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LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN
SUPERINTENDENTS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SOURCES
REGARDING EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED LEGISLATION

by

Charlene Bennett

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Education
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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1987

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VITA

The author, Charlene Bennett, was born September 16, 1955 in Chicago, Illinois.

Her elementary and secondary education was obtained in the public schools of Evergreen Park, Illinois, where she graduated in 1973. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1977 and a Masters of Education in Special Education from the same university in 1979.

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LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS
AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SOURCES REGARDING
EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED LEGISLATION

Statement of the Problem

How do legislators gather the information on which to act regarding education bills? Do they communicate with superintendents to hear their views?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze the communications relative to education bills that legislators who serve on the Elementary and Secondary House and Senate Education Committees of the 84th General Assembly have with superintendents and other educational sources. Specifically, the purposes of the study are stated as:

1. To identify whether or not superintendents and legislators communicate with each other concerning education bills.
2. To identify the pressure groups that are influential in communicating with legislators about educational issues.
3. To provide information on the sources used by legislators to gain information about educational issues.
4. To identify the methods legislators use to communicate their educational views to school administrators.
5. To recommend specific procedures and strategies that would:

- (a) Assist superintendents toward improving their relationships with state legislators.
- (b) Assist superintendents toward developing a communication system for bringing educational concerns and ideas for sponsoring education bills to state legislators.

Procedure

The related literature reviewed studies dealing with the relationships and interactions between legislators and superintendents, educational associations, fellow legislators and state Board of Education staff.

The thirty-nine legislators who serve on the Senate and House Education Committees were sent surveys to complete. The purpose of these surveys were to determine whether the legislators met the specified criteria for a follow-up in-depth interview and to serve as reference points for the interviewing. Both the survey data and interview data were analyzed in narrative form. Graphs were used to pictorially display the results where appropriate.

The structure of the presentation of data was organized according to major topical areas which include:

- Communications Initiated by Legislators to Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators;
- Communications Initiated by Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators;
- Lack of Communication Between Superintendents and Legislators;
- Obstacles of Communications Between Superintendents and Legislators; and
- Legislators' Perceptions of Other Sources They Utilize and Communicate With to Keep Current Regarding Educationally-Related Issues.

The data derived from the surveys and interviews which deal with the appropriate topic are presented and analyzed in that Section. Whenever data are

utilized, a reference is made as to the source from which it was obtained--the survey or interview.

CONCLUSIONS

COMMUNICATIONS INITIATED BY LEGISLATORS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS

Major Findings:

- (a) Legislators are not initiating contacts with their superintendents as a regular practice regarding educational legislation.
- (b) Legislators depend on superintendents to initiate contact with them concerning educational legislation.
- (c) Communications between superintendents and legislators are apparent when they are friendly.

COMMUNICATIONS INITIATED BY SUPERINTENDENTS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS

Major Findings:

- (a) Superintendents are not initiating contacts with their legislators regarding educationally-related issues.
- (b) Superintendents do not perform their political role in the state legislature in a way legislators consider to be effective.

OBSTACLES OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND LEGISLATORS

Major Findings:

- (a) Legislators are extremely busy and lack the time needed to contact their superintendents from their districts regarding educational legislation.
- (b) Legislators are extremely overloaded with hundreds of bills and with their attention so divided, it is difficult for them to develop any expertise regarding the education legislation on which they are required to vote.

LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
OTHER SOURCES THEY UTILIZE
AND/OR COMMUNICATE WITH
REGARDING EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED ISSUES

Major Findings:

(a) In reference to legislators' communications with education associations about educational issues, the IEA has the strongest support from legislators. Administration Education Associations ranked the lowest among the associations.

(b) Legislators turn to colleagues for information related to education bills.

(c) Legislators turn to legislative staff to analyze bills and keep them updated about educational issues.

The results of this study provide the basis for recommendations for the improvement of communication between superintendents and legislators.

The respondents in this study represent a small sample of legislators but to the degree that their comments are indicators of their colleagues, the generalizations can be valuable. The list of recommendations is not in terms of a priority ranking.

Implications for Further Study

1. Analyze the decision-making process used by legislators of the Education Committees.

2. Analyze the perceptions of superintendents in reference to legislators' communications with them.

3. Analyze and compare the most influential sources of information used by legislators.

4. Analyze the most effective method of communications used by superintendents and legislators.

5. Analyze the perceptions of superintendents concerning the decision-making process of legislators.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is little question that the state legislative decision-making process in the field of education, and the variety of laws generated by that process, has a definite impact on local school districts. For example, as a result of statutory enactments, school districts have been required to adopt curriculums consistent with state education codes, to furnish a variety of reports to state administrative agencies relative to the operations of the districts' schools, and provide tuition and reimbursement costs for handicapped students who attend special schools. Such examples, of course, are but a small part of the laundry list of duties and responsibilities, the identification of which is far beyond the scope of this paper, imposed upon school districts by the mandate of state legislatures.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how one facet of the state legislative decision-making process in the education area, specifically that manifested in Illinois, works. According to Madison,¹ much of what politics is takes place in small groups. Verba, in 1961, stated that:

... the bulk of significant political decisions... are made neither by individual, autonomous decision makers... nor by all the members of the political process, by the electorate, or by the rank and file of a political party. It is to the face [sic] group that one must look if one is to find the locus of political systems.²

True to the teachings of these commentators, a legislative body oftentimes subdivides itself into limitedly-defined groups. It must necessarily do so in order

¹ Madison, To Wo (1969). Small Group Methods and the Study of Politics. Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press.

² Verba, So (1961). Small Groups and Political Behavior. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

that all matters presented before it receive some degree of expert treatment. The Illinois State Legislature is no different. It has fifteen (15) established Committees. Those Committees are subdivided by subject matter as follows: Agriculture, Energy, Natural Resource, Environment, Business, Labor, Health, Welfare, Judiciary, Local Government, Transportation, Appropriations, Taxes and Education.

Committees such as those found in the Illinois State Legislature are the building blocks of a legislative body. As outlined by Lorch: (1) every bill has to be passed by the Committee before the Legislature votes on it; and (2) the Committee has the power to kill or modify a bill before the full House ever gets a chance to vote on it. With the life and death of a proposed bill resting upon the decision of the Committee to which it is first presented, each of these "little legislatures" serve as bastions of prominence, power and importance.³ This term was introduced by Lorch in 1970 to describe the "Committees of Congress." The term can also be used to describe Committees of state legislatures.

In Illinois, each legislator serves on at least two (2) Committees. Membership on those Committees gives the legislators considerable control over the future of proposed legislation. Because of the impact legislators' voting behavior has relative to education bills, it is important to isolate the means and identify the manner by which legislators serving on educational legislative committees gather the information on which to act. Once done, local school district officials might be better able to identify where to direct their efforts in order to maximize the prospects of passage of pending legislation in which their districts might have a

³ Lorch, Robert S., "State and Local Politics: The Great Entanglements," Prentice-Hall, Inc. (1986), p.190.

stake.⁴ It is to that end that the investigation and research which serve as the predicate for this paper have been directed.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to analyze the communications that legislators who serve on the Elementary and Secondary House and Senate Education Committees of the 84th General Assembly have with superintendents and other educational sources. The data were based on the perceptions of the legislators rather than a proof of their actions because no attempt was made to gather documentation for their responses given. Specifically, the purposes of the study are stated as:

1. To identify whether superintendents and legislators communicate with each other concerning education bills.
2. To identify the pressure groups that are most influential in communicating with legislators about educational issues.
3. To establish whether legislators sponsored or initiated educational legislative reform bills because of the emergence of the "band wagon" of mass popular support and national attention or the status of education in the United States.
4. To provide information on the sources used by legislators to gain information about educational issues.
5. To identify the methods legislators use to communicate their educational views to school administrators.

⁴ Manual of Public Interest Lobbying in Illinois, Illinois Association of School Boards, (March, 1984), Illinois State Support Center, Springfield, IL.

6. To recommend specific procedures and strategies that would:
 - (a) Assist superintendents toward improving their relationships with state legislators.
 - (b) Assist superintendents toward developing a communication system for bringing educational concerns and ideas for sponsoring education bills to state legislators.

PROCEDURE

A. The related literature reviewed studies dealing with the relationships and interactions between legislators, superintendents, educational associations, fellow legislators and State Board of Education staff.

B. The sample for the study was determined. The sample consisted of each Illinois State Senator and Illinois House of Representative who had served on the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee of the 84th General Assembly.

C. All thirty-nine (39) legislators were sent a survey to complete. (Please see the following section entitled "Instrument" for further information about the survey.) There were two purposes of the survey. First, the survey was made of the legislators to determine whether they meet the criteria which is described below for a follow-up in-depth interview. Secondly, the survey questions were designed to serve as reference points for follow-up interviews. Questions asked during the interview are included under the Instrument section.

Those legislators who responded to the written survey, served one full term on the Education Committee and met one of the following criteria were interviewed.

1. Introduced a legislative bill within the last five (5) years pertaining to education.

Rationale: These legislators have demonstrated a willingness to sponsor bills to effect educational change. The legislation may have been passed, thus affecting educational policy-making. The period of five (5) years was chosen because this time can serve as a reference point for discussing the impact of the National at Risk Report.

2. Co-sponsored a legislative bill within the last five (5) years pertaining to education.

Rationale: Same as 1.

3. Chairperson on either the 84th General Assembly's Senate or House of Representatives Elementary and Secondary Education Committees.

Rationale: The chairperson is an influential legislator chosen to affect education policy-making. The power of the chairperson can be seen by the fact that he/she has a lot of influence over the fate of bills that come before their Committee. The chairperson determines the Committee's agenda and decides when, where and if the Committee will meet. Additionally, the chairperson has the power to put a bill at the bottom of the agenda. Many of those bills which are put at the bottom of the agenda are never reviewed.

4. Vice-Chairperson on either the 84th General Assembly's Senate or House of Representatives Elementary and Secondary Education Committees.

Rationale: Influential legislator chosen to affect educational policy-making.

