contain all 4 of the above district types. Findings are presented in Table 12.

Selection - The vast majority (92%) of school board members responding to this survey indicated that they had

Table 11
 1977 NSLSB Response by District Size with Comparison To
 Actual Percentages of Districts by Size

Student Population (Enrollment)	Response Number	% of Total	Actual % of Districts by Size *
Less than 1,000	216	17.1	53.6
1,000 - 4,999	598	47.3	34.8
5,000 - 9,999	241	19.1	7.0
10,000 - 24,999	145	11.5	3.4
More than 25,000	63	5.0	1.2
TOTAL	1,263	100.0	100.0

(5 missing cases)

* SOURCE: Jeffrey W. Williams and Sallie L. Warf, Educational Directory: Public School Systems 1976-1977 (Washington D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, December, 1977), p. xix.

Table 12
1977 NSLSB Response by District Type

District Type	Response Number	% of Total
Urban	137	10.8
Suburban	420	33.3
Rural	398	31.5
Small Town	268	21.2
Other	40	3.2
TOTAL	1,263	100.0
(5 missing cases)		

been elected rather than appointed to their position. These findings are presented in Table 13 and conform very closely to earlier studies conducted on a national basis.

Sex - Table 14 presents the response by sex of board member and indicates that respondents were composed of approximately 3 males for every 1 female. A review of earlier studies, particularly on a national basis, indicates that perhaps female board members are growing in proportion relative to male board members. National school board surveys over the past 10 years, dating back to Hottleman in 1973, indicate that male board members have declined from approximately four fifths of total representation to approximately three fourths, or perhaps even two thirds if the latest study (1982) is considered. It should also be noted that since the survey sample was stratified by sex, it cannot be concluded that one fourth of all school board members were female. Rather, from a review of data collected on the question dealing with board size, the modal number of women board members on boards was 1, and of men, 5. The mean number of women board members reported from that question was 1.6, and of men, 5.17. Thus, 23.6% women board members appeared as a closer approximation to actual than the estimate of 25.9%.

Table 13

1977 NSLSB Response by Selection Method

Selection Method	Response #	% of Total
Elected	1,166	92.0
Appointed	102	8.0
TOTAL	1,268	100.0

Table 14

1977 NSLSB Response by Sex

Sex	Response #	% of Total
Male	940	74.1
Female	328	25.9
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,268	100.0

Age - The age of board members is reported in Table 15, and data have been recoded into 6 categories to simplify analysis in later sections. The modal age was 47 years, the median age was 45 five years, and the mean age of school board members was 46.6 years. These findings highly conform to earlier studies dating all the way back to Struble's review in 1922, which indicated a median age of 48.4 years for school board members.

Race - School board members were asked to categorize themselves by ethnic background as either Afro American, Anglo American, Spanish American, Native American, or other. The categories were those used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for racial classification. Over 40% of the respondents classified themselves as Native American, thereby indicating an American Indian heritage. Since such a finding was highly improbable, if not impossible, given the population of subscribers to the ASBJ and the sampling procedures employed, the information on race of board members could not be considered valid for reporting or analysis.

Occupation - Board members were next asked to identify their current occupation or previous occupation if presently unemployed. Information on current occupation is presented in Table 16 and is classified as provided for in U.S. Bureau of the Census reports on the civilian labor

Table 15
1977 NSLSB Response by Age

Age Range	Response #	% of Total
21 - 30	44	3.5
31 - 40	306	24.6
41 - 50	527	42.3
51 - 60	277	22.2
61 - 70	81	6.5
Over 70	10	0.8
TOTAL	1,245	100.0
(23 Missing Cases)		

Table 16
1977 NSLSB Response by Occupation (Current)

Occupational Category	Response #	% of Total
Professional/Technical	348	27.5
Managerial/Administrative	332	26.2
Sales	63	5.0
Clerical	31	2.4
Crafts	38	3.0
Operatives	16	1.3
Transportation	2	0.2
Laborers	4	0.3
Agriculture	116	9.2
Homemakers	56	4.4
Misc./Retired/Unemployed	261	20.6
TOTAL	1,267	100.0
(1 Missing Case)		

force. Information on specific occupation was solicited but is reported in 11 major categories in order to conform generally with earlier studies and also provide for analysis of occupational information in later stages. As was the case in almost all of the studies reported earlier, school board members representing the professional/technical and managerial/administrative occupations comprised more than half of all respondents. Of the 261 individuals who identified themselves as miscellaneous, retired or unemployed, 178 responded to the second part of the occupational question providing information about previous occupations. This information is reported in Table 17 and again indicates a very high proportion of representation from the professional and managerial occupations.

Family Income - Respondents were fairly evenly divided in the 4 income level categories identified and displayed in Table 18. As was noted earlier, the income level of school board members has been generally higher than the income level of the community members which these school board members have represented. Additionally, it is difficult to compare changing income levels over time due to previously mentioned factors, primarily inflation.

Marital Status - Board members were asked if they were married or not, and the vast majority (94.5%) indicated

Table 17
1977 NSLSB Response by Occupation (Previous)

Occupational Category	Response #	% of Total
Professional/Technical	99	55.6
Managerial/Administrative	29	16.3
Sales	4	2.2
Clerical	20	11.2
Crafts	0	0
Operatives	3	1.7
Transportation	0	0
Laborers	0	0
Agriculture	0	0
Homemakers	0	0
Miscellaneous	23	12.9
TOTAL	178	100.0

Table 18
1977 NSLSB Response by Level of Income

Income Level	Response #	% of Total
Less than \$20,000	322	26.1
\$20,000 - \$29,999	405	32.8
\$30,000 - \$39,999	232	18.8
More than \$40,000	275	22.3
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,234	100.0
(34 Missing Cases)		

they were. This information is presented in Table 19 and again is in high conformance with all other previous studies reported earlier.

Years Service-Board members were asked how many years they had served on the school board, and responses varied from 1 year to a high of 39 years. The mean service of school board members was 5.1 years; the median service was 3 plus years; and the modal service of school board members was 2 years as indicated by 201 of the 1,268 respondents. Table 20 reduces the findings into 4 categories, and it is noted that less than one fifth of all respondents had served on school boards for more than 8 years. These findings appear generally consistent with earlier studies reported.

Terms Served - In follow up to the previous question, board members were asked to identify the number of terms which they had served on their school board. More than one half of all respondents had served 1 or less than 1 term on the board, and less than one fifth of the school board members could be considered as perennial school board members (serving 3 or more terms). This information is provided in Table 21.

Table 19
1977 NSLSB Response by Marital Status

Marital Status	Response #	% of Total
Married	1,196	94.5
Single	70	5.5
TOTAL	1,266	100.0
(2 Missing Cases)		

Table 20
1977 NSLSB Response by Years of Service

Service on Board	Response #	% of Total
4 years or less	658	53.6
5 - 8 years	338	27.5
9 - 12 years	118	9.6
13 years or more	114	9.3
TOTAL	1,228	100.0
(40 Missing Cases)		

Table 21
1977 NSLSB Response by Number of Terms

Terms of Board Service	Response #	% of Total
Less than 1	474	37.4
1	253	20.0
2	291	23.0
3	111	8.8
More than 3	138	10.9
TOTAL	1,267	100.0
(1 Missing Case)		

Educational Attainment - As with several earlier studies, a high degree of college completion and advanced college training is observed. Of 1,267 respondents, 21 (less than 2%) indicated that they had not completed high school. For analysis purposes, less than high school and high school graduates were combined, and these data are presented in Table 22.

Employment in Education - In follow up to earlier questions about occupation, school board members were asked to specifically identify any present or previous employment by a public school system. Over three fourths indicated that they had not been so employed whereas the remaining respondents were classified as either employed in teaching, administrative or other educational positions. Other educational employment represented such occupations as teacher's aid, school transportation, school food service, and related activities. A combination response by board members was classified by the priority of administrative, teaching, and other educational employment in that order, such that if a respondent indicated experience as a teacher and an administrator, he or she was classified in the administrative category. This information is presented in Table 23.

Table 22
1977 NSLSB Response by Educational Attainment

Level of Educational Attainment	Response #	% of Total
Less than High School (21)	224	17.7
High School Graduate (203)		
Post High School Training	258	20.4
College Degree	406	32.0
Advanced College Degree	379	29.9
TOTAL	1,267	100.0
(1 Missing Case)		

Table 23

1977 NSLSB Response by Employment in Education

Previous/Present Employment in Education	Response #	% of Total
Not Applicable	972	76.7
Teaching	182	14.4
Administrative	42	3.3
Other Educational Employment	71	5.6
TOTAL	1,267	100.0

(1 Missing Case)

Number of School Board Members - The last 2 questions of the survey demographic section asked how many members of a respondent's school board were men and how many were women. The modal number of men school board members was reported as 5 by 335 respondents, whereas the modal number of women school board members was reported as 1 by 425 school board members. By calculating a weighted average of women board members and men board members from this data, the mean number of women on boards was 1.6, and of men, 5.17. Approximately 23.6% of all board members from boards represented by respondents to the survey were women. For purposes of analysis, these data elements were combined for each respondent to identify the total board size. This information was then reduced to 4 categories: 2 to 5 members, 6 to 8 members, 9 to 11 members, and more than 11 members. The modal range of school board size was 6 to 8 members, as indicated by over 46% of all respondents, and the mean board size was 6.8 members. This information is presented in Table 24.

In summary of all demographic characteristics, it is noted that although the return rate appeared somewhat low (39.5%), the responses indicated general representation in conformance with earlier studies and estimated information provided by the literature and NSBA statistics. All 50 states were represented in the returns, as were the full

Table 24
1977 NSLSB Response by Board Size

Number of Board Members	Response #	% of Total
2-5	431	34.0
6-8	588	46.4
9-11	218	17.2
More than 11	31	2.4
TOTAL:	1,268	100.0

range of district size, district classification, age, education, and years of service on the board, among other characteristics.

Management Concerns

In the next survey question, school board members were asked to check the 3 most pressing management concerns in their school district from a list of 16 items. An additional seventeenth item was provided for as an open-ended opportunity to indicate any other pressing management concern of a board member. By frequency of response to each of the 16 management concerns, these concerns were ranked and are presented in Table 25. Collective bargaining by teachers appeared to be the highest priority management concern, having been checked by 497 respondents (39.2% of the total 1,268 respondents). The management concerns of declining enrollments, curriculum reform, discipline, and cutting programs to balance budget followed in that order. All of these responses were indicated by 20% or more of total respondents.

In addition, there were 230 responses to the open ended individual management concerns item. The highest ranked "other" item, which received over 60 related responses, dealt with the issue of "mandated state programs

Table 25
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Board Member Management Concerns

Management Concerns	# of Responses	% of Respondents Concerned
Collective Bargaining by Teachers	497	39.2
Declining Enrollments	332	26.2
Curriculum Reform	314	24.8
Discipline	288	22.7
Cutting Programs to Balance Budget	272	21.4
Public Apathy	250	19.7
High Cost of Energy	224	17.7
Steady or Declining Tax Base	206	16.2
Coping with "Accountability"	205	16.2
Outmoded Facilities	197	15.5
Federal Interference	190	15.0
Cutting Staff to Balance Budget	184	14.5
Teacher Militancy	124	9.8
Drug Abuse	68	5.4
New Legal Rights of Students	58	4.6
Desegregation	47	3.7

(+230 Responses to Open-ended item--See Narrative)

and subsequent lack of adequate funding to accomplish such mandates." Many comments criticized such mandates and state regulation of local district efforts in general. In addition to the suggested items dealing with money matters, such as steady or declining tax base, cutting staff to balance budget, and cutting programs to balance budget, board members mentioned money and budget management problems in several instances. These concerns varied from inflation and taxation to the referendum problems of passing levies and bonds. In several cases these concerns overlapped with the concern mentioned above, namely "mandated state programs with lack of funding."

Other free choice responses included "increasing enrollments," "teacher/administrative/program evaluation," "teacher tenure," "teacher apathy and incompetence," and the problems inherent in conducting "building programs." Several board members were quite vocal in criticizing "public interference and ignorance" about school programs and goals. "Diversity of socioeconomic background," "culture," and "attitudes" were other concerns expressed more mildly than "public ignorance." The need for stronger "back-to-basics" movements and the need for "better quality education" were also mentioned to some extent. Several of the less frequently mentioned free choice management concerns including

the following: "where to hold the junior prom," "other board members who try to run the show," "United States morality in general," "lack of fuel," "student field trips and travel to activities," "the policy making process of the school board," "union organizing efforts," and "questionnaires to be completed by board members." "No management concerns" in their local school districts was indicated by 3 board members.

Opinions on Educational Issues

The last section of the NSLSB questionnaire dealt with educational issue related information and opinions by board members as to agreement or disagreement with these issues. Five principle areas of interest were determined: discipline, curriculum, Federal involvement in education, instructional quality, and financial support of public education. For each of these 5 categories, 3 educational issue statements were composed to elicit board members' opinions. A 5-point scale, varying from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree, was utilized in order to categorize these opinions. Table 26 presents the educational issue items and numbers and percentages of response by school board members for the 15 items in the 5 areas of interest. The 5 areas of interest are reviewed below.