5. Spokesperson on either the 84th General Assembly's Senate or House of Representatives Elementary and Secondary Education Committees.

Rationale: Same as 4.

6. Recognized by at least three peers who are serving on the Elementary and Secondary Education Committees of the 84th General Assembly other than the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Spokesperson as having taken a leadership role in legislative matters relating to education.

Rationale: An educational leader as recognized by peers in the 84th General Assembly. His/her views concerning educational issues are influential.

All legislators were sent packets, which included the cover letter, survey and return envelope with postage. Four sets of packets were sent to the legislators who did not return the survey. Only a small percentage of surveys (numbering only ten) were returned by the legislators after the first two mailings. Several strategies had to be implemented in order to encourage the return of the surveys and the scheduling of interviews. These strategies included:

1. The legislators' secretaries in Springfield were called and asked if they could encourage their bosses to return the surveys.
2. A retired House of Representative (ten terms) was asked to call his personal friends who are presently serving on the Elementary and Secondary Education Committees to schedule interviews for the author. Two interviews were scheduled. Prior to being interviewed, the legislators completed the survey. These two legislators had been unwilling to be interviewed until their friend asked them to cooperate. Both of these legislators serve in leadership positions on the Education Committees.

3. An Assistant Minority Senate Leader sent out personal letters on his Senate stationery to every legislator surveyed or the Education Committee members who did not respond to the author's request (letter enclosed in addendum). In the letter he asked for the legislators to complete and return the author's survey.

4. The author, while in Springfield, visited some of the legislators' secretaries and scheduled interviews with those legislators who returned the surveys but did not indicate whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed.

5. The Assistant Minority Leader's secretary scheduled appointments with those legislators who are in leadership positions on the Elementary and Secondary Education Committees.

6. Three of the legislators who returned the survey and were interviewed asked their fellow legislators to complete the survey and schedule an interview with the author.

D. The data collected from the survey are presented in the following manner:

1. Percentage of the legislators who responded to the survey.
2. Percentage of responses for the turnout of the total for that particular question where appropriate tables are presented to graphically display the statistics.

E. A total of twenty-one (21) legislators were interviewed. Of those legislators who were interviewed ten (10) were Senators and eleven (11) were Representatives. The data derived from the interviews are analyzed in narrative form focusing on patterns, trends similarities, differences and unique situations.

Salient characteristics are also derived from the data. Specific recommendations are suggested to administrators to use in their dealings with legislators. Specific insights that this author gained from the interviews are also discussed as they relate to the study.

QUESTIONING STYLE

The questions asked of the legislators were open-ended by nature. The purpose of asking these type of questions were to allow the legislators to pursue tangents. Every legislator was asked the same general questions related to a category, but not every survey question was asked.

There are several advantages to asking open-ended questions according to Bailey.⁵ These advantages are summarized below:

1. They can be used when all the possible answer categories are not known, or when the investigator wishes to see what the respondent views as appropriate answers. The open-ended questions may reveal some findings that the researcher did not anticipate in addition to the expected ones;
2. They allow the respondent to answer adequately in all the detail he/she likes and to clarify and qualify his/her answer;
3. They can be used when there are too many potential answer categories to list on the questionnaire;
4. They are preferable for complex answers that cannot be condensed into a few small categories; and
5. They allow more opportunity for creativity or self expression by the respondent. He/she feels the answers are uniquely his/hers instead of being focused upon him/her by the researcher. Some persons feel that closed-ended questions impose an artificial structure on the data by putting words in the respondent's mouth rather than allowing the respondent to structure his/her own responses in a more natural fashion.

⁵ Bailey, Kenneth, Methods of Research, McMillan Publishing (1978), pp.114-120.

The categories which questions were centered around and the type of questions asked within each category are outlined below.

CATEGORY ONE:

NATURE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The type of questions asked in reference to this category include:

- Do you initiate contact with the superintendents from your area?
- If so, what is the nature of your initiation -- telephone, written, newsletter, etc.?
- If you initiate contact with the superintendents from your district, what is the nature of your communication? What types of information do you ask of them? For instance, do you discuss the specific educational bill in depth or ask for the superintendent's analysis as to how the bill will affect the school district? Is the nature of your contact only to inform the legislator of the status of educational bills?
- If you do not initiate contact with the superintendents from your district, how do you receive their input? Do they contact you? If so, what is the nature of their contact? What type of information do they ask of you?
- If you don't have any communication with superintendents, how do you keep updated?

CATEGORY TWO:

NATURE OF COMMUNICATION
WITH NON-EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS
RELATING TO EDUCATION

The type of questions asked under this category include:

- If you don't have any communication with school superintendents, how do you keep updated about educationally related issues?

- If you don't have any communication with school superintendents, who do you seek assistance from if you need specific and/or general information about education bills?
- What roles do unions play in reference to your deciding to sponsor, co-sponsor or vote on education bills?

CATEGORY THREE:

IMPACT OF THE NATION AT RISK REPORT

- What role did the Nation at Risk Report have on the educational reform movement in Illinois?
- What specific recommendations of the Report do you believe needed to be addressed with legislation?
- Do the recommendations made in the Nation at Risk Report coincide with your particular interest in education?
- Did you read the Nation at Risk Report?

INTERVIEW

The interview was structured so that the legislators had the opportunity to discuss areas that were directly related to their personal experience and interests. Follow-up probe questions were asked so that more concrete information about the topic initiated by the legislators could be elicited and legislators could get off structured responses. For instance, one legislator mentioned that he does not initiate contact with his superintendents on a regular basis but conducts educational legislative workshops. Examples of probe questions that were asked included: (a) Who did you invite to attend these sessions? (b) How did you invite the guests? (c) What was the nature of the workshop? Another legislator

responded to one of the general questions relating to the nature of communications with superintendents by stating it is non-existent. An example of a follow-up probe question asked in that instance is "[t]hen how did you keep updated?" The legislator then responded by stating that the unions keep him updated about pertinent educational issues as well as how the bill would affect their constituency. A series of probe questions were then asked to elicit more precise information.

Even though open-ended questions were asked about specific categories and tangents were allowed to be pursued, all questions and probes were eventually brought back to the topic of the legislators' roles with superintendents in reference to educational legislation. For example, if a legislator pursued the topic of the role of the party leadership on voting behavior relative to educational legislation, summary questions asked were: "[t]o the best of your knowledge, how do the superintendents from your district attempt to 'lobby' the leadership in your chamber?" or "[w]hat do you specifically do to address this issue with your superintendents?" For instance, one legislator described in detail to the interviewer how education bills pass out of committees and the role of leadership and the chair person in this process. After specific probe questions were asked relative to this topic, the interviewer redirected the questioning to the central theme of the study. Examples of probe questions asked were: "What can legislators do to help school superintendents become aware of this political process so they can become more proactive in educational legislative making?" "What have you observed in the strategies being used by superintendents in reference to this area?" "Are they effective?" "If not, what steps can you recommend they follow so that they can be effective?"

Each interview lasted approximately forty (40) minutes. The interviewer took notes throughout the interview. A tape recorder was not used. The majority

of interviews took place in the legislators' offices in Springfield. One interview began in the legislator's office but ended up in the cafeteria located in the State House. Five (5) interviews took place on the House or Senate floor. In order to accommodate these legislators, their interviews had to be scheduled on the appropriate chamber floor.

INSTRUMENTS

Each Illinois State Senator and Illinois House of Representative who served on the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittees of the 84th General Assembly was sent a survey to complete. The survey was sent for the purposes of gathering data. The survey questions were intentionally broad so that they could serve as a reference point for follow-up interviews. Questions centered around: (1) general background information; (2) groups/individuals that legislators turn to for pertinent information on education bills; (3) views concerning the involvement of school superintendents in the educational state legislative process; (4) methods used by legislators to communicate their educational views to their constituency; and (5) views concerning recommendations made in the Nation at Risk Report. (See Appendix for Survey).

The instrument utilized to collect data for the analysis of patterns, trends, similarities, differences and unique situations was a series of interview questions. The questions asked during these sessions were in-depth probing based upon the responses from the survey. This follow-up probing focused more specifically on educational issues such as the nature of contact legislators have with school superintendents. These questions were designed to allow tangents to be pursued.

As cited in Lundquist's dissertation, Carter justified the use of an interview approach when he stated:

By means of the interview, it is possible to secure data that cannot be obtained through the less personal procedure of distributing a reply blank. People do not generally care to put confidential data in writing; they may want to see who is getting the information, and receive guarantees as to how it will be used. They need the stimulation of personal contacts in order to be drawn out. Furthermore, the interview enables the researcher to follow up leads and take advantage of small clues. In complex materials where the development is likely to proceed in any direction, no prepared instrument can perform the task. Again, the interview permits the interviewer to gain an impression of the person who is giving the facts, to form some judgment of the truth of facts, "to read between the lines," things that are not said.⁶

These questions used in the survey and the interviews were not developed from an existing guide; they were reviewed by legislative experts for possible modification. The experts consisted of a retired representative of twenty years, a senator and two professional lobbyists. The experts were asked to evaluate the instrument in terms of its sensitivity. For instance, the questions had to be designed to elicit indirect responses from the legislators and not put them on the defensive.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For purposes of this investigation, the following definitions of terms are applicable:

Educational Legislation. Legislation that has an impact on the activities of the public schools.

⁶ Good, Carter V., Barr, A.S. and Scates, Douglas E., The Methodology of Educational Research, New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, Inc. (1941), p.378.

Lundquist, Margaret, An Analysis of the Decision-Making Process Among Selected Suburban Chicago High School Principals and Selected Middle Management Executives, ED.D. Dissertation, Loyola University (1982), p.12.

Legislation. Any public policy proposal that requires the attention and consent of the legislature and governor and takes the form of law when adopted.

Legislative. Having the power to legislate; making and enacting laws.

Legislator. A member of a Legislature.

Legislature. A body of persons officially constructed and empowered to make and enact the laws of a state.

Public School Superintendent. The chief administrative officer employed by the Board of Education of a school district.