Table 26

1977 NSLSB Frequency of Responses to Opinions on Educational Issues

Page 1 of 2

Area/Question	Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<u>DISCIPLINE</u>						
1. Students who display extreme discipline problems should be removed from the home and placed in a live-in boarding school provided by the public school system.	# %	50 3.9	67 5.3	213 16.8	205 16.2	733 57.8
2. A lack of interest by parents is a primary cause of discipline problems in the public schools.	# %	650 51.2	395 31.1	85 6.7	105 8.3	33 2.6
3. Compulsory attendance laws should be changed to allow the student to leave school at age 14.	# %	89 7.0	65 5.1	109 8.6	203 16.0	802 63.2
<u>CURRICULUM</u>						
4. The school curriculum should place more emphasis on career education; that is, making students aware of career options.	# %	525 41.4	467 36.8	113 8.9	104 8.2	59 4.6
5. The school curriculum should place more emphasis on the moral and values development of the student.	# %	539 42.5	447 35.2	132 10.4	98 7.7	52 4.1
6. Students should master skills in reading and mathematics at grade level before being promoted to the next grade.	# %	691 54.5	322 25.4	119 9.4	95 7.5	41 3.2
<u>FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT</u>						
7. Stronger Federal involvement in public education is to assure that state and local systems are meeting the needs of students.	# %	47 3.7	65 5.1	100 7.9	232 18.3	824 64.9

Table 26
(Continued)

Area/Question	Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT (continued)						
8. Federal aid should be increased to local school systems to meet the increasing cost of public education.	# %	246 19.4	194 15.3	188 14.8	226 17.8	414 32.6
9. State and local school systems have not assumed adequate responsibility in assuring appropriate educational programs and have therefore contributed to the increase of Court decisions that affect public education.	# %	183 14.4	224 17.7	219 17.3	269 21.2	373 29.4
QUALITY INSTRUCTION						
10. A student should pass a standard nationwide examination in order to receive a high school diploma.	# %	275 21.7	234 18.4	214 16.9	217 17.1	328 25.8
11. The decline in the national test scores of students is primarily caused by inadequate instruction in the classroom.	# %	213 16.8	284 22.4	239 18.8	316 24.9	216 17.0
12. Teachers should have the right to negotiate class size.	# %	45 3.5	83 6.5	79 6.2	222 17.5	839 66.1
FINANCIAL SUPPORT						
13. State finance formulas for education should guarantee each child in the state an education comparable to every other child regardless of the local school system's ability to pay.	# %	566 44.6	290 22.9	127 10.0	130 10.2	155 12.2
14. Faced with budget cuts, a school system should first decrease spending by reducing the number of funded extracurricular activities.	# %	356 28.1	356 28.1	176 13.9	204 16.1	176 13.9
15. The community's lack of confidence in the school administration is a primary reason for the defeat of school budgets.	# %	193 15.2	217 17.1	175 13.8	336 26.5	347 27.3

Discipline - Statements dealing with removal of students from the home due to discipline problems, lack of parental interest, and potential change in compulsory attendance laws were identified as major issues within the discipline category. A very high proportion of school board members (74.0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the suggestion that extremely unruly students should be removed from the home and cared for by the public school system in a live-in boarding school. Approximately one sixth of the respondents were undecided as to how these extreme discipline problems should be handled. Board members were also overwhelmingly in agreement with the suggestion that parental lack of interest was the primary reason for public school discipline problems. Almost four fifths of respondents indicated some level of disagreement with the suggestion that a change in compulsory attendance laws was necessary and would be a viable option for aiding the public schools in dealing with discipline problems. The category discipline, in summary, elicited very strong response of either agreement or disagreement with these issues and indicates that board members had fairly strong preferences on major discipline issues. Underlying concerns should perhaps be the next avenue of investigation in order to

provide some information as to how board members think discipline issues ought to be solved.

Curriculum - The area of school curriculum was investigated by 3 statements which suggested where emphasis might best be placed in school programs. School board members, in response to all 3 statements, overwhelmingly agreed at the strong agreement or agreement level (greater than 75%) that more emphasis should be placed on career education; that moral and values development should receive more emphasis; and that mastery of skills in reading and mathematics should be a basis for promotion to the next grade. Relatively low levels of indecision and disagreement were noted. On the basis of this information, it appears that board members had somewhat higher expectations about what the schools should deliver to students than current programs provide.

Federal Involvement - One of the highest levels of disagreement was elicited by the suggestion that stronger Federal involvement in public education is necessary to aid state and local school systems in meeting the needs of students. Relatively little indecision or agreement was noted with this suggestion. School board members were much less in agreement on the issue of whether Federal aid should be increased to local school systems in order to meet the increasing cost of public education. Approximately one half

of the respondents disagreed with this suggestion while approximately one third agreed to some or great extent. From reviewing earlier studies, these 2 responses were not unexpected. School board members have consistently been concerned with Federal (and also state) intrusion into local school district affairs, while at the same time there has been a gradual mellowing of resistance to accepting Federal funds and the strings attached. This issue of autonomy, Federal versus state versus local authority, has been, and apparently will continue to be, a major policy and political issue regarding public educational governance. The last item in this interest area suggested that court cases affecting public education have been brought about by the failure of state and local school agencies to assume responsibility for providing appropriate educational programs. There was some opinion diversity among board members on this item with a level of disagreement approximating one half, a level of agreement approximating one third and a relatively high indecision rate approximating one sixth. The legal contest about certain educational issues has been and apparently will continue to be a major concern in public education.

Quality Instruction - The suggestion that students should pass standard nationwide examinations in order to receive a high school diploma elicited fairly equal levels

of agreement and disagreement as well as a high level of indecision from board members. This item could also be considered as a Federal involvement question since the issue of autonomy is presupposed by such a standard nationwide examination. Likewise, the suggestion that a decline in national test scores is caused by inadequate classroom instruction elicited disagreement among board members with findings somewhat similar to the above item. Not so for the suggestion that teachers should have the right to negotiate class size. The highest level of disagreement by board members (83.6%) was noted on this issue. This response might have been predicted from studies cited earlier and also from the significant concern with collective bargaining expressed by school board members on a nationwide basis.

Financial Support - School board members generally agreed (at the level of approximately two thirds) that it was a state responsibility for financing equal educational opportunity for each child regardless of the local district's ability to pay. This issue also relates logically to the concern about autonomy of local school districts vis-à-vis state and Federal interest in the equal governance and financing of local education. A somewhat lower proportion (56.2%) of school board members agreed with the suggestion that extracurricular activities should be the first

area to be reduced when a school district was faced with budget cuts. A more detailed analysis of this issue is presented in Underwood's January 1982 ASBJ article reporting school board member responses to a survey on cutting school district budgets.² A little over one half of all respondents disagreed with the suggestion that school district budget defeats were due to the community's lack of confidence in local school administration. There was some diversity of opinion on this issue, and further examination as to the reason for school district budget defeats, and also the relationship between superintendents and their boards, might well be investigated.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section intends to answer the first general research question: What are the relationships among demographic characteristics of school board members? The 12 demographic characteristics which have been analyzed are region, district enrollment, district type, selection method, sex, age, current occupation, income, terms on the board, educational attainment, educational employment, and size of board. Those demographic characteristics not analyzed include: state, due to the fact that the 50 states were

recoded into 5 regions; race, due to the fact that the data were apparently spurious; marital status, due to the fact that almost all board members were married; years of service on the board, due to the fact that terms on the board is analyzed; and past occupation, due to the large portion of the sample which did not provide a response and the fact that current occupation is analyzed. The basis for this analysis is contained in the general research question null hypothesis and an example relationship. The general null hypothesis is: There is no difference in characteristic A due to the influence of characteristic B. An alternate way of discussing the general null hypothesis is that characteristic B (independent variable) does not influence characteristic A (dependent variable), or more generally, there is no relationship between characteristic A and characteristic B. In several of the relationships tested, the independent variable and dependent variable may be considered interchangeable. A specific example for a single relationship would be: There is no difference in selection method due to the influence of school board region.

Chi Square analysis was chosen as the method of statistical investigation due to the fact that all data were either nominal or interval, and the primary concern was to determine relationships of dependence or independence

between any 2 variables. A fairly high level of significance, alpha equal to 0.01, was selected due to the problems inherent in a mailed survey of this nature as well as the need to gain some assurance that a relationship is, in fact, fairly significant statistically (to provide some foundation for inferring functional relationships). Chi square analysis is discussed at length in Ferguson (1971)³, Kerlinger (1973)⁴, and Nie and others (1975)⁵.

Table 27 presents a synopsis of all possible relationships (66 in number) among demographic characteristics. This matrix indicates whether a relationship was found at the 0.01 level of significance or that no statistical relationship was found. At the 0.01 level of significance, 38 relationships were found and will be discussed below. Those analyses that were found to indicate no statistically significant relationship numbered 28. Of the significant relationships (at the 0.01 level) the board characteristic of region was found to be a factor in 9 relationships, and the personal characteristic of current occupation was also found to be a factor in 9 relationships. A summary of relationships by characteristic is also included in Table 27. This table and the following narratives should suffice to explain relationships between any two demographic characteristics, and individual cross tabulation tables will not be presented.

Table 27

1977 NSLSB Summary of Significant Relationships Among Demographic Characteristics

	Region	Enrollment	Dist.Type	Selectn.	Sex	Age	Current Occupn.	Income	Terms Served	Ed. Attmmt.	Empl. In Ed.	Board Size
<u>Region</u>	--	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	NS	0.01	0.01	NS	0.01	0.01	0.01
<u>Enrollment</u>		--	0.01	0.01	NS	NS	0.01	0.01	NS	0.01	NS	0.01
<u>District Type</u>			--	0.01	NS	0.01	0.01	0.01	NS	0.01	NS	0.01
<u>Selection</u>				--	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
<u>Sex</u>					--	0.01	0.01	NS	0.01	0.01	0.01	NS
<u>Age</u>						--	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	NS
<u>Current Occupation</u>							--	0.01	NS	0.01	0.01	0.01
<u>Income</u>								--	NS	0.01	NS	NS
<u>Terms Served</u>									--	NS	0.01	NS
<u>Educational Attainment</u>										--	0.01	NS
<u>Employment in Education</u>											--	NS
<u>Board Size</u>												--

Key: 0.01 = Statistical Relationship at 0.01 Level of Significance (38)

NS = No Statistically Significant Relationship (28)

TOTAL (66)

Summary of Relationships

	0.01	NS
Region	9	2
Occupation	9	2
District Type	8	3
Education	8	3
Enrollment	7	4
Age	7	4
Educational Employ.	6	5
Sex	6	5
Income	6	5
Board Size	4	7
Selection	3	8
Terms	3	8

Region vs. Enrollment - The region in which a school board was located did appear to influence the size (in enrollment) of school districts. Those districts with 1,000 to 5,000 students enrolled represented approximately one half of all districts surveyed, and the northeast and central regions had a somewhat greater proportion of school districts this size when compared to southern and western regions. The south also had a much higher proportion of districts with student enrollment greater than 25,000 whereas the northeast indicated a very low proportion in this regard. In summary the south had relatively larger school districts than other regions, whereas the west had school districts of low enrollment to a great extent. This sample finding was consistent with earlier documentation.

Region vs. District Type - Region also appeared to influence the type of district, which was classified as either urban, suburban, rural, small town, or other (generally a combination of the previous types). The south had a proportionately higher number of urban school districts and other (combination) school districts. Approximately one half of all school districts in the northeast were suburban districts, whereas the national average approximated one third. Western districts were either rural or small town for the most part.

Region vs. Selection Method - Regional influence was also shown in regard to selection method of school board members. In the south, 34 out of each 100 school boards were selected by the appointive method, whereas in all other regions only approximately 3 to 5 boards out of each 100 were appointed.

Region vs. Sex - As noted earlier, the female sex comprised 25.9% of the total return of this survey. By region, this proportion varied from 10.7% in the southern region to a high of 32.8% in the pacific region. The south stood out as an anomaly, since other regions were represented by one fourth to one third women board members.

Region vs. Current Occupation - As noted earlier, all occupations were reduced to 11 general categories, 2 of which, professional workers and managers, included 53.7% of all school board members. In the northeast, this proportion was approximately 60% and in the west, about 43%. Approximately one third of all board members from the south classified themselves as managers, a slightly greater proportion than other regions. Due to the small number of respondents in other categories, comparisons were somewhat difficult. However, it was noted that relatively fewer sales personnel appeared in the pacific region and relatively more clerical workers appeared in the western region than in other regions.

As might be expected the central and western regions were represented by proportionately higher numbers of agriculturally employed individuals, with 18.9% of all western board members being occupied in this field. Only 1.2% of the northeastern board members were so employed. Also as might be expected, due to the relatively low proportion of female board members in the south, homemakers occurred in relatively fewer numbers in the south than in other regions.

Region vs. Income - Region also appeared to have some effect on the family income of board members. Whereas the national proportion of board members with incomes under \$20,000 was 26.1%, western board members exceeded 38% in this category. Western board members also appeared significantly lower in the higher income brackets than board members from other regions. On the other hand, somewhat over one half of all board members from the south were in the income categories of \$30,000 to \$40,000 and over \$40,000. The average proportion of board members in these categories from other regions approximated 40% except in the western region, where less than 30% were so classified.

Region vs. Education - Board members from the southern region appeared relatively more highly educated than board members from other regions. Approximately three fourths of all southern board members had college or

advanced college degrees. By contrast, approximately 50% of all board members from the western region had educational attainment of high school or less and post high school training. The northeast had the highest proportion of board members with advanced college degrees (38%), whereas the western region had only 19.6% of its board members so classified. The central region was represented by board members with only a slightly higher educational attainment level than western board members.

Region vs. Educational Employment - As noted earlier board members were asked whether they currently were or previously had been employed by a public school system. Responses were categorized as not employed, teaching, administrative, or other. Approximately three fourths of all board members indicated no current or previous employment by public school system. The western region showed a somewhat higher proportion of board members who had been employed as teachers (18.2%) or other educational employees (9.1%). The Pacific region showed a relatively high proportion of board members with other educational employment (10.2%), and the southern region showed a relatively high proportion of board members who had been employed as educational administrators (8%).

Region vs. Board Size - Board members had been asked to indicate the number of male board members and the number of female board members on their board. These responses were combined to provide a reference for total board size, which were then categorized into the following ranges: 2 to 5 board members, 6 to 8 board members, 9 to 11 board members, and over 11 board members. The southern region most closely approximated the national average in categories of board size. The northeast generally tended to have larger boards, with approximately 55% of all boards having 9 or more members. The Pacific region, in stark contrast, had over 78% of all boards with a size of 2 to 5 members, and approximately 99% of all boards in the Pacific region had less than 9 members. A board size of 6 to 8 members in the central and western regions appeared to be the general rule of thumb.

Enrollment vs. Selection Method - It was noted earlier that the southern region had a much greater proportion of large (over 25,000 students) school districts than other regions, and also that the south had a much higher proportion of appointed board members than other regions. In summary of the relationship between enrollment and selection method, those largest school districts (over 25,000 students) were much more prone to have appointed board members than

other size school districts. Approximately 80% of all board members in this size school district were elected, whereas 91.7% to 94% of board members from other size districts were elected.

Enrollment vs. Current Occupation - The two largest categories of board member occupations, professional workers and managers, tended to be more frequent in those school districts with 5,000 or more students enrolled than in smaller school districts. Whereas the national total of board members in these two groups included 53.6% of all respondents, over 61% of board members from 5,000 to 10,000 student school districts were professional workers and managers. About 58% from 10,000 to 25,000 student school districts and 54.7% of respondents from school districts with greater than 25,000 students were so classified. In the occupational categories with lower numbers of respondents, analysis was not very fruitful. However, it was noted that clerical workers appeared most frequently in the smallest school districts (under 1,000 students). As might be expected, since the western and central regions had the smaller school districts and also the greatest number of agricultural workers as board members, agricultural workers occurred most frequently in the smallest school districts. Approximately one fourth of all board members in the smallest school districts

(under 1,000 students) were agriculturally employed. It also may be noteworthy that more than one third of the board members from districts with greater than 25,000 enrollment classified themselves as employed in the miscellaneous category, in many cases retired professional workers and managers.

Enrollment vs. Income - When the 5 groups of district size were cross tabulated against the 4 categories of family income, several significant factors emerged. Those districts with 1,000 to 5,000 in enrollment most nearly replicated the national average for all school districts. The smallest school districts (under 1,000 students) tended to have board members more frequently in the lower income categories, whereas those school districts with 5,000 to 10,000 students had approximately 55% of their board members in income groups above \$30,000. Of all respondents only about 40% were so distributed. School districts with 10,000 to 25,000 students were represented by board members, approximately 50% of whom had incomes above \$30,000. The largest school districts had a much smaller proportion of board members with incomes below \$20,000 and a much greater proportion with incomes above \$40,000.

Enrollment vs. Educational Attainment - The analysis of district enrollment with educational attainment followed

approximately the same distribution as district enrollment with family income. Those school districts with 1,000 to 5,000 students most nearly replicated the national average, whereas board members from the smallest school districts had a less than average educational attainment level. Those school districts with 5,000 to 10,000 students were represented by board members, approximately 74% of whom had college or advanced college degrees. The same held true for board members from school districts with 10,000 to 25,000 students, approximately 77% of whom had college or advanced college degrees, and approximately 83% of all board members from school districts with greater than 25,000 students were so degreed.

Enrollment vs. Board Size - A general summary of this analysis appears to be that smaller school districts have smaller boards. Almost one half of those boards with under 1,000 students had 5 or less members. The boards with 1,000 to 5,000 students again most nearly replicated the national average. Those school systems with over 25,000 students had the most frequent occurrence of boards with greater than 11 members. In concurrence with previous research, which indicated that boards were frequently composed of an odd number of members and varied from 5 to 7 to

9 members, the modal range for all school districts (regardless of size) was represented by the 6 to 8 member category. Approximately one half of all board members served on boards of this size.

District Type vs. Enrollment - In summary of this analysis, as might be expected, smaller school districts (that is, those with 5,000 or less students) tended to be more frequently rural or small town districts, whereas larger school districts (with 10,000 or more students) tended to be more often urban or suburban. The other type of school districts (those indicating a combination of 2 or more of the discrete types) occurred more frequently as larger districts.

District Type vs. Selection Method - Urban school districts appeared to have elected school board members less frequently (84.6%) than all other types of school districts. All other types of school districts had 90% or more of their school board members elected, which coincided fairly closely with the national average of 92% elected board members.

District Type vs. Age - Age, as noted earlier, was reduced to 6 categories of approximately 10 years each. Those older board members, 51 or above, occurred more frequently in urban school districts than in any other type of

district. Combination school districts (those "other" districts) had a more frequent occurrence of board members between 31 and 40 years of age than other district types and also a relatively high proportion of board members aged 61 or above. Rural school boards appeared to most closely approximate the age distribution of the national averages, although small town school districts were not that different in age distribution.

District Type vs. Current Occupation - The type of school district did appear to have some influence upon the occupation of board members. Professional workers, as might be expected, occurred more frequently in urban and suburban school districts. Managers were fairly evenly distributed among the different types of school districts, although small towns had a slightly higher proportion of managers than other types of school districts. Agricultural workers, as would be expected, appeared much more frequently in rural school districts. Those school board members occupied in the miscellaneous category (many of whom were retired professional and managerial employees) appeared more frequently in the other, combination, school districts.

District Type vs. Family Income - School board members from rural and small town school districts had lower income levels than did school board members from other types

of school districts. Members from suburban school districts occurred more frequently in the income categories of \$30,000 and higher. Urban school board members approximated the national average in these categories, and rural and small town school board members occurred infrequently within these categories.

District Type vs. Educational Attainment - Urban and suburban school board members had the highest proportion (over three fourths of such members) with college or advanced college degrees. The national average within these 2 education categories approximated 62%. Other, combination, school districts also had relatively high numbers of school board members in these 2 categories. Rural school board members were relatively less educated than their counterparts from other types of school districts. Approximately one third of all rural school board members had a high school diploma or less education.

District Type vs. Board Size - Urban and suburban school boards tended to be larger in size than other types of school boards. Small town school boards had the greatest proportion of smallest school boards (2 to 5 members) with approximately 41% of all small town school boards of this size. The modal range of board size for all types of school boards, except the other category, was 6 to 8 members. The

other type of school board had a fairly high proportion of boards of the smallest size and also a fairly high proportion of boards with 9 to 11 members. This may reflect the different combinations of boards falling within this other category.

Sex vs. Age - Women board members tended to fall more frequently in the age categories of 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years and over 70 years than did their male counterparts. Male board members occurred more frequently in the 21 to 30 year category and the 51 through 70 years categories. The modal range for both sexes, however, was 41 to 50 years.

Sex vs. Current Occupation - As might be expected, male school board members were proportionately more highly represented in the occupational categories of professional workers, managers, and agricultural workers than female school board members. Females were proportionately more highly represented in the clerical, homemaker and miscellaneous categories of occupation. The miscellaneous category, in addition to having a number of retired persons, also had unemployed individuals and those respondents who did not list or were not specific in the documentation of their occupation. It appears that women school board members

classified themselves more frequently in these latter categories.

Sex vs. Terms Served - Almost one half of all female school board members had served less than 1 term on their board. Almost one fourth of all male school board members, on the other hand, had served 3 or more terms. If a "perennial" board member could be identified, this individual would most likely be a male. Less than 9% of women board members had served 3 or more terms.

Sex vs. Educational Attainment - Women school board members had proportionately higher representation in the post high school and college categories than did male school board members. Male school board members were more likely to have completed advanced college degrees, however. Men occurred more frequently than did women in the category of high school or less educational attainment.

Sex vs. Educational Employment - It appears that women school board members were more likely to have had previous employment in public school systems than men school board members. Of the approximately three quarters of all respondents who indicated no previous or current employment in public education, about 84% of the male school board members and only about 57% of the women school board members were so classified. As might be expected, female school

board members included a fairly high number of individuals who had previous teaching experience. Approximately 3 out of every 10 female school board members had been so occupied. Only about 1 out of every 10 male school board members had been occupied in a similar position. The administrative category of educational employment had only a slightly higher proportion of male school board members than female. Female board members also were more likely to have been employed in other educational activities, such as teacher aid, school food service and other related services.

Age vs. Current Occupation - Of all professional workers, about 70% fell into the age categories of 31 to 50 years. Managers appeared most frequently in the 2 age categories from 41 to 60 years. All homemakers occupied the age categories from 31 to 60 years and one half of these were between 41 and 50. All school board members over 70 years, except one manager, classified themselves in the miscellaneous occupational category.

Age vs. Family Income - Generally speaking, younger workers made less money and older workers made more money, within certain parameters. Those individual school board members over 61 and under 31 years of age occurred more frequently in the lowest income category. Over 70% of the individuals from the \$20,000 to \$30,000 income category were

from the age groups 31 to 50 years. Board members in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 income range and also the over \$40,000 income range were most frequently represented by individuals aged 41 to 50 years.

Age vs. Terms Served - It follows logically that older board members have served more terms than have younger board members. A fairly high positive correlation is in evidence between age and terms served, although one note may be made. Fully 80% of those board members over 70 years of age had served 2 or less terms, and 60% of board members from this age group had served 1 or less term.

Age vs. Educational Attainment - There was proportionately higher representation by the youngest school board members (aged 21 to 30 years) in the high school or less educational attainment category. The post high school category was represented more frequently by those youngest school board members and also individuals from the 51 to 70 age categories. Those individuals aged 41 to 60 were proportionately more frequent in the college category, whereas individuals aged 21 to 40 and 61 to 70 occurred proportionately more frequently in the advanced college category. All school board members over 70 years of age had college or advanced college degrees.

Age vs. Educational Employment - A higher proportion of individuals from the age category 51 to 60 years (than all other age categories) identified themselves as having no public school system employment experience. Those individuals with teaching experience occurred more frequently in the 21 to 30 age category and the 61 to over 70 age categories. School board members with administrative educational experience came more frequently from the higher age groups. Individuals 21 to 30 years old and 41 to 50 years old occurred more frequently in the other educational employment category.

Current Occupation vs. Family Income - As might be expected, professional workers and managers had proportionately higher family incomes (from \$30,000 up) than did most other school board members. Also, homemakers had a relatively high occurrence in these family income categories. Over one half of the crafts workers and operatives had incomes less than \$20,000, and approximately one third of the sales workers, clerical workers, agricultural workers and miscellaneous employed fell in this income category.

Current Occupation vs. Educational Employment - Those individuals classified as professional workers, homemakers and miscellaneous employed appeared more likely to have had teaching experience than other occupational groups.

Likewise, managers and miscellaneous employed individuals appeared more likely to have had educational administration experience than other occupational groups. Clerical workers and homemakers appeared as those occupational groups to more frequently have been involved in the other category of educational employment. It might be noted that approximately one third of the clerical group, the homemaker group, and the miscellaneous group indicated educational employment experience as compared with an average of one fourth for all occupational categories.

Educational Attainment vs. Current Occupation -

Approximately 6 out of every 10 professional workers held advanced college degrees, and approximately 6 out of 10 individuals holding advanced college degrees were professional workers. Managers, sales personnel, homemakers and miscellaneous employed individuals appeared more likely to hold college degrees than other occupational groups (with the exception of professional workers as noted above). Managers, sales personnel, clerical personnel, crafts personnel, homemakers and miscellaneous employed individuals also were more frequently classified in the post high school category than other groups. Sales personnel, clerical workers, crafts, operatives, laborers and agricultural workers were those occupational groups more likely to have a high

school or less educational attainment level. It was noted that more than one half of all homemakers had college or advanced college degrees, and over 60% of miscellaneously employed individuals were similarly educated.

Educational Attainment vs. Income - A fairly high correlation appeared when family income was related to educational attainment. Approximately one half of those individuals with a high school or less educational level had incomes under \$20,000. Likewise, approximately three fourths of those school board members in the post high school educational attainment category had incomes less than \$30,000. In contrast, approximately one half of those individuals with a college degree had incomes over \$30,000. And approximately one third of those school board members with advanced college degrees had incomes over \$40,000.