Pressure Group. An organized aggregate which seeks to influence the content of governmental decisions without attempting to place its members in formal governmental capacities.

Lobbyist. One who lobbies, that is, one who attempts to influence someone else's opinions and activities.

Session. The time during which the Legislature meets. Regular session is held January through June of each year. Veto sessions are held every fall; special sessions to deal with one specific issue can be called at any time by the Governor or jointly by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House.

Bill. A proposed law presented to the legislature for approval.

Chief Sponsor(s). Refers to the member(s) who actually introduce a bill and are responsible for handling it before committees and on the floor. Usually there is only one such sponsor; when there are two or more, their names are linked with hyphens.

Committee Bill. A bill which is authorized by a standing committee rather than by a single legislator. These often originate when numerous bills on a single topic have been referred to that committee and the members determine that

writing and reporting out a single bill would be more advantageous. Committee bills are exempt from deadlines on introduction and consideration of bills. Committee bills may be referred to as Substitute Bills.

Committees. The committees take on a variety of forms and functions. However, the term is most often used to refer to the "standing" committees which are established by the rules of each chamber for the purpose of reviewing proposed legislation before it comes to the floor for a vote. It may also refer to conference, or study, committees.

General Assembly. The legislative body of the State of Illinois; the State Legislature.

House Leadership. The Speaker of the House is elected by House members and appoints the Majority Leader, Assistant Majority Leaders, Majority Party Whips, Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs and Majority Party members of committees. A Minority Leader is selected by the Minority Party and appoints Assistant Minority Leaders, Minority Whips, Minority Spokesmen of committees and Minority Members of committees.

Senate Leadership. A majority of the members elect the Senate President who selects three (3) Assistant Majority Leaders. The Minority Leader is selected by members of his/her party and selects two Assistant Minority Leaders.

Co-Sponsor. Legislator(s) who join as sponsors with the chief sponsor(s) in introducing a bill but do not take responsibility for the committee and floor management of the bill. Co-sponsors are listed after the primary sponsor(s), with names separated by commas.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Legislators serving on the Elementary and Secondary Education Committees vote on education bills without thoroughly researching the side effects or implications.

2. Legislators, as a matter of practice, do not initiate contact with superintendents to receive their input about the implications of pending education bills.

3. Superintendents do not take a proactive stand in reference to the passing of education bills. They are more reactive once the bills are passed.

4. The nature of communication between legislators and superintendents is superficial.

5. The Nation at Risk Report served as a political impetus for the surge of educational reform bills.

STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

The reporting and analyzing of the data are presented in Chapter 3.

The structure of the presentation of data is organized according to major topical areas which includes:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| Section I | - | Communications Initiated by Legislators' to Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators. |
| Section II | - | Communications Initiated by Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators. |
| Section III | - | Lack of Communication Between Superintendents and Legislators. |
| Section IV | - | Obstacles of Communications Between Superintendents and Legislators. |
| Section V | - | Legislators' Perceptions of Other Sources They Utilize and Communicate With to Keep Current Regarding Educationally Related Issues. |

The data derived from the surveys and interviews which deal with the appropriate topic are included in that Section. Whenever the data are presented, a reference is made as to the source they were obtained from--survey or interview. Tables, charts and graphs are included to display the results where appropriate.

The purpose of the survey was to serve as a frame of reference for the follow-up questions that were asked during the interviews and also to determine if the legislators qualified to be interviewed. The categories of questions were purposely designed to be general so that more specific probing questions could be asked later. To analyze the responses given would not be appropriate since they were so general. The pertinent information and responses obtained from the data will be analyzed with the interview data where it is appropriate.

The presentation includes an analysis of the data which were collected from the interviews. This presentation will be in the form of a narration which will focus on trends, patterns and unique situations. Wherever appropriate, quotes which were made by the respondents are cited. Extraneous information which was reported by the legislators has been deleted prior to this presentation, i.e., ramblings, personal discussions. If the interview responses were contrary to the data revealed from the survey, the contradictions will be noted. Likewise, data results from the survey and interviews which were in synchronization will also be noted when appropriate.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has not been an abundance of literature dealing with the perceptions of members of the House and Senate's Elementary and Secondary Committees about the communications they have with superintendents. Thus, the review of the related literature which follows contains views and studies which related more indirectly than directly. The substantiation of this conclusion has been derived from an ERIC Search and a search of dissertation abstracts which have revealed a variety of findings on a variety of related topics, but none on the topics treated in this investigation.

Campbell and Layton⁷ have stated that there are many different classes of actors who are engaged in the policy-making process for education. Among these actors are: professionals (administrators and teachers), education associations, legislators and boards of education. Of these actors, there are those classes of individuals who are involved in the state education policy-making by virtue of their communications with the legislators on the Education Committees. Easton⁸ states that the basic units of political systems are not persons, parties, legislators or any structures or institutions. Rather, the basic unit of analysis of existing political systems are the set of relevant interactions that exist among the members of the system.⁹

⁷ Campbell, Roald F. and Layton, Donald H., Policy Making for American Education, Chicago University of Chicago (1969), pp.17-24.

⁸ In Matley, p.7. Easton, David, A Framework for Political Analysis, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall (1986).

⁹ Hatley, Richard V. and Koser, Ron R., Legislator Characteristics, Attitudes, and Constituencies as Predictors of Educational Policy Legislation, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 137 935 (1977).

Thus, the review of the related literature which follows contains studies dealing with the relationships and interactions between these above-named educational actors and legislators. The literature review will be categorized according to the following classes of actors: educational associations, superintendents, legislators and State Board of Education staff. In spite of the indirect nature of the relationship of these writings, there are implications which can be beneficial and germane to this present study.

EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

The present research has not been concentrated on the Education Committee members' perceptions of educational lobbyists as sources of information. Rather, the research has been concerned with such topics as: the relationship between intra-personal factors and the effectiveness of educational lobbyists as perceived by legislators; the extent of the influence educational lobbyists have on the level of funding to public universities; the relationships between the legislators and interest groups; the identification of five major statewide educational organizations and the degree they become involved in the political process on behalf of their membership; and finally, the educational lobbyists in the Pennsylvania State Legislature.

A dissertation written by Becker¹⁰ attempted to determine the relationship between such intra-personal factors such as age, experience, education background, commitment, contacts and allocation of time and the effectiveness of educational

¹⁰ Becker, James, Education and Education-Related Lobbyists' Effectiveness as Related to Role Taking Ability; Perceptions of Legislators in Indiana, (ED.D Dissertation, Indiana University, 1979), Dissertation Abstracts International, 40 (Aug. 1979), p.4313-A.

lobbyists as perceived by legislators. This study also attempted to determine the influence of such intra-personal factors as the organizational context of the lobbyist's interest group and to the extent to which the philosophy of the lobbyist's interest group coincides with that of the legislative body on lobbying effectiveness.¹¹

Becker used as the independent variables what he termed the intra and extra personal factors of the lobbyists. These factors include the training experience, background knowledge, the organizational context and the philosophical position of the interest group they represent. Questionnaires were sent to the 1979 Indiana General Assembly. Personal Interviews were conducted with the significant educators and educationally-related lobbyists active in the session. The legislators were asked to identify five lobbyists whom they believed were most effective for their particular interest group in activities affecting public education and to indicate what they considered were the most important factors that determined the effectiveness of educational lobbyists. Point biserial correlation was used to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables.¹²

Conclusions were drawn from Becker's research including: (1) persons are perceived by legislators as effective lobbyists when they are honest, candid, accurate with facts and who have a good rapport with legislators; (2) lobbyists who represent an organization whose philosophical orientation is similar to the legislators are perceived as being more effective than lobbyists whose organizational philosophical orientation is different than the legislators; (3) full time lobbyists who make themselves available to the legislators are perceived as more effective

¹¹ Ibid., p.4313-A.

¹² Ibid., p.4131-A.

than those lobbyists who only work part-time; (4) a lobbyist who has a wide variety of contacts with legislators is considered helpful; and lastly, (5) a lobbyist is more effective if he/she is bipartisan.¹³

The purpose of a study by Gaston¹⁴ was to survey the members of the 1981 Alabama Legislature to determine the extent of the influence the educational lobbyists have on funding to four-year universities. Gaston utilized a questionnaire which was sent to Senators and Representatives to gather data. The questions asked related to legislators' perceptions of their attitudes toward the budget process, methods of contacts used by lobbyists which are most effective and the techniques utilized by lobbyists who are the most influential in affecting a legislator's voting behavior regarding appropriations to four-year universities. Seventy-seven (77%) percent of the legislators returned the survey. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was the statistical method used for analyzing the data. The conclusions derived from the dissertation included:

1. Educational lobbyists could exert greater influence on the legislators related to funding four-year universities if their attention were concentrated on the entire legislature rather than a select few.
2. University presidents and close personal friends of legislators could enhance the likelihood of receiving funding if they became more involved in lobbying efforts to increase funding.

¹³ Ibid., p.4313-A.

¹⁴ Gaston, Donna Robertson, An Assessment of the Influence by Lobbyists on Appropriation by the Alabama Legislature to Public Four-Year Universities in Alabama. (ED.D. Dissertation, The University of Alabama, 1982), Dissertation Abstracts Internationl 43 (May, 1982), p.1365-A.

3. Timing rather than the number of contacts by lobbyists can be more productive in influencing legislators.
4. Recognizing previous support by individual legislators can be translated into future assistance by lobbyists.
5. Legislators respond more favorably to direct contact than to other lobbying techniques.¹⁵

The Becker¹⁶ and Gaston¹⁷ studies have concluded that the use of communication techniques are key to being effective lobbyists. Honesty, accuracy and candidness are important communication skills in the view of legislators. A study by Dirks¹⁸ also stated that in order for superintendents to be effective in legislative politics, they must communicate with their legislators. His study further indicated that personal communication is the most effective method. Lobbyists who are visible and accessible to a wide variety of legislators are considered more effective lobbyists than those lobbyists who have a few contacts and work part-time. This finding was also derived in a study by William Reid Root.¹⁹ This study attempted to identify which sources of information about higher education were used by legislators in a sample of twenty states chosen from the

¹⁵ Ibid., p.1365-A.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.4313-A.

¹⁷ Gaston, An Assessment of the Influence by Lobbyists on Appropriation by the Alabama Legislature to Public Four Year Universities in Alabama, p.1365-A.

¹⁸ A.W. Dirks, Accountability and the Politics of Education, ERIC ED 216 423 82.

¹⁹ Root, William Reid, Perceptions of State Legislators and Designated Legislative Representatives About Information Sources Pertaining to Higher Education, (ED.D Dissertation, Indiana University, 1983) 44 (April, 1983) 1003.

ten Federal regions established by the United States Office of Management and Budget. Similar to the findings cited above, the findings from this study revealed that legislators preferred not to receive information that was not personally communicated.

In 1972, a study was conducted by Longlois²⁰ to determine how and by whom decisions were made concerning educational legislation in New Jersey. The study was designed to be exploratory. The relationship between twenty legislators during the 1970-71 legislative session and eight (8) spokesmen representing four (4) major interest groups: New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey School Board Association (NJSBA), and the New Jersey State Department of Education, were determined by scrutinizing three major educational issues confronting the 194th Legislature. Newspaper reporters selected the issues to be studied. Case studies were used as the means to report the actions of interest groups, legislators and lobbyists. The conclusions of Langois' study were presented in the form of a posteriori hypothesis. One of the conclusions derived from the study was that the legislators welcome interest groups because they need the information and the data organizations are able to provide. Legislators prefer specific lobbying associations over other associations. The preferred associations appear to provide legislators with supplemental staff as well as information when needed.

The NJEA is the strongest and most influential educational interest group in New Jersey because of its largeness, its united and intensively concerned member-

²⁰ Langlois, Donald Earnest, The Politics of Education in New Jersey. A Study of Legislator Behavior and Four Major Interest Groups, (ED.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1972), Dissertation Abstracts International 33 (August, 1972) p.4010-A.

ship, its considerable financial resources, its electoral influence and its effective leadership. The data also indicated that legislators who are teachers introduce, support and vote for educational bills more often than do other legislators. Langlois' study implied that the New Jersey Association of School Administrators were obscure because they are not well known among legislators. He recommended that they will have to take more initiative if they want to become more visible and influential. This present dissertation is an attempt to determine whether Illinois legislators who serve on the education committees perceive the Illinois Association of School Administrators lobbyists as a reliable source of information.²¹

Education lobbies in the Pennsylvania State Legislature were studied by Lutz and Hess²² in 1982. They surveyed the Pennsylvania legislators to examine their attitudes about educational bills, educational lobbies and their influence, effective lobbying characteristics and the amount of influence exerted by other legislators, legislative staff and official party policies. The data obtained from the survey and an analysis of the voting patterns derived guidelines for educational lobbyists and information regarding influence processes. The guidelines which were listed are: (1) keep up political lobbying and support nonpartisans; (2) lobbying the chairman, members and staff of the Education and Appropriations Committees; (3) working continuously with the lobbies' grassroots constituencies; and (4) supplying accurate information.

²¹ Ibid., p.4010-A.

²² Lutz, Frank W. and Hess, Paula K., Education Lobbies in the Pennsylvania State Legislature, ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 214 251, (1982).

Two guidelines were yielded from participant observation research from 1979 through 1981 on the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators. These guidelines are: (1) lobbying should be continuous instead of concentrated on just one bill; and (2) lobbying should be quiet and not boastful.

Lutz' and Hess' conclusions were similar to conclusions from Becker's study. Both studies discovered that effective lobbyists are honest, candid, accurate with facts and are nonpartisan.

The purpose of a study by Athas²³ was to identify five major statewide educational organizations in Illinois and to research to what degree they become involved in the political process on behalf of their membership. The primary source of data collected was the focus interview process, with predominantly instructive questions. Additionally, Athas reviewed organizational tables, job descriptions, legislative programs and political handbooks. Her study concluded that five selected organizations are involved in the political process in Illinois. Athas' study derived the following conclusions:

1. All five organizations are cognizant of and are involved in the political process in Illinois. There is a wide variation of involvement and sophistication that exists between the organizations.
2. Educators have organized a united approach to influencing state education matters through their organizations. The effectiveness of the organization is dependent upon whether or not the organization participates

²³ Athas, Elaine Sikokis, The Politics of Education in Illinois. A Study of Political Action Programs of Major Educational Organizations, Doctoral Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago (1980).

in political activities and accommodates divergent membership demands.

3. The legislature was the site of resolution of the problems for the intra-professional feuds over roles and controls of education in Illinois during the 1970's.

4. The main issue which has forced educators to become more aware of and involved in political techniques is collective bargaining.

5. Educational organizations are still relatively naive politically.

6. Issues determine political strength in education instead of political strength determining issues.

7. All five (5) organizations have reached the level of political sophistication needed to decipher the intent of a piece of legislation.

8. The five organizations studied must assess the feasibility of remaining free of a formed political action program inasmuch as the future of education may continue to be determined in the legislature.²⁴

A recommendation made in Athas' study was reinforced in a study by Dirks in 1982. Both authors recommend that coalitions be formed among education groups. For instance, Athas states that the purpose of the formulation of coalitions would be to "coalesce the political and professional strengths of the five major educational organizations to work for the mutual benefit of education."²⁵

The data derived from the Athas and Gaston studies indirectly imply the lack of involvement by administrators in the political process. For instance, the Athas study indirectly implied that historically superintendents have not been

²⁴ Ibid., pp.274-288.

²⁵ Ibid., pp.291-297.

extremely active lobbyists. They did not become politically active until the issue of collective bargaining forced their involvement in the political arena. There is evidence that perhaps they are not extremely active today. The data derived from the Athas study indicated that the Illinois Association of School Administrators is not as politically active as other education associations."²⁶ Also, the Gaston study noted that legislators believe the university president's involvement in the political process could enhance the opportunities for receiving funding.²⁷ This comment indirectly implies that in the views of these legislators, university administrators are not active in lobbying for funding.

The conclusions of all studies thus far have revealed that educational lobbyists have some degree of influence on the voting behavior of legislators. To what degree lobbyists influence the voting behavior still remains unknown. However, a study by Harrington²⁸ in 1976 revealed that the frequency of contacts with education lobbyists revealed the fewest number of significant relationships that affected the decision-making process of the Education Committee was with legislators. This research was designed to assess factors that affected the decision-making process of education members who served in the Connecticut General Assembly during the period from 1968 to 1984. The study examined the

²⁶ Ibid., p.292-299.

²⁷ Gaston, An Assessment of the Influence by Lobbyists on Appropriations by the Alabama Legislature to Public Four Year Universities in Alabama, p.1365-A.

²⁸ Harrington, John Maurice, An Analysis of Factors Affecting Legislator's Decisions Regarding Education Legislation, (ED.D Dissertation, The University of Connecticut, 1976).

relationship between: (1) the background, political and personal characteristics of the legislators; (2) their frequency of contacts with education lobbyists; (3) their perceived sources of influence; and (4) sources of information used by the committee members. The relationship between party affiliation and legislative district proved to be the only independent variables that produced significant data relative to the frequency of the contacts. To obtain the information necessary, the researcher used the focused questionnaire survey method. Relations were posited in the form of thirty null-hypotheses which were accepted or rejected on the basis of available significant data.

An article written by Williams²⁹ in 1975 cited a study conducted by Campbell and others at Ohio State University entitled, "State Policy Making for Public Schools. A Comparative Analysis." The premise of the study was that educational policy is born from and thrives on politics. The data derived from the study revealed that of the education associations, teacher associations are ranked as the most influential at the state level. School board associations are ranked second. Administration groups are ranked third. Teacher federations, where they exist, rank last.

The quality of public education in the United States is related to the ability of school leaders to influence the political systems within which the schools function. According to Williams,³⁰ too much credence was placed on the axiom

²⁹ Williams, Fred D., Working Effectively With State Legislators, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 108 348 (1975).

³⁰ Ibid., p.3.

that education and politics do not mix. Consequently, in his view, educators have abhorred the terms "politics" and "politicians." State associations of school administrators he believes are fast becoming, "educational planets in their own rights and not satellites of state education associations."³¹ He maintains that administrators cannot afford to leave the legislative action to associations. Administrators must become active participants. The purpose of his article was to make recommendations to superintendents as to how they may become more effective practitioners in the area of influencing legislative bodies. He suggested that superintendents establish an effective communication network with legislators. Superintendents need to become skilled communicators. Williams believes that a face-to-face, one-to-one approach is more effective than the written letter or telephone when communicating with a legislator.³²

Similarly to the ideas stated by Williams, the implications of a study by Richard Hartley and Ron Koser³³ determined that the school administrator has a role to fulfill in keeping the community aware of needs, programs and problems. Communication lines between educational interest groups and the legislators often need to be developed, maintained and used. The results from the study further implied that school administrators need to keep abreast of actions of the elected representatives. They maintained that this spokesman should provide both positive

³¹ Ibid., p.8.

³² Ibid., pp.9-10.

³³ Hatley, Richard and Koser, Ron, *Legislator Characteristics, Attitudes and Constituencies as Predictors of Education Legislation*, ERIC, ED 137 935 (1977).

and negative feedback to the districts' legislators. The views maintained by Williams that superintendents have been politically inactive have been verified from the data derived in studies by Moore,³⁴ DePree³⁵ and Lehman.³⁶ Moore sent questionnaires to the members of Colorado's State Legislature and all public school superintendents in the State of Colorado which contained statements concerned with the political climate in the State of Colorado and the political role of the school superintendent in state level educational decision-making. The data suggested the following conclusions:

1. School superintendents do not have a basic understanding of the political climate in the State of Colorado as perceived by state legislators.
2. The political actions of school superintendents concerning state level education decision-making often are not being interpreted by state legislators as school superintendents intended.
3. Both state legislators and school superintendents perceive the way superintendents should perform in state level educational decision-making in the same way a majority of the time.
4. School superintendents frequently do not perform their political role in a way they themselves and their peers consider to be effective.
5. State legislators view school superintendents' political efforts as frequently being ineffective to legislators' decisions.