Educational Attainment vs. Educational Employment - As might be expected again, those individuals with college or advanced college degrees were much more likely to have had previous or current educational employment experience than those individuals less educated. Individuals with teaching experience were much more likely to have completed college or advanced college degrees, and individuals with educational administration experience were much more likely

to have completed advanced college degrees. The other category of educational employment was identified primarily by individuals with post high school training and college training. Particularly in the instance of post high school training, this perhaps reflects the paraprofessional and supportive service occupations within public school systems.

Educational Employment vs. Terms Served - It appeared that those individuals with educational employment experience were more likely to serve fewer terms than those individuals with no previous or current educational employment experience. One exception is noted in that the other category of educational employment shows a relatively high proportion of board members serving over 3 terms. In referring back to the previous literature review, it was revealed that appointive authorities (and also those electing school board members) in many instances preferred a lay citizen to serve on a public school board as opposed to an educator. This may have some relationship to the number of terms served by school board members with educational employment experience.

Board Size vs. Current Occupation - It appears that professional workers, managers, the miscellaneous employed, and in some instances sales personnel were more likely to serve on larger school boards than were other occupational

groups. Agricultural workers and homemakers appeared more likely to serve on smaller school boards than other occupational groups.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

This section intends to respond to the second general research question: What relationships exist between management concerns and demographic characteristics of school board members? The ranking of the 16 management concerns (by frequency of response to each concern), as presented in Table 25 was analyzed against each of 10 demographic characteristics. These demographic characteristics were region, enrollment, district type, selection method, sex, age, income, terms served, educational attainment, and educational employment. Those demographic characteristics not studied with regard to management concerns included: states, which were reduced to regions; race, which contained apparently spurious data; marital status, due to the fact that almost all school board members were married; current and past occupations, due to the extreme variations in numbers of respondents to categories and the difficulties associated with such analysis; years served, due to the fact

that terms served is being reviewed; and board size, due to the fact that this variable has not proved to be a critical factor in numerous previous studies. The basis for such an analysis of relationships between demographic characteristics and management concerns is contained in the general null hypothesis: There is no association between (or among) the different levels of a demographic characteristic as related to the ranking (by frequency of response) of management concerns. A specific example of this null hypothesis when applied to selection method would be: The ranking of management concerns by elected school board members is not the same as the ranking of management concerns by appointed school board members.

Since the rankings of management concerns are ordinal data, non parametric statistical methodology has been employed to analyze the association or lack of association between different levels of the aforementioned demographic characteristics. For the 2 dichotomous demographic characteristics, selection method and sex, Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation has been employed. For those other demographic characteristics, which have greater than 2 levels or categories, Kendall's coefficient of concordance W has been employed. These methods test for level of association between 2 or more ordinal rankings of data. For

Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation, rho was calculated as a notation of the degree of association between any 2 ranked sets of data. Likewise, Kendall's coefficient of concordance W was calculated as an indicator of the degree of association or correlation among any 3 or more sets of ranked data. These methodologies are reviewed in detail in Ferguson (1971)⁶ and Kerlinger (1973)⁷. Spearman's coefficient of rank correlation was tested at a critical rho with a level of statistical significance of alpha equal to 0.01. Kendall's coefficient of concordance W was tested by calculating a chi square statistic from the W coefficient and comparing this chi square to a critical chi square with probability p equal to 0.001. These findings are summarized in Table 28.

Each of the 10 analyses noted above were found to be statistically significant and are discussed below. A summary table is presented for each of the rankings of management concerns by demographic characteristics. Only those management concerns noted by 20% or more of the respondents are included within these summary tables.

Selection Method vs. Management Concerns - When the ranking of management concerns by elected school board members was compared to the ranking of concerns by appointed school board members, a rho equal to 0.81 was calculated and

Table 28

1977 NSLSB Summary of Significant
Relationships Between Demographic Characteristics
and Management Concerns Rankings

Demographic Characteristics	Statistics (Relation of Levels of Characteristic to Rankings)
Selection	$\rho = 0.8125 > \rho_{crit} = 0.601$ at $\alpha = 0.01$, $N = 16/\text{Reject } H_0$
Sex	$\rho = 0.8537 > \rho_{crit} = 0.601$ at $\alpha = 0.01$, $N = 16/\text{Reject } H_0$
Region	$W = 0.6467 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 48.503 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Enrollment	$W = 0.7706 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 57.800 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
District Type	$W = 0.6863 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 51.470 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Age	$W = 0.6792 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 61.130 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Family Income	$W = 0.9337 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 56.020 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Terms Served	$W = 0.8281 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 62.110 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Educational Attainment	$W = 0.8871 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 53.230 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$
Educational Employment	$W = 0.8547 \Rightarrow \chi^2 = 51.280 > \chi^2_{crit} = 37.70$ at $p = 0.001$, $N - 1 = 15/\text{Reject } H_0$

the null hypothesis of no association between the 2 methods of selection was rejected. A high probability of relationship between these 2 selection methods appears evident and the top ranked management concerns in each category are presented in Table 29. Some differences in ranking of these top concerns are noted, but considering the rankings of all 16 concerns and a fairly high coefficient of correlation, association between the 2 selection methods can be assumed. These differences included a higher priority for curriculum reform and cutting programs by elected board members and for Federal interference by appointed board members.

Sex vs. Management Concerns - When the ranking of management concerns by male school board members was compared to the ranking of concerns by female school board members, a rho equal to 0.85 was calculated and the null hypothesis of no association between the 2 rankings was rejected. Again, male and female rankings of management concerns did not differ to a great extent and the top ranked concerns of these respondents are presented in Table 30. Males did appear somewhat more concerned about discipline than females.

Region vs. Management Concerns - When the ranking of management concerns by school board members in each of the 5 regions were analyzed by Kendall's coefficient of concordance, a W equal to 0.65 was calculated. This coefficient of

Table 29
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Selection Method

	Elected	% Response	Appointed	% Response
1	Collective Bargaining	40.8	Collective Bargaining	} (tie) 26
2	Declining Enrollment	26.5	Declining Enrollment	
3	Curriculum Reform	25.5	Discipline	
4	Discipline	22.7	High Cost of Energy	
5	Cutting Programs	21.9	Federal Interference	21
6	Public Apathy	20.4	Curriculum Reform	20

Table 30
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Sex

	Male	% Response	Female	% Response
1	Collective Bargaining	39.9	Collective Bargaining	38.8
2	Declining Enrollment	24.9	Declining Enrollment	30.8
3	Discipline	24.0	Curriculum Reform	28.6
4	Curriculum Reform	23.8	Cutting Programs	24.3
5	Cutting Programs	20.8	Accountability	21.8
6	Public Apathy	20.6	Discipline	20.0

concordance proved significant at a probability level less than 0.001 when a chi square statistic was determined from the W coefficient. The null hypothesis of no association among the rankings of management concerns by region was rejected and the probability of association among rankings of management concerns in each of the 5 regions can be assumed. Table 31 presents the top ranked management concerns of school board members in each of the 5 regions. On observation, the south appears noticeably different from other regions in the ranking of management concerns. This difference is practically significant, if not statistically so, and should be considered in concert with other analyses of regional influence presented elsewhere in this study. In the south, collective bargaining was noticeably absent as a major concern, while discipline held top priority. In other regions, collective bargaining was the major concern, and discipline ranked between fourth and sixth.

Enrollment vs. Management Concerns - A coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.77 was calculated for the rankings of management concerns in each of the 5 categories of school district enrollment. This W proved significant at p less than 0.001, and a fairly high probability of association among rankings by school district enrollment categories

Table 31
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Region

	Northeast	South	Central	West	Pacific
1	Collective Bargaining	Discipline	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Declining Enrollment	Federal Interference	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Curriculum Reform
3	Curriculum Reform	High Cost of Energy	Cutting Programs	High Cost of Energy	Cutting Programs
4	Cutting Programs	Public Apathy	Curriculum Reform	Outmoded Facilities	Discipline
5	Declining Tax Base	Curriculum Reform	Discipline	Discipline	Accountability
6	Discipline	Outmoded Facilities	---	Declining Enrollment	Public Apathy
7	Accountability	Accountability	---	Public Apathy	---

can be assumed. The ranking of top ranked management concerns in each of the 5 enrollment categories is presented in Table 32. The concern of discipline was noticeably absent as a priority in larger school districts.

District Type vs. Management Concerns - The null hypothesis of no association among rankings of the 5 types of school districts was rejected, and the rankings in these 5 categories of district type can be assumed to be related. Table 33 presents the top ranked management concerns in each of the 5 categories. A coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.69 was the basis for rejection of the null hypothesis in this analysis. Some differences in rankings appeared, particularly for rural and small town districts, and these included a much lower priority for declining enrollments and cutting programs by those districts.

Age vs. Management Concerns - A relationship among the rankings of management concerns in each of the 6 age categories can be assumed due to the rejection of the null hypothesis that no association exists among these rankings. A coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.68 was the basis for this rejection of the null hypothesis. Table 34 presents the top ranked management concerns for each of the 6 age categories. Although the hypothesis of no difference was rejected, some difference is observed, most notably for

Table 32

1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by District Enrollment

	< 1,000	1 - 5,000	5 - 10,000	10 - 25,000	> 25,000
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Declining Enrollment	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform
3	Discipline	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment	Cutting Programs	Federal Interference
4	Public Apathy	Curriculum Reform	Cutting Programs	Accountability	Desegregation
5	Curriculum Reform	Cutting Programs	Accountability	Public Apathy	Declining Enrollment
6	High Cost of Energy	---	---	Curriculum Reform	---

} tie

Table 33
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by District Type

	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Small Town	Other
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	High Cost of Energy
3	Curriculum Reform	Cutting Programs	Public Apathy	Discipline	Curriculum Reform
4	Declining Tax Base	Curriculum Reform	Outmoded Facilities	Public Apathy	Declining Tax Base
5	Discipline	Cutting Staff	Curriculum Reform	High Cost of Energy	---
6	Cutting Programs	---	High Cost of Energy	---	---
7	---	---	Cutting Programs	---	---

Table 34
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Age

	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	70+
1	Coll. Barg.	Coll. Barg.	Coll. Barg.	Coll. Barg.	Coll. Barg.	High Cost of Energy
2	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enroll.	Declining Enroll.	Discipline	Declining Enroll.
3	Outmoded Facilities	Cutting Programs	Curriculum Reform	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	Desegregation Curriculum Reform
4	Declining Enroll. tie	Declining Enroll.	Cutting Programs	Public Apathy	Declining Enroll. tie	
5	Cutting Programs	Outmoded Facilities	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	High Cost of Energy	Discipline tie
6	Curriculum Reform	Discipline	Public Apathy	---	---	Public Apathy
7	---	Public Apathy	---	---	---	---

the over 70 age group. Collective bargaining was not a major concern, whereas high cost of energy was. Also, the issue of desegregation, which began in the '50s, was still a concern for these board members.

Family Income vs. Management Concerns - When the rankings of management concerns in each of the 4 family income categories were compared, a coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.93 was calculated, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Association among the rankings of management concerns by the 4 income categories can be assumed, and little difference among the rankings of management concerns by family income, as presented in Table 35, is observed. Higher income board members, however, appeared less concerned about the issue of discipline.

Terms Served vs. Management Concerns - The rankings of management concerns in each of 5 categories of number of terms served by board members were compared, and a W equal to 0.83 was calculated. The null hypothesis of no association among these rankings was rejected. It appears that relationships exist among these rankings by review of Table 36, and little difference is observed in the 5 rankings. No systematic difference is observed, such as might be hypothesized for perennial board members or newcomers to the board. Board members with greater than 3 terms of service appeared

Table 35
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Family Income

	Under \$20,000	\$20 - 30,000	\$30 - 40,000	Over \$40,000
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Discipline	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment
3	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Curriculum Reform
4	Curriculum Reform	Discipline	Discipline	Cutting Programs
5	Public Apathy	Cutting Programs	Cutting Programs	
6	Cutting Programs	---	Public Apathy	---
7	---	---	Accountability	---

Table 36
1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Number of Terms Served

	< 1	1	2	3	> 3
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Curriculum Reform	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment
3	Discipline	Declining Enrollment	Cutting Programs	Discipline	Discipline
4	Declining Enrollment	Cutting Programs	Curriculum Reform	High Cost of Energy	High Cost of Energy
5	Cutting Programs	Discipline	Public Apathy	Public Apathy	---
6	Public Apathy	---	---	---	---

relatively unconcerned about curriculum reform, a relatively high priority for other board members.

Educational Attainment vs. Management Concerns -

When the rankings of management concerns in each of the 4 levels of educational attainment were compared, a coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.89 was calculated. The null hypothesis of no association among these rankings was rejected, and a relationship of rankings with respect to the educational attainment characteristic can be assumed. Those top ranked management concerns in each of the 4 educational attainment categories are presented in Table 37. Of note in these rankings are some differences in the higher levels of educational attainment. These board members were apparently not as concerned about discipline issues, generally a major concern. This appears somewhat similar to opinion expressed by polls of professional educators, where discipline was of less concern than money issues.