³⁴ Moore, Jack Bryan, A Study of the Local School Superintendent's Political Role in State Level Educational Decision Making, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado (1970), p.106.

³⁵ Lehman, Lloyd W., Educational Legislation in Illinois, An Analysis of the Activities of School Superintendents in Cook County, Doctoral Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago (1978).

³⁶ DePree, Kenneth R., Michigan Public School Superintendents' Understanding of and Participation in the Legislative Policy-Making Process, Doctoral Dissertation, Michigan State University (1971).

6. Age and years in position of respondents have little or no relationship to their perceptions concerning the political climate in the State of Colorado and the school superintendents' political role in state level educational decision making.³⁷

DePree³⁸ states that Michigan school superintendents are deficit in their understanding of the policy-making process in the state legislature. He further states that superintendents are not highly organized or systematic in their efforts to influence educational legislation. Many superintendents make little use of the various methods and tactics available and those they used were indirect. Lastly, according to DePree's research, the legislators perceived the superintendents as making little use of the various tactics and techniques in an effort to inform and influence them regarding educational legislation.

Similarly, Lehman³⁹ researched the roles of school administrators to determine their legislative activities relative to the growing effects educational legislation make on their local responsibilities. This study specifically analyzed superintendents' involvement in the legislative decision-making process, superintendent expectations of available and potentially available mechanisms for information delivery, participation in the legislative process and superintendent percep-

³⁷ Moore, A Study of the Local School Superintendent's Political Role in State Level Educational Decision Making, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado (1970), p.106.

³⁸ DePree, Michigan Public School Superintendents' Understanding of and Participation in the Legislative Policy-Making Process, Doctoral Dissertation, Michigan State University (1971), pp.140-165.

³⁹ Lehman, Educational Legislation in Illinois, An Analysis of the Activities of School Superintendents in Cook County, Doctoral Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago (1978), pp.187-201.



tions of their political responsibilities within the role of superintendent. Lehman concludes that superintendents are improving their political astuteness because they are dissatisfied with the present system for delivery of information regarding proposed educational legislation. The following conclusions were made:

1. Superintendents are inactive in education associations;
2. Superintendents desire training to increase their effectiveness in the state legislative process; and
3. The superintendents' role now includes responsibility for the awareness of proposed educational legislation.

Dunkin⁴⁰ in 1974 studied the opinions of selected Iowa school superintendents and lay persons about the political role of Iowa superintendents in order to develop a political role model. He studied opinions about what they ought to do as well as what they actually did in their political role. He concludes:

1. Enrollment size served by a superintendent has little relationship to the opinion expressed by superintendents regarding their political roles with state legislators.
2. A comparison of superintendents' opinions on the ought to/did do dichotomy in political roles indicated there was significantly less done in political roles than superintendents thought they should do.
3. There is no association between the opinions on importance of an issue and the opinions on having made an optimum number of contacts with legislators on the issue.
4. Lay person respondents paralleled the opinions of the superintendents.

⁴⁰ Dunkin, Orvill J., The School Superintendent's Political Role With State Legislators Representing the Local District, Ph.D. Dissertation, Iowa State University (1974), Dissertation Abstracts International 35 (May, 1974), p.2572-A.

The studies reviewed thus far have implied that superintendents need to become active in the legislative process. The findings of a study by Robert Allen Gemar⁴¹ revealed the urgency for the need of superintendents to become involved in the legislative process. The study found that: (1) educational leaders held few common visions about the future of education, and (2) superintendents had a significantly different assumption about the purpose of education than did legislators. Additionally, superintendents least often ranked issues identically with one of the other groups such as state legislators and state departments of education officials in a study researched by Dorothy Ratliff Schnell.⁴² The purpose of her study was to determine those issues perceived as being most critical relative to the public school system of Alabama and to determine whether there was a significant difference in the perceptions of these groups. The legislators most frequently ranked issues identically with one of the other groups of respondents. These studies implied that the differences in how superintendents and legislators view the purpose of education could account for laws that are incongruent with how schools are administered.

In summary, it is apparent from the literature that there is a need for superintendents to become involved in the legislative process especially when laws are formulated by legislators that must be implemented at the local school district levels. The literature also implies that superintendents remain inactive in the

⁴¹ Gemar, Robert Allen, The Future of Education in the Year 1995--Analysis of the Assumptions, Concepts, and Visions of Administrators and Legislators, ED.D. Dissertation, University of LaVerne (1983), 44 (January, 1983), p.27.

⁴² Schnell, Dorothy Ratliff, Identification of the Most Critical Issues Facing Alabama's Public School System as Perceived by Educators and State Legislators, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Mississippi (1981), 42 (February, 1981), p.494-A.

legislative process even though they believe they ought to become active. Superintendents inaction could account for laws that are incongruent with how schools are administered because they are not communicating their visions about education with legislators.

A comment made by Marc Jerome Sosne⁴³ captures the essence of what is needed if superintendents are going to become effective in education legislation policy making. He remarks:

As educators better understand the importance between politics and education, the more they will be able to influence the future of their profession. The amount of influence educators can have in determining the future of public education depends on how politically astute they are, how much effort they are willing to expend, and how they go about entering into the political process.

Other persons with whom the legislators on the Education Committees rely on, as sources of information include fellow legislators, State Board of Education staff and persons who testify at committee hearings. The following Section will review the literature that relates to the interaction that exists among the legislators and these persons.

Legislative Colleagues

Colleagues have an influence on the behavior of state legislators according to David R. Berman.⁴⁴ This type of influence is manifested in cue-taking which is a process that occurs when an individual accepts advice on a legislative matter

⁴³ Sosne, Marc Jerome, State Politics and Educational Legislation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1979), p.124.

⁴⁴ Berman, D.R., State and Local Politics, Holbrook Press, Boston (1978), pp.117-118.

from a fellow legislator who is perceived to be a friend, an expert on a particular policy or a leader. Thus, legislators rely on other legislators for policy advice. The results of research conducted by John Wahlke and Leroy Ferguson⁴⁵ have determined that not only do legislators depend on fellow legislators for policy advice but they also behave according to the informal rules of the legislature so that they do not become the victim of sanctions imposed upon them by their co-workers. The underlying premise of the one informal rule is that in order for legislators to justify a negative vote "on the merits," they have to state their understanding of the bill, which in turn permits their proponents to correct any misunderstanding of it. This informal rule is an attempt for legislators not to kill a bill because of a conflict of personality.

On legislative matters, Berman stated that legislators seek advice from legislative party leaders. One reason why legislators may seek advice from party leaders has been described by Robert S. Lorch⁴⁶ as the Iron Law of Oligarchy, a theory which postulates that all governments and organizations are run by a few; to that of party leadership. In his view, party leaders are influential in determining policy. The views and positions of party leadership have an influence over their legislative colleagues. This law does not mean that the same few are running all organizations or are influencing all public policies. As different leaders come forward to exert their role a different sets of issues surface.

According to the previously cited studies, colleagues have an influence on legislators' actions. They behave in the legislature according to informal rules so

⁴⁵ Wahlke, John C. and Ferguson, Leroy C., Rules of the Game, in John C. Wahlke et al., The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior, New York: John Wiley & Sons (1962) p.154.

⁴⁶ Lorch, Robert S., State and Local Politics: The Great Entanglements, Prentice-Hall, Inc. (1986), pp.98-102.

as to avoid being ostracized by fellow legislators. Additionally, legislators seek advice from their legislative friends and party leaders. The literature relating to the sources legislators utilize when needing information pertaining to educational issues also verify the fact that legislators seek advice from fellow legislators.

Sally Keiser Boese⁴⁷ attempted to identify environmental factors that are operative in shaping the perceptions of Virginia legislators on education issues and to assess the perceived relative influence of the factors identified. The interviews were conducted with the selected members of the standing education committees of the 1979 Virginia General Assembly. The environmental factors which were selected for analysis included, value systems or personal beliefs regarding education, economic factors, legal factors, political factors and historical factors. The data revealed that the opinions of other legislators have a moderate influence in shaping the perceptions of Virginia legislators on education issues. Personal beliefs, economic considerations and legal factors exerted the strongest influence in shaping the perceptions of Virginia legislators on education issues. Other conclusions revealed:

- Legislators' decisions are not frequently made on the basis of solid information and on an objective analysis of the issue.
- Constituents have a moderate influence in shaping the perception of Virginia legislators on education.
- Party affiliation and historical factors are the least influential in shaping legislators' perceptions on educational issues.

⁴⁷ Boese, Sally Keiser, The Shaping of Political Behavior: A Study of Policy Determinants in the Virginia Legislators, ED.D. Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1979) 40 (September, 1979), p.4815-A.

Harrington's study⁴⁸ revealed that legislators most often turned to colleagues, particularly the persons chairing the Education Committee. He stated that a substantial percentage of legislators considered colleagues as an influential factor affecting their decision regarding education legislation. However, unlike the data revealed in the Boese study, party affiliation was influential, at least indirectly, in shaping legislators' perceptions on educational issues. Party affiliation proved to be the only independent variable that provided significant data relative to the frequency of the contacts.

Other studies revealed that fellow legislators appear to be an influential source of educational information for state legislators. The data derived from the William Reid Roots study⁴⁹ revealed that when the results of the frequency, reliability and influence rating scales were compared, legislators ranked politically based sources of information higher than other sources. Similarly, fellow legislators appeared to be the most influential source of educational information for Idaho state legislators according to Betty Turner's⁵⁰ research. These were the floor leaders, party leaders, or chairmen and members of Education or Joint Finance and Appropriations Committees. The rank order of mean percentages of source-initiated contacts showed that fellow legislators were a leading source.

The Governor of North Carolina was deemed the central figure in the process which determined the outcome of an education bill in Marc Jerome Sosne's⁵¹ research in 1979. His research was a case study that examined a piece of

⁴⁸ Harrington, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Root, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Turner, Betty Pacatte, Sources of Influence on Educational Decisions of the First Regular Session of the 43rd Legislature of the State of Idaho, Ed.D. Dissertation University of Idaho (1976) 37-A (November, 1976), p.3330-A.