Educational Employment vs. Management Concerns - A

coefficient of concordance W equal to 0.85 was calculated for the comparison of rankings of management concerns in each of 4 categories of the educational employment characteristic. The null hypothesis of no association among these rankings was rejected and a relationship of these rankings in the educational employment characteristic can be assumed.

Table 37

1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Educational Attainment

	H.S. and < H.S.	Post H.S.	College	Advanced College
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining
2	Discipline	Discipline	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform
3	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Declining Enrollment
4	Declining Enrollment	Public Apathy	Cutting Programs	High Cost of Energy
5	Cutting Programs	Curriculum Reform	Public Apathy	Declining Tax Base
6	High Cost of Energy	High Cost of Energy	---	---

Table 38 presents a summary of those top ranked management concerns by each of the 4 categories within this demographic characteristic. Although some minor differences in ranking are observed, these differences are not statistically significant. The one management concern which stands out is curriculum reform. Board members with education employment experience, particularly administrators, ranked this concern very high.

A review of each of the previously noted demographic characteristics and the ranking of management concerns within categories of these characteristics may suggest generally that demographic characteristics have little influence upon the ranking of management concerns by school board members. In all cases the null hypothesis of no association among the rankings of management concerns by category of demographic characteristics was rejected. One concludes thereby that there is a fairly high probability that any association between any 2, or among any 3 or more, categories of a demographic characteristic does not occur by chance. One must also not overlook several observed differences in rankings, most notably that of the south when compared to other regions.

Table 38

1977 NSLSB Ranking of Management Concerns by Educational Employment

	Not Employed	Teaching	Administration	Other
1	Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining	Curriculum Reform	Collective Bargaining
2	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Collective Bargaining	Curriculum Reform
3	Discipline	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment	Declining Enrollment
4	Curriculum Reform	Accountability	Accountability	Cutting Programs
5	Cutting Programs	Discipline	Cutting Programs	Discipline
6	Public Apathy	Cutting Programs	---	Declining Tax Base

} tie
 } tie

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
AND OPINIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

This section intends to respond to the third general research question: What relationships exist between opinions on critical education issues and demographic characteristics of school board members? The same 12 demographic characteristics that were analyzed in research question number 1 were also analyzed with respect to level of agreement or disagreement with each of the fifteen educational issues contained in section 3 of the survey instrument. Those demographic characteristics not considered were also the same as in research question number 1 and non-consideration was based upon the same rationale. Demographic characteristics analyzed include region, enrollment, district type, selection method, sex, age, current occupation, income, terms served, educational attainment, educational employment, and board size. The educational issue statements fall into the 5 areas of discipline, curriculum, federal involvement, quality of instruction, and financial support of education. Each of these 5 areas contained 3 educational issue statements. For purposes of analysis in this section, the 5 point response scale was reduced to 3 levels to facilitate understanding of any possible interactions. The strongly agree and agree levels of response were combined into an

agree category, and the strongly disagree and disagree levels of response were combined into a disagree category. Therefore, responses of participants were noted as either in agreement, undecided, or in disagreement. The same levels within each demographic characteristic, as explained earlier, were analyzed in cross tabulations against the 3 categories of statement response. The basis for analysis within this section is founded upon the general null hypothesis: There is no difference in opinion on educational issues due to the influence of different levels of a demographic characteristic. A different way of stating this general null hypothesis in a specific example is: Male school board members do not hold different opinions from female school board members on whether students should master skills in reading and mathematics at grade level before being promoted to the next grade.

Since all data are either nominal or interval in nature, and due to the fact that these data were being tested for nonrelationship (or the possibility of interaction between demographic characteristics and opinions on educational issues) the same analysis is conducted for research question number 3 as was applied to research question number 1; that is, chi square analysis. The basis for rejection of the null hypothesis is founded upon a level of

statistical significance of alpha equal 0.01. This level of significance, alpha (or the probability of Type 1 error), is based upon the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis if in fact such hypothesis is true.

A specific null hypothesis has been tested for each of 180 possibilities in the comparison of the 12 demographic characteristics with opinions on the 15 educational issues. Of these 180 tests, 32 were found to be significant at the alpha level equal to or less than 0.01, and 148 were found to have no significant interaction. A general summary of these analyses is presented in Table 39. Additionally within Table 39, it is noted that the personal characteristic of educational attainment was a factor in the interaction with opinions on 8 educational issues. The board characteristic of region was a factor in 4 relationships. In the following narrative, each of the 15 statements are discussed in terms of relationship with several demographic characteristics. Only those demographic characteristics which interacted at a significance level of 0.01 with opinions on educational issues are discussed.

Discipline/Issue Number 1 - Opinions on the statement, "Students who display extreme discipline problems should be removed from the home and placed in a live-in boarding school provided by the public school system," were

Table 39
1977 NLSLS Summary of Significant
Relationships Between Demographic Characteristics
and Opinions on Educational Issues

*REFER TO TABLE 26 FOR STATEMENT NARRATIVE	Region	Enrollm.	Dist. Type	Selectn.	Sex	Age	Current Occupatn.	Income	Terms Served	Ed. Attmpt.	Employ. in Edctn.	Board Size
<u>DISCIPLINE</u>												
Statement: #1	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—	0.01	—	—
#2	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	0.01	—	—	—	—	—
#3	0.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—	—	—
<u>CURRICULUM</u>												
Statement: #4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
#5	—	—	0.01	—	0.01	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—
#6	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	—
<u>FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT</u>												
Statement: #7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	—
#8	0.01	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	0.01	—	—	—	0.01
#9	—	0.01	0.01	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	—	—
<u>QUALITY INSTRUCTION</u>												
Statement: #10	0.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—
#11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	0.01	—
#12	—	—	—	—	—	0.01	—	—	0.01	0.01	0.01	—
<u>FINANCIAL SUPPORT</u>												
Statement: #13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
#14	0.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
#15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Key: 0.01 - Statistical Relationship at
0.01 Level of Significance (32)
Blank Space Indicates no Statistically
Significant Relationship (NS) (148)

TOTAL: 180

Summary of Relationships

	0.01	NS
Education	8	7
Region	4	11
Educational Employ.	4	11
Current Occupation	3	12
Sex	3	12
Age	2	13
Income	2	13
District Type	2	13
Terms Served	2	13
Enrollment	1	14
Board Size	1	14
Selection	0	15

found to be influenced by the personnel characteristics of current occupation and educational attainment. Approximately three fourths of all respondents disagreed with this statement, and professional workers disagreed to a greater extent than did individuals from other occupational categories. Professional workers were also less undecided about this statement than were other board members. With respect to the effect of educational attainment on opinions about statement number 1, the level of disagreement with this issue increased with the level of education. Also, the level of indecision about this issue decreased as the level of educational attainment increased. In summary, those individuals in the more highly occupied employment categories, as well as those more highly educated individuals, appeared to be more in disagreement and less undecided about this issue than did those individuals not so classified.

Discipline/Issue Number 2 - Opinions on the statement, "A lack of interest by parents is a primary cause of discipline problems in the public schools," were found to be influenced by the personal characteristics of sex and current occupation. The summary findings noted earlier indicated that approximately four fifths of all respondents agreed with this statement. Male school board members tended to have a stronger degree of agreement and a lesser

degree of indecision about this statement than did female school board members. Those individuals employed as managers, sales workers, and crafts workers tended to agree with this statement to a greater extent than did other individuals, and clerical workers and homemakers (primarily female school board members) tended to have a higher level of indecision.

Discipline/Issue Number 3 - Opinions on the statement, "Compulsory attendance laws should be changed to allow the student to leave school at age 14," were found to be influenced by the characteristics of region and family income. Approximately four fifths of all respondents nationally disagreed with this issue. School board members from the south and central regions were those who stood out as predominately different from all other board members. Southern board members appeared much less in disagreement and significantly more in agreement with the statement, whereas central board members appeared somewhat more in disagreement and somewhat less in agreement than board members from the northeast, western and Pacific regions. Those individuals with lower incomes tended towards stronger agreement with this statement, and those individuals with incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000 had a proportionately

higher level of disagreement than did individual school board members from other income categories.

Curriculum/Issue Number 4 - Opinions on the statement, "The school curriculum should place more emphasis on career education; that is, making students aware of career options," were found to have no significant interactions with any of the demographic characteristics. That is to say that school board members, regardless of personal or board characteristics, tended toward general agreement on opinions to this educational issue. Very strong support for this issue has been noted earlier.

Curriculum/Issue Number 5 - Opinions on the statement, "The school curriculum should place more emphasis on the moral and values development of the student," were found to have a significant interaction with the demographic characteristics of district type, sex, and educational attainment. Of the total sample, approximately four fifths were in agreement with this issue, one tenth were undecided, and one tenth were in disagreement. Those school board members from urban, suburban and small town school districts were found to approximately replicate the total national response. On the other hand, rural board members tended to be in stronger agreement and lesser disagreement. Other (combination) school board members tended to be in much less

agreement and much more undecided than all other school board members. Male school board members tended to have a stronger level of agreement and a lesser degree of indecision with this educational issue than did female school board members. Level of agreement with this issue tended to systematically increase with a decrease in level of educational attainment. In general summary, rural school board members, male school board members and those with relatively low education levels tended to have the strongest level of agreement with this educational issue.

Curriculum/Issue Number 6 - Opinions on the statement, "Students should master skills in reading and mathematics at grade level before being promoted to the next grade," were influenced by the characteristics of sex, educational attainment and educational employment. Approximately four fifths of the nationwide sample was found to be in agreement with this issue, whereas undecided and some level of disagreement were each indicated by approximately one tenth of the respondents. Again, male school board members tended to be in stronger agreement and have a lower level of indecision with this educational issue than did female school board members. The degree of agreement with this issue also tended to systematically increase as the level of educational attainment of board members decreased. The level of

disagreement with this statement increased as the level of educational attainment increased and those board members with advanced college training tended to be more undecided than all other board members. Those board members who had no previous or current educational employment experience tended to agree with this issue to a somewhat higher extent than all other individuals. Board members with teaching and administrative experience in the public schools tended to have a much stronger level of disagreement. In general summary, male school board members, those board members with a low level of educational attainment and those with no employment experience in the public schools tended to have the strongest level of agreement with this educational issue.

Federal Involvement/Issue Number 7 - Opinions on the statement, "Stronger Federal involvement in public education is necessary to assure that state and local systems are meeting the needs of students," were influenced by the personnel characteristics of educational attainment and educational employment. Over four fifths of the respondents from the nationwide sample disagreed with this educational issue. Individual school board members with post high school training and college degrees tended to have a proportionately higher level of disagreement than other board members, while individuals with advanced college degrees tended toward the

least disagreement and the strongest level of agreement. School board members with current or prior public school system experience tended to disagree with this statement to a lesser extent than did school board members with no current or previous experience in the public school systems. It may be noteworthy that while only approximately 6% of non-educator board members desired stronger federal involvement in the public schools, almost 20% of educator board members felt such is necessary.

Federal Involvement/Issue Number 8 - Opinions on the statement, "Federal aid should be increased to local school systems to meet the increasing cost of public education," were influenced by the demographic characteristics of region, age, current occupation, family income, and board size. Approximately one third of the nationwide sample agreed with this statement while approximately one half disagreed. The northeast region stood out as significantly different from all other regions. Almost one half of northeastern board members felt that Federal aid should be increased to local school systems, whereas one third disagreed. Well over one half of board members from all other regions disagreed with this statement. Those youngest board members (aged 21 to 30) and the older board members (aged 61 and above) tended to feel similarly to the northeastern

board members mentioned above. Those school board members from the clerical, craft, operative, transportation, and miscellaneous ranks tended to proportionately favor Federal aid to a higher degree than individuals from other occupational categories. Approximately one half of these individuals so favored increased Federal aid. Managers, sales workers, and agricultural workers held increased Federal aid in the greatest disfavor. Family income was seen to have a very systematic relationship with opinions on this educational issue. As family income decreased, the level of support for more Federal aid increased, and as the level of income increased, increased Federal aid became more in disfavor. Board members from boards with 8 or less members tended to hold increased Federal aid in proportionate disfavor. In summary, it appeared that the northeast, young board members, older board members and lower income board members supported increased Federal aid most strongly. However, a slight majority of all board members were not in agreement with such increases.

Federal Involvement/Issue Number 9 - Opinions on the statement, "State and local school systems have not assumed adequate responsibility in assuring appropriate educational programs and have, therefore, contributed to the increase of

Court decisions that affect public education," were influenced by the characteristics of enrollment, district type, terms served, and educational attainment. Of the national sample, approximately one half disagreed with this statement, one third agreed and one sixth were undecided. As the size of school district increased, so did the level of agreement with this statement. Those school districts with 1,000 to 10,000 students enrolled had a slightly higher level of disagreement with this issue than did other school districts. With respect to district type; urban, suburban, rural and small town school districts generally replicated the national sample opinions on this issue, although small towns had the highest level of indecision. The "other" classification of school districts had an approximately inverse opinion to all other types of school districts. Approximately one third disagreed with the statement while one half agreed. No systematic relationship existed about opinions on this issue as the number of terms served by school board members increased. However, those school board members with 2 terms served had a slightly lower level of disagreement than did other board members. Board members with over 3 terms served had the highest level of disagreement on this issue. The level of educational attainment had a somewhat systematic relationship with opinions on this

issue in that those individuals with advanced college degrees were the ones who most agreed with this statement, and those board members with a high school or less education were the ones who had the lowest level of disagreement. As the level of education increased for board members, the degree of indecision about this issue decreased.

Quality of Instruction/Issue Number 10 - Opinions on the statement, "A student should pass a standard nationwide examination in order to receive a high school diploma," were influenced by the characteristics of region and educational attainment. In the nationwide sample, opinion on this issue was generally divided evenly. Board members from the western region generally stood out as differing from their counterparts in all other regions. Less than one third agreed with the need for standard nationwide exams, whereas over one half of the western board members disagreed. Some systematic relationship in the analysis of educational attainment with opinions on this issue was observed in that, as the level of education of board members increased, so did the degree of disagreement with this issue. In summary, more highly educated board members and those from the west were more opposed to standard nationwide examinations for graduation from high school.

Quality of Instruction/Issue Number 11 - Opinions on
the statement, "The decline in the national test scores of students is primarily caused by inadequate instruction in the classroom," were influenced by the personnel characteristics of educational attainment and (as might be expected) educational employment. Again, responses on a nationwide basis were generally evenly divided. Some systematic relationship was observed in the analysis of educational attainment with opinions on this statement. Those board members with the highest level of education tended to hold the highest proportion of disagreement with this issue. As educational level increased, the level of disagreement with this issue increased from approximately one third to approximately one half. Educational employment by board members with respect to opinions to this issue might very well be viewed as a dichotomous characteristic rather than in the 4 levels noted previously. Non-educators tended to agree most strongly with this statement, whereas educators tended to agree at a proportion approximating only one third. Well over one half of the educator board members disagreed with the suggestion of inadequate classroom instruction, and educational administrators were the least undecided about this issue.

Quality of Instruction/Issue Number 12 - Opinions on
the statement, "Teachers should have the right to negotiate class size," were influenced by the personnel characteristics of age, terms served, educational attainment, and educational employment. As noted earlier, this statement was one to which board members as a whole had a very high level of disagreement (83.7%). The youngest board members (aged 21 to 30) tended to have a higher proportion of agreement with this issue than all other board members and also a lower level of disagreement. Those board members 41 to 70 years of age had the highest degree of disfavor toward the right of teachers to negotiate class size. The demographic characteristic of terms served appeared to have a rather systematic relationship with opinions on this issue in that as the number of terms of school board members increased, so did the level of disagreement with this issue. Conversely, as the number of terms increased the level of agreement with this issue decreased. When educational attainment was compared to opinions on this issue, those school board members with advanced college training stood out as different from all other groups of board members. Board members with advanced college training disagreed to a lesser extent and agreed to a much greater extent (with the suggestion that teachers should have the right to negotiate class size) with

all other board members. As might be expected, the educational employment characteristic was a significant factor as related to opinions on this issue. Educator board members, teachers particularly, disagreed to a significant extent with non-educator board members. Approximately one fourth of the board members with teaching experience agreed with the right to negotiate class size, and so did approximately one fifth of the board members with educational administration experience. Only 7.2% of the non-educator board members so agreed. In summary, middle aged to older board members, perennial board members, board members with less than advanced college training and board members with no educational employment experience heavily weighted the strong disagreement with this issue.

Financial Support of Public Education/Issue Number 13 - Opinions on the statement, "State finance formulas for education should guarantee each child in the state an education comparable to every other child regardless of the local school system's ability to pay," were found to have no significant interactions with any of the demographic characteristics. Approximately two thirds of the total sample agreed with this statement while only 10% were undecided. It may be concluded that school board members generally tend to

agree on this issue, regardless of personal or board characteristics.

Financial Support of Public Educational/Issue Number

14 - Opinions on the statement, "Faced with declining enrollment, a school system should first decrease spending by reducing the number of funded extracurricular activities," were influenced by the board characteristic of region. As noted earlier, approximately 56% of the total sample agreed with this issue whereas only 30% disagreed. The northeast and the west were the discriminating regions in this analysis. Board members from the northeast tended to have a proportionately lower level of agreement and higher level of disagreement with this issue. Conversely, approximately two thirds of the board members from the western region agreed with the potential reduction in funded extracurricular activities, whereas only approximately one fifth disagreed.

Financial Support of Public Education/Issue Number

15 - Opinions on the statement, "The community's lack of confidence in the school administration is a primary reason for the defeat of school budgets," were also found to have no significant interactions with any of the demographic characteristics. Approximately one third of the total sample agreed with this suggestion, and slightly more than one half of the respondents disagreed.

In the foregoing analyses, the personal characteristic of educational attainment was found to be a factor relating to differences in opinion on educational issues more than any other demographic characteristic. School district enrollment and board size were each found to be a significant variable in only one instance, both of these with respect to statements relating to Federal involvement in public education. The category of statements dealing with Federal involvement in public education was found to interact with the greatest number of demographic characteristics, whereas the category of financial support for public education was only affected by region in one instance. In several cases, opinions on educational issues were found to systematically vary with respect to interval type demographic characteristics, such as educational attainment, in that as the level of educational attainment increased, the degree of agreement or disagreement either increased or decreased proportionately.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TOP RANKED MANAGEMENT CONCERNS AND OPINIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

This section intends to respond to the fourth general research question: What relationships exist between

management concerns of board members and opinions on critical education issues? A review of all 16 management concerns plus open-ended free choice concerns expressed by board members was conducted, and those management concerns identified by 20% or more of respondents to the survey were selected for analysis. These 5 management concerns included in order of priority; collective bargaining, declining enrollment, curriculum reform, discipline, and cutting programs to balance budget. A content analysis was performed on all educational issue statements to determine which of the statements related directly or marginally in context to any of the 5 top ranked management concerns. Whether or not an individual school board member had expressed concern about one of the management concerns was then cross tabulated against the level of opinion about those directly and marginally related educational issue statements.

The basis for analysis is contained in the general null hypothesis for this section: There is no difference in opinion on educational issues due to the expression of a particular management concern. Since all data were nominal in nature, and testing was being conducted to determine relationship or non-relationship between an expression of management concern and level of opinion about an educational issue, chi square analysis was chosen for analysis of these

data. The foundation for this analysis and the rationale is similar to that conducted for both research question number 1 and research question number 3. A level of statistical significance of alpha equal to 0.01 was selected to conform to earlier analyses.

Table 40 presents a general summary of the 5 top ranked management concerns as related to the educational issue statements. As an example, the top ranked management concern, collective bargaining, was found to relate in context directly to issue number 12 dealing with the negotiation of class size by teachers. Collective bargaining was also found to marginally relate to statement 9 dealing with Federal involvement and all 3 of the statements dealing with the financial support of public education. A specific example of the null hypothesis for one of these comparisons is contained in the statement: The priority of management concern about collective bargaining does not relate to the level of agreement by school board members on whether teachers should have the right to negotiate class size. The 5 top ranked management concerns and educational issue statements related to each of these is discussed below.

Collective Bargaining vs. Opinions on Educational Issues - Collective bargaining had been identified as the top ranked management concern of school board members,

Table 40

1977 NSLSB Summary of Significant
Relationships Between Top-Ranked Management Concerns
and Opinions on Educational Issues

*REFER TO TABLE 26 FOR STATEMENT NARRATIVE	Collective Bargaining	Declining Enrollment	Curriculum Reform	Discipline	Programs to Balance Budget	Cutting
<u>DISCIPLINE</u>						
Statement: #1	---	---	---	D-NS	---	---
#2	---	---	---	D-0.01	---	---
#3	---	D-NS	---	M-NS	---	---
<u>CURRICULUM</u>						
Statement: #4	---	---	D-NS	---	---	---
#5	---	---	D-NS	M-0.01	---	---
#6	---	---	D-NS	---	---	---
<u>FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT</u>						
Statement: #7	---	---	D-NS	---	---	M-NS
#8	---	D-NS	---	---	---	D-0.01
#9	M-0.01	M-NS	M-0.01	M-NS	---	---
<u>QUALITY INSTRUCTION</u>						
Statement: #10	---	---	D-NS	---	---	---
#11	---	---	M-NS	---	---	---
#12	D-0.01	---	---	M-NS	---	M-NS
<u>FINANCIAL SUPPORT</u>						
Statement: #13	M-NS	M-NS	---	---	---	D-NS
#14	M-0.01	M-NS	M-NS	---	---	D-NS
#15	M-NS	---	---	---	---	M-NS

Key: Through content analysis of concerns and educational issue question, contextual relationship was determined as basis for analysis.

D = Direct Contextual Relationship
M = Marginal Contextual Relationship

Blank implies no contextual relationship.

0.01 = Statistical Relationship at 0.01 Level of Significance
NS = No Statistically Significant Relationship

having received 497 responses or 39.6% of the total. As noted above, collective bargaining was found to relate directly to the quality of instruction statement, "Teachers should have the right to negotiate class size." Those individuals who expressed concern about collective bargaining were found to disagree to a proportionately higher degree with this statement than those individuals who expressed no concern about collective bargaining. The issue statement, "State and local school systems have not assumed adequate responsibility in assuring appropriate educational programs and have therefore contributed to the increase of Court decisions that affect public education" was found to marginally relate in context to the collective bargaining management concern. The relationship between collective bargaining and this statement was also found to be statistically significant, in that board members who were concerned about collective bargaining expressed stronger disagreement with this statement than those board members who did not express concern. In the area of financial support for public education, all 3 of the issue statements were found to marginally relate in context to the management concern of collective bargaining. Only that statement, "Faced with budget cuts, a school system should first decrease spending by reducing the number of funded extracurricular activities," was found to

statistically relate to the collective bargaining management concern. Here again, board members concerned about collective bargaining disagreed to a higher degree than did their counterparts.

Declining Enrollment vs. Opinions on Educational Issues - Declining enrollment had been identified by respondents as that second ranked management concern with 332 responses or 26.5% of the total of 1268 respondents. Two educational issue statements, 1 dealing with discipline and 1 dealing with Federal involvement, were found to be directly related in context to the management concern of declining enrollment. Three issue statements, 1 dealing with Federal involvement and 2 dealing with financial support of public education were found to marginally relate in context to this management concern. Of these 5 issue statements, no significant relationships were found between the expression of concern by a board member and the level of opinion expressed about the issue statements.

Curriculum Reform vs. Opinions on Educational Issues - Curriculum reform had been identified as that third ranked management concern with 314 responses or 25% of the total response. Five educational issue statements were found to directly relate in context to this management concern, and 3 issue statements were found to marginally relate.

Of the 3 curriculum statements, no significant relationships were ascertained, and this was additionally the case with 2 statements in the quality of instruction area and 1 statement within the financial support of public education area. Two statements were identified in the Federal involvement area which related contextually to curriculum reform. That statement directly related was found to have no dependence upon the expression of concern for curriculum reform. The statement suggesting that state and local school systems have contributed to the increase of Court decisions that affect public education by virtue of not having assumed adequate responsibility in assuring appropriate educational programs was found to relate significantly to the expression of management concern for curriculum reform. An inverse relationship was discovered in this instance in that, although approximately 50% of all respondents disagreed with this statement, somewhat less than 50% of those individuals concerned with curriculum reform disagreed. Likewise the level of agreement with this statement was stronger for those individuals concerned about curriculum reform than for other board members. In essence, those individuals concerned about curriculum reform appeared to be less vehement in their defense of the local schools systems' assumption of responsibility in assuring appropriate programs.

Discipline vs. Opinions on Educational Issues -

Discipline was that fourth ranked management concern with 288 responses or 22.9% of the total. Two educational issue statements were found to directly relate in context to the management concern of discipline. Both of these statements were in the educational issue area of discipline. Four other educational issue statements were found to marginally relate in context to the concern of discipline. Two statistically significant relationships between the expression of management concern and opinions about these issues were discovered. Opinions about the statement, "A lack of interest by parents is a primary cause of discipline problems in the public schools," were found to significantly relate to the expression of management concern about discipline. Slightly over 80% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, but almost 90% of those individuals expressing concern about discipline agreed or strongly agreed. Opinions about the statement, "The school curriculum should place more emphasis on the moral and values development of the student," was also found to relate statistically to the expression of management concern about discipline. Of the total sample, 77.7% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 82.3% of those individuals expressing management concern about discipline agreed or strongly agreed.

It should be noted that the level of strong agreement was greater for individuals concerned about discipline but the level of agreement was slightly less, indicating perhaps more vehement opinions on this issue by individuals concerned with discipline.

Cutting Programs to Balance Budgets vs. Opinions on Educational Issues - Cutting programs to balance budgets was identified as that fifth ranked management concern with 272 responses or 21.7% of the total. Six educational issue statements were found to contextually relate to this management concern, 3 of them directly and 3 of them marginally. Of all of these educational issue statements, only 1 directly related statement, in the area of Federal involvement, was found to statistically relate to the expression of this management concern. That statement, "Federal aid should be increased to local school systems to meet the increasing cost of public education," was supported by 34.7% of all respondents and disagreed with by 50.4% of all respondents. Of those individuals concerned about cutting programs to balance budgets this statement was supported somewhat more strongly than by board members as a whole. Of the board members concerned about cutting programs to balance budgets, 36.8% expressed some level of agreement with this statement, while only 45.3% disagreed. A slightly

higher level of indecision by those board members concerned with cutting programs was also observed. It appeared that those board members concerned with cutting programs were slightly less vehement in their opinions about Federal aid than those unconcerned board members. Although general agreement was greater for concerned board members and general disagreement less, those unconcerned board members strongly agreed at a slightly higher level and also strongly disagreed at a slightly higher level.