⁵¹ Sosne, Marc Jerome, State Politics and Educational Legislation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1979), p.124.

educational legislation from its conception, through its journey in the North Carolina House of Representatives until its passage into law.

The data revealed that the governor proposed the legislation, chose the representatives who would introduce and sponsor the bill and pushed the bill through the political process until its passage into law. The North Carolina Association of Educators had little impact on the final outcome of the process.

It appears from the studies reviewed that fellow legislators are important sources of information for state legislators. The data revealed that when they were ranked against other sources, legislators most often ranked the highest. The only factors that ranked higher than fellow legislators were personal beliefs, economic considerations and legal factors.

MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES

The data from the Harrington⁵² and Turner⁵³ studies revealed that legislators use the State Department of Education staff as sources of information. For instance, the Turner study revealed that State Board of Education staff in Idaho ranked among the five leading sources of legislator-initiated contacts. A purpose of her study was to determine which sources were most frequently contacted by the forty-three legislators of the State of Idaho. Harrington's study revealed that the outside source accorded the greatest value as a source of information proved to be the State Department of Education. His research was designed to access factors that affected the decision-making process of Education Committee members who served in the Connecticut General Assembly during the period from 1968 to 1974.

⁵² Harrington, op. cit.

⁵³ Turner, op. cit.

The Turner study revealed that individual citizens rank among the five (5) leading sources of legislator-initiated contacts. These data were obtained through a questionnaire survey method where the legislators were asked to reveal the sources of information they utilized for eleven education-related bills that passed, failed or were otherwise processed in the 1975 regular session.

The intent of this literature review was to reveal the conclusions from the data of studies which examined various factors of those groups of individuals/groups who are engaged in the policy-making process for education by virtue of their communication with the members of the Education Committees.

CHAPTER 3

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This Chapter includes a presentation of data. Described below is a summation of how the data are reported.

The structure of the presentation of data was organized according to major topical areas which include:

- Section I - Communications Initiated by Legislators to Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators.
- Section II - Communications Initiated by Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators.
- Section III - Lack of Communication Between Superintendents and Legislators.
- Section IV - Obstacles of Communications Between Superintendents and Legislators.
- Section V - Legislators' Perceptions of Other Sources They Utilize and Communicate With to Keep Current Regarding Educationally Related Issues.

The data derived from the surveys and interviews which deal with the appropriate topic are included in that Section. Whenever the data are presented, a reference is made as to the source it was obtained from--survey or interview. Tables, charts and graphs are included to display the results where appropriate.

The purpose of the survey was to serve as a frame of reference for the follow-up questions that were asked during the interviews and also to determine if the legislators qualified to be interviewed. The categories of questions were purposely designed to be general so that more specific probing questions could be asked later. To analyze the responses given would not be appropriate since they were so general. The pertinent information and responses obtained from the data will be analyzed with the interview data where it is appropriate.

The presentation includes an analysis of the data which were collected from the interviews. This presentation will be in the form of a narration which will focus on trends, patterns and unique situations. Wherever appropriate, quotes which were made by the respondents are cited. Extraneous information which was reported by the legislators has been deleted prior to this presentation, i.e., ramblings, personal discussions. If the interview responses were contrary to the data revealed from the survey, the contradictions will be noted. Likewise, data results from the survey and interviews which were in synchronization will also be noted when appropriate.

Background Information of Legislators

The purpose of obtaining this background information was only to serve as reference points for the interview questions and to make general comparisons of responses among the data collected, if appropriate. Another purpose was to determine if the legislators met with the established criteria to be interviewed. The criteria included: (1) serving on the Educator's Senate and House Elementary and Secondary Committee for one complete term; and (2) sponsored or co-sponsored an education bill after 1975.

The survey was sent to the thirty-nine legislators who are serving on the Illinois Legislative 84th General Assembly's House or Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Committees. A total of twenty-nine surveys (74.35%) were returned. One legislator returned two surveys. The results of both surveys were included in the tally because the second survey had more detail than the first. One legislator sent the survey back without any identification. Three of the surveys were completed in the presence of the investigator prior to the interview.

Part I of the survey was designed to obtain background information about the legislators. They were asked to identify their educational background, occupation, committees on which they are presently serving, political background, make-up of constituency and a list of education bills sponsored or co-sponsored. The intent of obtaining this information was not to be used for an in depth relationship study between the legislators' background and the data collected from the surveys.

The Senators represented a variety of professions including a pharmacist, businessman, grain farmer, lawyer, professor and school teacher. Two of the Senators who returned the survey have only high school educations. The remaining Senators have college degrees. Four of the Senators obtained graduate degrees. One of these Senators has a Masters of Education. Three of the Senators are lawyers. One of the attorneys received her LL.D. degree. Two of the Senators received Ph.D. degrees in the field of Political Science. One of these Senators is a Professor of Political Science who teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The members of the Illinois House of Representatives also appear to be an educated group. One Representative has a high school education. Four of the Representatives are or have been affiliated with the teaching profession. One Representative served as a School Board Member for eleven years. Another Representative was a former teacher and President of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. This Representative is currently a practicing attorney. Two Representatives are teachers who hold graduate degrees. One of the Representatives is a pharmacist.

The legislators are presently serving on a variety of committees. Each legislator serves on anywhere from three to six committees during a session. There

are seventeen standing Senate committees and thirty-two House committees. The membership of each standing committee is selected by the members of the Committee on Committees. The memberships of each chamber elect ten members, no more than six of whom shall be members of the same political party, to serve on the committee or committees.

The make-up of the legislator's constituency, geographical area and income level is extremely diverse and varied. The legislators represent areas including blue-collar workers, farmers, miners, professionals, business people and areas of high unemployment. Income levels also vary from extremely poor urban minorities, poor rural families, to extremely wealthy and white suburbanites.

One of the purposes of this dissertation was to establish whether legislators sponsored or initiated educational legislative reform bills because of the emergence of the "band wagon" of mass popular support and national attention on the status of education in the United States. However, due to the fact that the information provided by the legislators was vague, no in-depth analysis would be made. All the legislators did indicate that they were aware of the Nation at Risk Report. They stated that this Report was the impetus behind the educational reform movement. The reason legislators supported this Report was because of President Reagan's interest and public support of education. None of the legislators interviews give specific examples of the recommendations made in the Report.

I. COMMUNICATIONS INITIATED BY LEGISLATORS TO SUPERINTENDENTS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS.

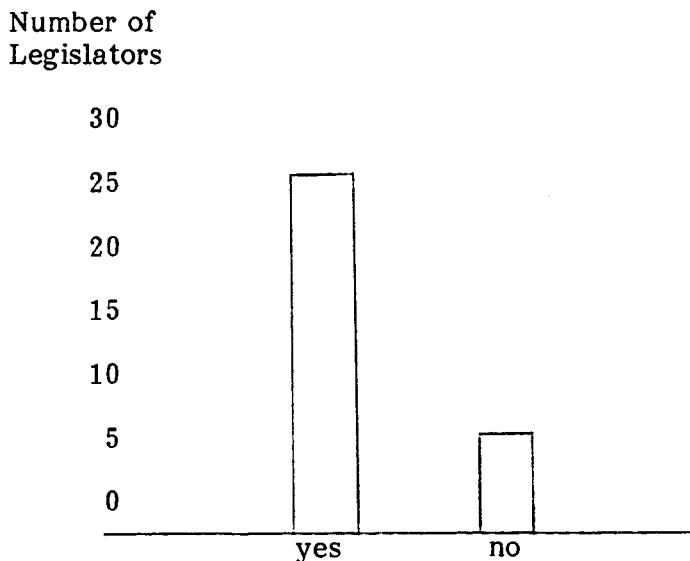
A. Legislators Who Initiate Contact as Perceived by Legislators.

1. Survey Data.

Table 1 displays the number of legislators who indicated that they initiate contact with their superintendents.

Table 1

LEGISLATORS WHO INITIATE CONTACT
AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS



Total Sample = 29

These data were obtained from the survey. According to the table, eighty-six (86%) percent of the legislators surveyed or twenty-five legislators believe they are initiating communications with their superintendents, while fourteen (14%) percent or four legislators stated that they do not initiate communications with legislators. One respondent indicated that he does not usually initiate contact with the superintendents from his district, but that he does keep them informed. This

legislator did not indicate how he kept superintendents informed. Of the other three, one legislator stated that he does not initiate contact during the legislative session to hear their views about educationally-related matters, but does keep his superintendents updated. Of the other three who indicated that they do not keep their superintendents informed, one legislator wrote "... is not my job to keep them informed. It is their job to find out." Another of these legislator's wrote, "I have only two superintendents in my district. I do not keep them informed about the status of individual bills unless they contact me or unless I see them at a meeting." The legislator who wrote that he has only two superintendents from his district clearly demonstrates his lack of awareness. There is no Senate district in Illinois which is represented by only two districts. It is obvious from this legislator's responses to the survey that he has little communication with his superintendents.

2. Interview Data.

The data derived from the interviews in reference to legislators initiating contacts with their superintendents are different from that of the survey. Twenty-nine legislators responded to the survey. Twenty-one legislators were interviewed. Of the twenty-one legislators interviewed who responded to the survey that they initiate contacts with superintendents only nine of these legislators indicated without any qualifications that they contact their superintendents. Twelve legislators expressed a different point of view when interviewed. For instance, of these twelve legislators, nine legislators stated that they do not initiate contact with superintendents but gave examples later in the interview which indicated that they do in fact initiate communications. These examples include writing letters, mailing newsletters and talking to them at various community functions. Two of these twelve legislators stated that they do not initiate contact while one

legislator did not respond to the question. Clearly, the data derived from the survey revealed a higher number of legislators who initiate contacts with their superintendents than the data derived from the interviews.