This section of analysis tended to indicate that those board members expressing concern or priority about a management concern also tended to have a somewhat higher level of agreement or disagreement on issues contextually related to that concern. Perhaps by more explicitly investigating management concerns and opinions on educational issues related to these management concerns, one can begin to lay a stronger foundation for the analysis of board member attitudes in general and how these board member attitudes might relate to behavior and activity of board members.

CHAPTER 4 FOOTNOTES

¹Jeffrey W. Williams and Sallie L. Warf, Educational Directory: Public School Systems 1976-1977 (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, December, 1977), p. xix. (Table 11)

²Underwood, Fortune and Dodge, pp. 17-21, 37.

³George A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (Third Edition; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pp. 173-192.

⁴Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, (Second Edition; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 166-173.

⁵Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Brent, pp. 223-224.

⁶Ferguson, pp. 303-318.

⁷Kerlinger, pp. 288-294.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been threefold. First, a longitudinal review of school board studies over the past 65 years was conducted and was included as Chapter 2. The summary at the end of that chapter noted salient points of the longitudinal analysis. Second, the 1977 National Survey of Local School Boards (NSLSB), dealing with school board member demographic characteristics, management concerns and opinions on educational issues, was conducted, reported and analyzed in Chapter 4. Third, given a review of other studies and reporting and analysis of the 1977 NSLSB, comments and recommendations for the future study of school board members and school boards are presented in Chapter 5.

A general summary of this threefold study is presented in this chapter. The chapter is divided into 3 major sections. Section 1 presents an overview of statistically significant and practically significant findings from the 1977 NSLSB as reported in Chapter 4. Section 2 presents a review of school board study trends over time, relating findings from the 1977 NSLSB to studies presented in the

longitudinal review. Section 3 presents recommendations for further research and study of school board members and school boards.

SUMMARY OF 1977 NSLSB FINDINGS

This section reviews findings from the 1977 NSLSB and is presented in 3 subsections: demographic characteristics, management concerns and opinions on educational issues.

The demographic profile of public school board members responding to this survey was based on 17 demographic characteristic variables, 11 of which were personal characteristics and 6 of which were board characteristics.

The variable of state was collapsed to provide a summary of responses by region in accordance with the standard NSBA regional categorization. The random sampling technique employed and the return rate to the survey suggested a fairly representative response. Region appeared to be that board characteristic which interacted most frequently with other demographic characteristics, and the south appeared to be that region which most frequently distinguished itself as somewhat different from other regions in

the nation. The south appeared to have larger school districts, more frequently appointed board members, had a somewhat higher educational attainment level and had significantly fewer women board members than other regions. Additionally, board members from the south appeared less concerned about collective bargaining and more concerned about discipline and Federal interference management concerns.

The variable of district size, or student enrollment, was less frequently a factor in differences among public school board members than region. It should be noted that the survey response was somewhat skewed to larger school districts when responses were compared to actual statistics on the proportion of districts by size throughout the nation. However, this sampling concern is minimized due to the fact that the large number of very small school districts serve relatively few students. For ease of analysis, district size could be viewed as a dichotomous variable in that larger school districts tended to be more frequently urban, suburban or combination districts; tended to be more frequently appointive; tended to have a larger proportion of professional and managerial board members; and tended to have higher incomes and higher education levels than boards from smaller school districts.

From the variable of district type, it was observed that suburban districts occurred more frequently in the northeast; that urban districts were more frequently appointive and had somewhat older board members; that urban and suburban school districts had more frequent professional occupation representation and also a somewhat higher education level than other types of districts. Larger boards also occurred more frequently in urban and suburban school districts.

The variable of selection method suggested that board members from the south were more frequently appointed, and that larger districts and also urban school districts were more frequently appointive than other smaller districts and non-urban districts.

The personal characteristic of sex was shown to be a distinguishing characteristic with respect to the region in which school board members resided; the occupation of board members; and the history of educational employment experience. Women board members were less frequent in the south and more frequently had been previously employed in educational endeavors than men. In response to several issue statements, primarily regarding discipline and curriculum issues, women school board members appeared to be in more

disagreement with those statements and somewhat more undecided than men board members.

The personal characteristic of age was shown to be a significant factor in relation to district type, in that older board members occurred more frequently in urban school districts. Older board members also generally had higher incomes than younger board members. Those youngest board members and the oldest board members appeared to be more highly educated than other board members.

The personal characteristic of occupation, which was identified through 2 variables, current occupation or previous occupation if currently unemployed, was found to be that personal characteristic which most frequently interacted with other demographic characteristics. Occupation was shown to vary as a function of region, district size, district type and size of board. Also, occupation varied with respect to the personal characteristics of sex, age, income and education. Due to the numbers of survey participants in various occupations and the extent of occupations represented, it was difficult to perceive particular differences by occupation in relation to management concerns or opinions on educational issues. However, professional and managerial workers, representing the majority of respondents, generally differed in their responses from all others.

The personal characteristic of income also varied as a function of region, enrollment and district type. As might have been expected, when board member education increased, family income also increased proportionately. It was noted that lower income groups were more likely to have favored a change in compulsory attendance laws and also the increasing of Federal aid to local school districts.

Almost all school board members were married and this variable was not seen to be a distinguishing characteristic.

The personal characteristic of race was apparently misunderstood by many respondents to the survey, and due to the apparent spurious data, this variable was disregarded.

Two variables, years of service and terms of service, dealt with the longevity of board members in their positions. This longevity factor did not generally relate to other demographic characteristics, the priority of management concerns or opinions on educational issues. Some exceptions were noted in that terms of service did vary with respect to sex, age and educational employment. Also, a systematic relationship was observed in the instance that, as terms of service increased for board members, those board members tended to be much more unfavorably disposed toward the right

of teachers to negotiate class size. Distinguishing characteristics of a "perennial" board member could not be determined.

The personal characteristic of educational attainment appeared to be a highly significant variable in relation to other demographic characteristics and also with respect to opinions on educational issues. More highly educated individuals appeared to have a lower priority for the management concern of discipline. This personal characteristic also appeared to have a systematic relationship in several instances with respect to opinions on educational issues. Agreement with the need for moral and values development, the necessity of skill mastery for graduation and the need for a standard nationwide exam generally increased as the level of educational attainment decreased for board members.

A history of educational employment by school board members was shown to be a moderately distinguishing personal characteristic. Curriculum reform was ranked very high by board members with current or previous educational employment experience. Those individuals also appeared more supportive of skill mastery for graduation and stronger Federal involvement in the public schools.

The board characteristic of board size was determined from 2 variables which requested board members to indicate the number of male school board members and the number of female school board members on their board. From these variables it was determined that the mean board size was 6.8 members, and 23.6% of the board members on school boards from which respondents to this survey came, were women. The characteristic of board size was found to relate to the board characteristics of region, enrollment and district type, and also the personal characteristic of occupation. It was noted that board members from those largest school boards favored increased Federal aid to a somewhat greater extent than did board members from smaller boards.

When responses to the variables of management concerns were analyzed, only 5 of those concerns elicited a response from more than 20% of the respondents. Those concerns were, in order of priority, collective bargaining by teachers, declining enrollment, curriculum reform, discipline and cutting programs to balance budget. Issues such as teacher militancy, drug abuse, legal rights of students and desegregation ranked very low in the priority of school board members. When the ranking of management concerns was analyzed with respect to several demographic characteristics, no statistically significant differences appeared. However,

several observed practical differences did appear to occur. Most notably, the south appeared to differ from other regions and held a relatively low priority for the issue of collective bargaining. Also, board members from rural and small town school districts appeared somewhat less concerned about the issue of declining enrollment and more concerned about discipline than their counterparts from urban and suburban districts. Board members with higher education levels appeared less concerned about discipline issues. As might have been expected, board members with previous educational employment experience held a higher priority for the management concern of curriculum reform than did their counterparts with no educational employment experience. When management concerns were analyzed with respect to opinions on educational issues, relatively few relationships were observed. An exception occurred for the management concern of collective bargaining, in that board members concerned about this issue disagreed more frequently with the right of teachers to negotiate class size; disagreed more frequently with the suggestion that state and local school systems had not assumed adequate responsibility for providing appropriate educational programs; and disagreed more frequently that extracurricular activities should

be reduced when a school district was experiencing budget cuts.

In the questionnaire section dealing with opinions on educational issues, 3 statements were presented in each of 5 areas of interest; discipline, curriculum, Federal involvement, quality of instruction and financial support to public education. In the area of discipline, board members were generally in agreement among themselves on all 3 of the issue statements. A significant majority disagreed with the proposed placement of students who displayed extreme discipline problems in live-in boarding schools. A significant majority of board members agreed with the suggestion that parental lack of interest was a primary cause of discipline problems in the public schools. Also, a significant majority disagreed with the possible alteration of compulsory attendance laws to allow students to leave school at age 14. In the area of curriculum, the educational issue statements also did not discriminate among board members to a very high degree. For all 3 statements, more than 75% of board members agreed with the suggestions that more emphasis should be placed on career education; that more emphasis should be placed on moral and values development in the public schools; and that skill mastery in reading and mathematics should be assured before students were promoted to the

next grade. Issue statements in the area of Federal involvement appeared to show some greater differences among board members than the 2 previous areas of investigation. Although the vast majority of school board members were unfavorably disposed toward stronger Federal involvement in the public schools, only a very slight majority favored increased Federal aid and only a slight majority felt that state and local school systems had abdicated their responsibility in certain instances, thereby paving the way for increased court decisions affecting public education. Issue statements in the area of quality of instruction elicited the greatest disagreement among board members. Board members were fairly evenly divided between agreement and disagreement toward the suggestion that a standard nationwide examination should be imposed as a requirement for a high school diploma. The same held true for the suggestion that inadequate classroom instruction was responsible for the decline in national test scores. An exception was noted for the suggestion that teachers should have the right to negotiate class size, in that the vast majority of school board members disagreed with this statement. Only 10% of all respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this suggestion. In the area of financial support for public education, a moderate majority of the board members agreed that

state finance formulas for education should guarantee equal educational opportunity for all children. Also, a moderate majority agreed that a reduction in the funding of extracurricular activities should be the first step toward cutting school district budgets. A slight majority of board members disagreed with the notion that the defeat of school budgets was caused by communities' lack of confidence in school district administrations.

TRENDS OVER TIME

This section intends to relate findings from the 1977 NSLSB to those studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Nineteen of those studies were national in scope, as was the 1977 survey. However, it should be noted that the 1977 NSLSB was conducted prior to the last 10 studies cited in the summaries of selected school board surveys (refer to Tables 3-8).

The variable of region in all of these studies indicated that the sample was fairly representative of the population addressed, although the population in many instances was limited by factors such as membership in the NSBA, residence in large cities or other parameters. Also, region in

all of these studies appeared to be a distinguishing characteristic in regard to certain opinions, concerns or personal characteristics of board members.

The variable of district size, or enrollment, was distinguished much like the variable of region. In many instances, survey samples appeared to be somewhat skewed toward larger districts, and the districts under 1,000 in enrollment, currently over 50% of all school districts, have not been represented in surveys of this nature to any great extent. The comment was cited earlier that rural school boards have not been studied enough. Rural school boards in the 1977 survey were fairly well represented and several distinctions were made based upon this characteristic of district type.

It has also been noted over the years that appointed board members have become somewhat less frequent and have appeared most frequently in the south. The earliest studies showed approximately 85% of board members to be elected whereas the latest showed this proportion to be approximately 95%.

The characteristic of age has remained very stable over the past 65 years, and the average age of board members has been and continues to be in the mid-40s.

The personal characteristic of sex, however, was another matter. More recent studies showed somewhat of an increasing proportion of female board membership. The proportion of female board membership in the 1977 survey was extrapolated to be 23.6%, as compared with approximately 8 to 10% in the earliest national studies. More recent studies, sponsored by the NSBA, have shown this proportion to be even higher and approximating 30% of total board membership.

The personal characteristic of occupation has continued to reveal that a majority of board members are employed in the business or professional ranks, and this characteristic has also been shown to be influential as a distinguishing variable regarding other characteristics and opinions of board members.

The variable of income has related significantly to occupation and education of board members. Income of board members has also been somewhat higher than the average of individuals in the communities from which board members came.

Most all board members have been and continue to be married. The variable of race did not provide data to be analyzed and compared with earlier studies. The average tenure of board members has been and continues to be in the neighborhood of 3 to 4 years.

Of particular note was the variable of educational attainment, which showed significant interaction with many other demographic characteristics as well as opinions on several educational issues. This has also been the case in many previous studies and has been noted as a factor of influence regarding board member opinion and behavior, as referenced by general literature on school boards as well as the school board studies related here. Previous educational employment has not been studied as a variable in very many reviews of school boards members but, as might have been expected, board members with prior or current educational employment experience differed somewhat in opinions about educational issues from those board members with no such experience.

Board size was noted to be the most distinguishing characteristic in several previous studies with respect to opinions on educational issues. This was perhaps due to the limited study of other board characteristics such as region or district type. Such has not appeared to be the case in the 1977 survey, and board size did not significantly relate to many other board characteristics.

Six studies, all sponsored by the NSBA or ASBJ since 1976, have investigated the priority of management concerns by board members. The 1977 NSLSB was the second of these 6

studies. In the earlier reviews, 1976 and 1977, collective bargaining appeared as the top ranked management concern, followed by the 2 issues of declining enrollment and curriculum reform. In latter years, from 1978 through 1982, 4 studies have shown collective bargaining to be dropping somewhat in priority, whereas declining enrollment and financial matters particularly, have been increasing in priority.

Of particular note in regard to opinions on educational issues, Federal aid and Federal involvement have stood out over the past 20 years. Increasing acceptance of Federal aid has been observed, but board members have continued to be very suspect of Federal involvement or regulation in local school district matters. The 1977 survey did not show any divergence from this trend. Another issue which has stood out to a lesser extent was discipline, which appeared to be of somewhat more concern to the lay public than to public school board members. Curriculum reform, the quality of instruction and financial support for public education, all fairly highly ranked management concerns over recent years, have been regarded as important by school board members. The general trend has seemed to be related more toward the desire for local control of curriculum development and implementation activities, the need for

greater Federal and state support of local education efforts, and the desire for decreased standardization in instructional activities by authorities other than the local school board.

Not much change in the public school board member demographic profile has been observed. To a limited extent, concerns and opinions of board members have evolved, particularly in the past 20 years, as a reflection of how much particular issues (on which concerns and opinions are based) have come to play in a given school district. Some examples of these issues are Federal involvement in local governance, budgetary shortfalls and collective bargaining. The resolution of these issues promises to be a continuing dilemma for individuals governing local school districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

This study intended to analyze data about school board members from a survey conducted in 1977, and to longitudinally review school board studies from the 65-year period of 1917 to 1982. An overriding concern of the study, as noted in Chapter 1, was to aid in improving the foundation for concentrated and comparative periodic research of school board members and school boards. Based upon a summary review of findings from the 1977 NSLSB and from the literature

review, several issues stood out as important and worthy of comment or possible future investigation.

1. First, if research is to be concentrated and comparative, it follows logically that perhaps a single organization or research center should initiate and coordinate this long-range effort. Such an organization should act as a clearinghouse for school board research and sponsor, or seek sponsorship, of specific studies related to a school board research long-range plan.
2. Since school board members operate only as individuals within a collective, the school board, increased attention should be focused on providing information about the board as a whole and as a composite of unique individual members. A modified form of case study, or specific sampling techniques, might be employed to achieve this goal.
3. The problems of lack of representativeness, sampling bias, lack of utility and lack of generalizability have been cited in regard to many past studies. These difficulties need to be overcome, or at least minimized, if school board research is to be of specific utility to researchers and practitioners. To alleviate these problems, closer attention needs to

be paid to data collection and sampling methodologies; non-response of survey participants needs to be followed up; particular research needs of specific audience types should be identified more clearly; and critical attention should be paid to building upon, rather than repeating, prior research and the expression of needs by researchers and users of research.

4. Several studies have been conducted of NSBA members and ASBJ subscribers. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether or not these studies are representative only of NSBA members or ASBJ subscribers or whether findings from such research might be generalized to all board members.
5. The individual school administrator, school board member, school board and others have expressed interest in how school board research might aid them in their ongoing activities. National studies have often been too global to provide such aid, but key variables within such studies might be focused upon in order to help answer questions of the professional or lay observer. These 4 basic audience types; school system administrators, school board members, school boards (as individual groups and collective

organizations) and lay observers; each appear to have specific and distinct information and research needs. Prior research too often has been conducted under too broad a framework, primarily for general information of school board organizations, and has not been specifically helpful to any of the other audience types. Some suggestions as to research needs for each of these audience types includes:

a. For school system administrators -

How might administrators best influence school board behavior?

What should administrators know about perspectives of the community on major educational issues?

What are the school board's concerns with the quality of education and the disposition of major policies?

b. For individual school boards and school board members -

What are the best ways to deal with conflict in school board operations?

How are certain procedures and policy issues handled by other similar boards?

What are the best ways to deal with conflict among Federal, state and local requirements in the governance of local school systems?

What constitutes an appropriate definition of the effective school board member and school board?

c. For other educational observers -

How might community concerns best be expressed to school administrators and boards?

What factors influence school board decisions on certain issues?

What constitutes a fair and appropriate education?

How might research on other types of governing units aid in dealing with governance and policy issues at the local school board level?

6. It has also been suggested that the gaps between study of board member social composition, study of board member opinions/attitudes/concerns and study of board member behavior need to be bridged. In order to bridge such gaps, research needs to be specifically focused on a particular topic (as was the case with the NSBA's 1976 study of standardized testing) and then structured so as to investigate what happens or has happened when boards were socially analyzed or held attitudes in a particular direction. The key issues here appear to be delimitation of research toward a particular audience type and focusing study upon behavioral concerns with

respect to certain relevant variables. An additional methodological concern might exist with regard to how researchers attempt to pose attitudinal questions and what relation these have to behavior.

7. Certain criticisms of the 1977 NSLSB and this study are in order to provide assistance to future researchers and observers.
 - a. In a national study of this nature, a basic question raised is "Are school board members and/or school boards alike?" The answer appears to be no, and the logical extension is that boards should be studied under certain constraints (or variables) such as state, district enrollment, and district size.
 - b. Standardization of certain variables, particularly with regard to the suggestions made in recommendation 1, are in order. The classification system used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census is suggested for the variables of occupation and race. Certain other variables might also be eliminated from consideration, or reduced to 2 or 3 categories, dependent upon the needs of particular future research. These include marital status, income, years of service, terms of office, educational

attainment and prior or current educational employment.

c. School board research might well be directed more toward providing individual school system administrators, school board members, school boards, researchers or lay observers with information that might aid them in their day-to-day practice and concerns with public education.

8. This study, Umberger (1982), provides a comprehensive review and summary of research on school board members and school boards over the past 65 years, analyzes many of the variables which have been considered extensively in previous research and suggests some directions and general content for future research. Additional studies and commentaries which may be helpful to practitioners as school board research progresses are: for purposes of literature review and general structure - White (1959) and Hurwitz (1971); for purposes of history and general concerns of and about the school board - Goldhammer (1964) and Brodinsky (1977); and for purposes of suggested direction for future research and concerns of the school board as a political entity within a community

- Iannacone and Lutz (1970), Zeigler and Jennings (1974) and Cistone (1975).

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APPENDIX A

Cover Letter and
NSLSB Questionnaire



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

OFFICE OF CONTRACT RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Dear School Board Member:

We are conducting a study in cooperation with the National School Boards Association. The purpose of the study is to investigate the opinions of current school boards to issues in education relative to certain socio-demographic information. We would appreciate your taking a few minutes to assist us in this national study.

The study will be accomplished anonymously using the technique of random sampling. There will be no coding for a follow-up inquiry. It is therefore very important that you assist us by returning the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Cordially yours,

Kenneth E. Underwood, Ed.D.

Julia V. Oertel, M.Ed.

Enclosure

NATIONAL SURVEY OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

This study is intended to report information related to selected characteristics of individual school board members and their perceptions of current issues in education.

Instructions: Completion of this questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes. Please respond to all requested information and return AS SOON AS POSSIBLE in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

GENERAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION. (Please check appropriate answer for each question.)

1. In what state is your school system? _____
2. The student population of your school district is:
 - ___ (1) Less than 1,000
 - ___ (2) 1,000 - 4,999
 - ___ (3) 5,000 - 9,999
 - ___ (4) 10,000 - 24,999
 - ___ (5) More than 25,000
3. Would you classify your school district as serving a population that is predominantly:
 - ___ (1) Urban
 - ___ (2) Suburban
 - ___ (3) Rural
 - ___ (4) Small town
 - ___ (5) Other. (Explain: _____)
4. Are you: ___ (1) Elected? ___ (2) Appointed?
5. Are you: ___ (1) Male? ___ (2) Female?
6. What is your age? _____
7. Are you:
 - ___ (1) Afro-American
 - ___ (2) Anglo-American
 - ___ (3) Spanish-American
 - ___ (4) Native-American
 - ___ (5) Other. (Explain: _____)
8. If you are currently employed, what is your occupation? _____ (1)
 If you are currently unemployed, what was your previous occupation? _____ (2)
9. What is your family income?
 - ___ (1) Less than \$20,000
 - ___ (2) \$20,000 - \$29,999
 - ___ (3) \$30,000 - \$39,999
 - ___ (4) More than \$40,000
10. Are you married? ___ (1) Yes. ___ (2) No.
11. How many years have you served on the School Board? _____
12. How many terms have you served on the School Board?
 - ___ (1) Fewer than one
 - ___ (2) One
 - ___ (3) Two
 - ___ (4) Three
 - ___ (5) More than three

2

13. What is your highest educational attainment? (1) less than high school
 (2) high school graduate
 (3) post high school training
 (4) college degree
 (5) advanced college degree
14. Have you ever been employed by a public school system? If so, in what capacity?
 Please be specific. _____
15. How many members of your school board are men? _____
16. How many members of your school board are women? _____
17. From the following list, please check the three most pressing management concerns in your school district:
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Drug abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Public apathy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Curriculum reform | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Collective bargaining with teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Outmoded facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Federal interference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Declining enrollments | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) High cost of energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Steady or declining tax base | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) New legal rights of students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6) Teacher militancy | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Coping with "accountability" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (7) Discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) Cutting programs to balance budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (8) Desegregation | <input type="checkbox"/> (17) Other (Explain: _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (9) Cutting staff to balance budget | |

EDUCATION ISSUE-RELATED INFORMATION. (Please indicate your opinion of the following statements by circling the appropriate number under each statement.)

ISSUE: DISCIPLINE

18. Students who display extreme discipline problems should be removed from the home and placed in a live-in boarding school provided by the public school system.
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
19. A lack of interest by parents is a primary cause of discipline problems in the public schools.
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |
20. Compulsory attendance laws should be changed to allow the student to leave school at age 14.
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |

ISSUE: CURRICULUM

21. The school curriculum should place more emphasis on career education; that is, making students aware of career options.
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree |

ISSUE: CURRICULUM (continued)

22. The school curriculum should place more emphasis on the moral and values development of the student.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

23. Students should master skills in reading and mathematics at grade level before being promoted to the next grade.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

ISSUE: FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

24. Stronger Federal involvement in public education is necessary to assure that state and local systems are meeting the needs of students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

25. Federal aid should be increased to local school systems to meet the increasing cost of public education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

26. State and local school systems have not assumed adequate responsibility in assuring appropriate educational programs and have therefore contributed to the increase of Court decisions that affect public education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

ISSUE: QUALITY INSTRUCTION

27. A student should pass a standard nationwide examination in order to receive a high school diploma.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

28. The decline in the national test scores of students is primarily caused by inadequate instruction in the classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

29. Teachers should have the right to negotiate class size.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

ISSUE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

30. State finance formulas for education should guarantee each child in the state an education comparable to every other child regardless of the local school system's ability to pay.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

31. Faced with budget cuts, a school system should first decrease spending by reducing the number of funded extracurricular activities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

32. The community's lack of confidence in the school administration is a primary reason for the defeat of school budgets.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree

Thank you again for participating in this anonymous survey. Please tuck this form in the postage-paid envelope and mail today.

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A National Study of Public School
Board Member Demographics, Management Concerns and
Opinions on Critical Issues in Education

by

George R. Umberger

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to examine demographic characteristics, management concerns and opinions on critical issues in education of public school board members throughout the nation. An historical review of social composition, concerns and issues was conducted from studies of school board members and school boards. Recommendations as to suggested future directions in school board research were made based upon the review of studies over a 65-year period and findings from the 1977 National Survey of Local School Boards.

Participants in the 1977 survey were all subscribers to the American School Board Journal, and distribution of a questionnaire to these participants was sponsored by the National School Boards Association. Respondents numbered 1,268, and the survey response rate was 39.5%. All states were represented in the survey as were all types and all sizes of school districts.

Demographic profiles were determined; the rank priority of school board member management concerns was established; and level of agreement or disagreement to 3 statements in each of 5 critical education issue areas; discipline, curriculum, Federal involvement, quality of instruction and financial support of public education; was analyzed. Study findings suggested that region, district type and district size were the most influential board characteristics in relation to other characteristics, management concerns and opinions on educational issues. The personal characteristics of educational attainment, occupation and age were the most influential with respect to other characteristics, concerns and issues.

With a critical eye toward supplementing the foundation for the further study of school boards, recommendations included: the suggested study of boards as collectives; the initiation of a focal center for the study of school boards on a concentrated and comparative basis; the need to assure representativeness, generalizability and utility in school board research; and several criticisms and suggestions posed to help focus future research more clearly, and aid the researcher and practitioner in making the study of school boards more utilitarian.