B. Leadership Who Initiate Contact.

Four of the twenty-one legislators fall into a special category. These legislators serve in leadership positions on the Education Committees either in the House of Representatives or the Senate. Leadership does have an extremely influential role in determining the bills that will pass out of Committee. Also, often leadership does influence the stand a party will take in reference to a bill. Because of their powerful positions on the Education Committee, these legislators hear from superintendents, education lobbying associations, teachers, school board members and parents throughout the state. Ironically, none of these four legislators indicated that they heard from the superintendents from the districts they represent during the past two years. Examples were given by each of these legislators throughout the interview citing their attempts by them trying to communicate with superintendents. However, it was unclear as to whether or not these attempts were made to initiate contact with superintendents from their districts. One of these legislators did state that he does not initiate contact with his superintendents because he is too busy. Each of these legislators did, however, clearly indicate that they initiate contact with the superintendents who they know and they are not necessarily the superintendents from their districts, but those that are highly visible in Springfield.

All of these legislators served on key positions on the Illinois Commission for the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. This body consists of twelve legislators and eight lay members and is chaired by a

Senate Education Committee member and a House Education Committee member. This Committee was created by a Senate Joint Resolution, a resolution introduced in the Senate, sponsored by the Senate Leadership, passed unanimously and brought over to the House of Representatives. Ten public hearings were conducted throughout the State. Public hearings were held in Springfield, Grayslake, Carbondale, Glen Ellyn, Moline, Chicago, Champaign, Homewood, Flossmoor and Rockford. Two hundred fifty people have participated in these statewide hearings by the Improvement Commissions.

1. Leadership (Legislator #1).

According to this legislator, whenever testimony was needed by a superintendent or when an educator is needed to serve on a committee, those educators who are active will be notified. For instance, this Committee received several studies about the problems of education. It was their role to analyze the reports. He formally solicited individual and organizational ideas for reform recommendations. The ideas which were presented as testimony by educational leaders were extremely crucial. The study by the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education began in August, 1983 and ended with a final report, "Excellence in the Making," in January, 1985. This report served as the basis for the educational reform package which was formulated by the 1985-1986 General Assembly. Those educators who presented testimony helped shape the package according to Legislator #1 because several of these committee members were influenced by their recommendations. He mentioned that he approached the superintendent he knew to participate in presenting testimony. He noted, "[t]he superintendents who get involved are the ones that are called upon when needed."

During the course of the year prior to the Educational Reform Packet being formalized, several meetings were held throughout the state. Citizens, as well as educators, were encouraged to present testimony about the problems with the educational system. Public notices were posted in the newspapers. When asked if superintendents were involved in the process, he stated that he approached the superintendents he knew to participate in the meetings. It became clear the legislators contact those superintendents who they personally know to get involved in the political process. These superintendents thus become key in shaping policy.

According to Legislator #1, it is important for superintendents to become extremely active in the "educational political process." He discussed this issue at length. Superintendents need to support legislators who are effective in education bill making. For instance, he mentioned that superintendents can contact their legislator about sponsoring a bill, but if they are "non-influential" legislators, the bill may never pass out of committee. Therefore, a superintendent needs to know whether the legislator representing his or her school district is an influential legislator in bill making. If the superintendent is pleased with the voting record and influence his or her legislator has in getting bills passed out of committee, then the superintendent should get involved in helping this person get re-elected.

This legislator stated that there are several means by which a superintendent can assist a legislator in getting re-elected. He mentioned that superintendents can call their legislator and mention that there are parents within their district who "would like to lend them a helping hand" in re-election. Another means by which a superintendent can be helpful to a legislator is by contributing money to his/her campaign or by helping him with his campaign. "Legislators are always thinking about re-election," he stated. "Superintendents need to be aware of the perks which influence legislators--money or votes," he continued. Legis-

lators will "listen" to the superintendent with whom they are friendly and who have helped them in their campaign.

(a) Insecurity Needs.

(1) Needs of Legislators: Maslow's Hierarchy.

Legislator #1 discussed at length the safety and security needs of legislators. He described Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In fact, throughout the interview a re-occurring theme emerged which reflected the legislators' insecurity needs. They expressed their concern about maintaining their position and to be re-elected. Legislators want to ensure their continued ability to provide for their physical needs while protecting their future. No indications were made as to whether this legislator communicates this information to his superintendents. If legislators are direct in asking for financial contributions or campaign help then they may appear to be greedy to their superintendents. These legislators may only be trying to protect their job. They need economic and emotional security. The data suggest, however, that for the most part superintendents remain uninvolved in assisting legislators with their campaign and/or re-election. These data will be discussed in a following section. In the one case where the superintendents assisted a legislator in his election and subsequent re-elections, he became an extremely active educational leader. This legislator sponsored and co-sponsored education bills which became law at the request of these superintendents.

As this legislator further described, not all legislators remain at the level of security and safety. In fact, another theme which emerged is that there are legislators who exuded confidence and assurance about their positions and did not display any insecurity about their re-elections. These legislators expressed a deep interest in making a significant contribution to the field of education as though they would be legislators for years to come. For instance, Legislator #1 described

his concerns about remediating the problems of the educational system through formulating educational reform legislation over a period of time. This legislator was confident that his position was sufficiently secure so that he had no need to worry about his influence or impact.

2. Leadership (Legislator #2).

This legislator stated that he does not initiate contact with superintendents because he is too busy. He is a member of several committees which take up much time. He made the following comment:

It is difficult for legislators to meet with their superintendents. There is no time. When we do talk to superintendents we have to explain everything. They do not keep current and abreast.

This second legislator gave an example in the course of the interview of how he chooses superintendents at random to call a meeting and explain the implications of proposed education bills which would be included in the Education Reform Packet. He felt that these superintendents now have a better understanding of the problems. When asked how he selected the superintendents described above, he maintained that he called the superintendents whom he knows. A theme which becomes evident is that the legislators who are serving in leadership positions contact the superintendent they know to present testimony, to seek information from about educational issues.

3. Leadership (Legislator #3).

Legislator #3 stated that he does contact his superintendents, and did say that he speaks to school groups about once a year. This legislator reiterated much of the same sentiment as Legislator #2 about the issue of time. He emphatically stated that legislators are extremely busy and do not have the time to initiate contacts with their superintendents as often as they should.

This legislator discussed at length how politics is education. According to

this legislator, every bill that is passed in Springfield affects the governance of education at the local level. He stated that superintendents must be extremely involved in the political process because at this time they remain inactive. In his opinion, superintendents must be astute not only in the understanding of the technicalities of how a bill is passed but also the pragmatics of how a bill passes through the chambers. He stated, "[w]e would love to have more superintendents who know the business formulate the bills which become law." This legislator indirectly implied that superintendents are naive about the political nature of education because of their uninvolvedness, especially during the year of educational reform.

4. Leadership (Legislator #4).

Legislator #4 stated that he has "regular" communications with a number of superintendents from his district. This legislator indicated that he is on a first name basis with approximately twenty of these superintendents. One superintendent in particular was mentioned by this legislator as being his "very close personal/professional friend." He has socialized with this superintendent on many occasions. This legislator described the professional nature of the relationship between this superintendent and himself as, "mutually beneficial." This superintendent who is a friend of this legislator and his superintendent friends were described as "helping" him get elected. The legislator in return has sponsored education bills.

The Iron Law of Oligarchy.

This legislator and the superintendents he allies himself with are very influential in educational legislation making. When asked to clarify what he meant by influential, he responded, "I sponsor many education bills in committee which are passed." The activity of these influential superintendents, who in the opinion

of this legislator are good lobbyists, is described as "a small company of activists." He agrees with the theory described by Lorch in Chapter Two which is the Iron Law of Oligarchy. They are "outstanding lobbyists" especially one particular superintendent. He maintains that a few active superintendents at the top are running and organizing the masses below who do not have the time or desire. In his opinion, many superintendents "choose to stay home and do nothing."

In addition, this legislator indicated that these superintendents work very closely with the Illinois State Board of Education's Superintendent. He mentioned that one particular superintendent visits the State Superintendent on a regular basis in Springfield. He was unaware of how often this superintendent makes his visits to the State office.

This legislator maintains close communication with those superintendents who are part of this clique. However, the newer superintendents who are outside this circle are not personally contacted by this legislator. He stated, "I have not gotten around to contacting these superintendents by phone."

Summary

This section analyzed the data derived from the survey and interviews concerning whether or not legislators perceive themselves as initiating contacts with superintendents. It became apparent that there are at least nine legislators who believe they initiate contact with superintendents. This number is smaller than the number indicated from the survey. Obviously, there are at least twelve legislators who serve on the Education Committees of the House and Senate who do not initiate contact with their superintendents. These legislators readily admitted that they did not initiate contact with superintendents even during the legislative

session when landmark educational reform legislation was being formulated. During that time when substantial educational issues were at hand, it would seem an ideal opportunity for legislators to initiate communications with their superintendents.

The data previously described indicated that there are at least nine legislators who claimed they initiate contact with their superintendents. The frequency for which these legislators contact their superintendents will be discussed.

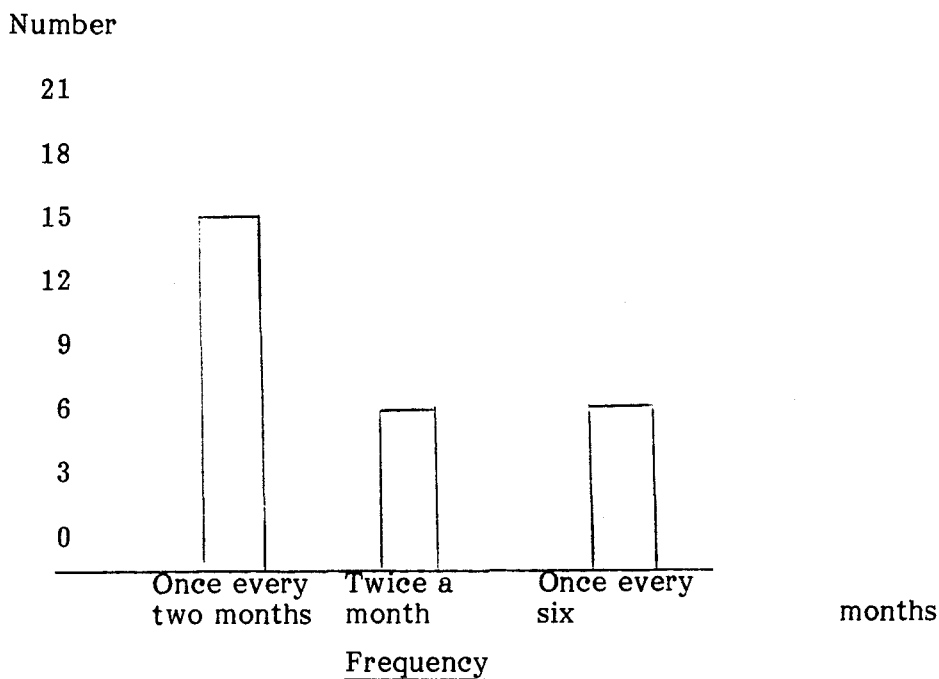
C. Frequency at Which Legislators Initiate Contact.

2. Survey Data.

Table 2 displays the data obtained from the survey. The total sample is twenty-five; however, three legislators responded by checking two categories.

Table 2

FREQUENCY AT WHICH LEGISLATORS
INITIATE CONTACT (SURVEY DATA)



Total Sample = 25

Of those respondents who indicated that they contact superintendents to hear their views about educationally-related issues, sixteen indicated that they contact their superintendents from their districts at least once every two months. Six stated that they contact superintendents at least twice a month and six indicated that they contact their superintendents at least once every six months. One respondent indicated that he contacts the superintendents in his district frequently while he is in session and only once every few months when out of session.

Another respondent indicated that he contacts one superintendent much more frequently than the other superintendents. In response to the frequency terms, one respondent indicated that the categories of frequency terms did not adequately reflect the contact he initiated with his superintendents. He clarified the frequency of contacts he initiates by writing on the survey, "I may talk to my school superintendents three times in one week. Then not talk to them again for several months."

Clearly, the data suggest that legislators believe they are initiating contacts with their superintendents. The data did not indicate whether these initiations are with one or more superintendents from their districts. A legislator could only contact one superintendent from his district once every few months and still indicate on the survey that he initiates contacts. The survey responses did not reflect the different number of superintendents who are contacted.

The frequency terms were also vague. As one legislator commented, the categories of frequency terms did not adequately reflect the contact legislators initiate. For instance, they may initiate contact several times at the end of a session and not at all the rest of the year.

2. Interview Data.

The same ten legislators who completed the survey and indicated that they initiate contacts with their superintendents at least once every two months gave contradictory answers when interviewed. None of these legislators stated that they initiate contact with superintendents on such a regular basis. An example of this contradiction is seen by one legislator who stated in the interview that he does not initiate contact with his superintendents, but he indicated on the survey that he initiates these contacts at least twice a month. Even though the frequency terms were vague, none of the legislators stated specifically just how often they initiate contacts. A pattern which did become clear, however, is that legislators contact those superintendents to whom they are friendly, even if these superintendents live outside of their districts.

D. Purposes of Communication.

The last two sections reported the data derived from both the survey and interviews pertaining to whether or not legislators initiate contacts with their superintendents concerning educationally-related issues and the frequency at which these contacts are initiated.

Part I of Chapter 3 is concerned with reporting and analyzing the data obtained from the surveys and interviews concerning only the communications initiated by legislators to superintendents as perceived by legislators. This next Section will reveal the purposes of these communications initiated by legislators. For the sake of organization, other sources utilized by legislators for the same purposes will be reported under Part 5. Comparisons will be made between these sources and superintendents in reference to the purposes of the legislators' initiation of communications under Part 5.

Table 3 highlights the purposes for which legislators use to initiate communication with superintendents.

Table 3

PURPOSES OF LEGISLATORS TO INITIATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS

Number of Legislators Utilizing Superintendents	22	6	10
Percent out of total sample of 29 who responded to survey	75%	21%	34%
	To Investigate the "Pros & Cons" of Education Bills that they may consider Sponsoring	To gather information about an Education Bill before it is voted upon in Committee	To gather special information about an Education Bill Before it is voted in Committee

When interviewed, only nine legislators indicated that they initiate communications with superintendents regardless of the purpose. However, when the same question was presented to the legislators in the form of a survey, twenty-five legislators responded positively. As previously discussed, these data represent a contradiction. Yet different points of view developed when legislators were asked to respond to the specific purposes where indicated. As Table 3 displays, a larger number of legislators indicated that they initiate communications when they want superintendents to investigate the "pros and cons" of education bills they may

consider sponsoring. This number is larger than the nine legislators who stated during the interview that they initiate contacts. Yet, this number is smaller than the twenty-five who reported on the survey that they initiate communications with their superintendents during a legislative session. More specifically, twenty-two legislators (75% of the total sample) when surveyed indicated that they contact superintendents to ask them to investigate the pros and cons of education bills that they may consider sponsoring.

When surveyed to determine specifically whether legislators contact superintendents to gather general information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee, only six legislators answered positively. As Table 3 portrays, this number represents less than fifty (50%) percent of the total sample survey. Six legislators represent only twenty-one (21%) percent of the total sample. This figure is even less than the nine legislators who indicated during the interview that they do communicate with their superintendents.

Table 3 displays the number of legislators who contact their superintendents and gather specific information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee. Ten legislators or thirty-four percent of the total sample utilize superintendents as sources of information to gather specific information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee.

The data derived from the survey concerning the purposes of the legislators' initiations of communications disclosed that at least twenty-three legislators do not utilize superintendents as sources to gather general information about education bills, nineteen legislators do not use superintendents as sources to gather specific information about an education bill and seven legislators do not utilize superintendents as sources to investigate the pros and cons of education bills that they may consider sponsoring.

During the time period at which these data were collected, major educational reform legislation was being formulated. Never before in the history of the Illinois General Assembly has such massive education reform been developed. These data do not reflect large numbers of legislators who utilized superintendents as sources of information. In fact, none of the legislators who responded to the three questions just cited indicated that superintendents are used as a sole source of information.

The Sections thus far reported the data pertaining to the number of legislators who initiate contact with superintendents and the purpose of their communications. This next Section will report and analyze the methods utilized by legislators to initiate these communications.

E. Methods Utilized by Legislators to Initiate Communications.

1. Personal Contact.

According to the survey data, twenty-two respondents indicated that they inform superintendents about the status of education bills through personal contact. These responses include seventy-six (76%) percent of the total sample of twenty-nine legislators. Of these twenty-two respondents, nine rely solely on personal contact to keep the superintendents informed. These legislators did not indicate how they keep their superintendents informed when they are extremely busy. State legislators apparently rely most heavily upon personal contact as a source of information from their superintendents. These data derived from the survey did not indicate the nature of these personal contacts.

More detailed information was gathered from these same legislators when they were interviewed. Of the twenty-two who were cited above as personally contacting their superintendents, eighteen were interviewed.

For purposes of organization and clarification, these responses will be summarized and presented according to category rather than individual responses.

(a) Educational Forums.

There are examples of two legislators who attempted to organize educational forums which school people could attend. One of these legislators sponsored two forums. The first forum was an attempt by the legislator to hold an open meeting where interested citizens, parents and school people could discuss school problems. The constituency on his mailing lists was sent copies of the invitation. Special invitations were sent to school board members and schools within his district. Approximately eight people attended the session. This legislator was very unhappy with the small turnout and attributed the attendance to a lack of interest on the part of school people. He indicated that no superintendents from his district attended the meeting. The second forum was attended by a much larger group. Over thirty-five people attended this session. One superintendent, who is a friend of this legislator, attended the session. The format of the second forum was that of a panel which was represented by parents, teachers, a principal and a superintendent. The topic being discussed was that of educational problems.

Many issues are unanswered and could have contributed to the low attendance. This legislator indicated that invitations were mailed to the school districts in his district. However, the meetings may have been insufficiently advertised. The time and location of the meetings could have been inconvenient for the people who wanted to attend. Also, the purpose of the meeting may not have been clearly defined.

(b) Community Functions.

Nine legislators indicated during the interview that they communicate with their superintendents whenever they see them at annual meetings, open houses, lunches, dinners, community functions, campaign functions or on the streets. Comments made by six different legislators include:

- "I hear my constituents' ideas when I talk to them during campaigns. I see them on the streets and I talk with them."
- "I am invited to annual gatherings to discuss legislation with my constituents."
- "I attend meetings. I get feedback from the people."
- "I talk to people, my constituency, whenever I see them."
- "I attend functions--dances, dinners, church. The people tell me their views."
- "I communicate with my school people when I see them on the streets."

As previously stated, legislators indicate that personal contact includes talking to constituents at meetings, luncheons, church and other social events. It would seem likely that personal contacts are intensified during the legislators' campaign for election. The conversations which occur, especially at social functions, could be superficial. The nature of communication which takes place between the legislators and superintendents at these functions must be analyzed for implications, albeit with speculation. This speculation, however, may be sufficiently on target to warrant care and caution on the part of the legislator. A legislator on the campaign trail may be hearing ideas from several people about many topics. During this time a legislator may hear a lot of citizens talk about what they believe ought to be done to solve education problems. Yet, one has to wonder how much depth is covered about any particular topic during these conversations. Also, everyone considers himself an expert in education and gives advice on how the problem should be solved. A legislator who is inundated with

people telling him their educational ideas during a campaign may remember the idea after he is elected, but may forget where the idea originated. A problem develops when a legislator acts on the solutions suggested by non-educators without analyzing the implications of these recommendations.

Legislators indicated that they get their ideas for sponsoring educational bills from their constituency. When asked whether their constituency includes educators, indirect answers were given. Therefore, in summary, legislators gather some of the information they act upon from citizens they talk to at campaign and social functions. They may act upon this information in committee but may not recall how this information was gathered. Some legislators may think that these ideas are representative of the educational community when in fact they may be ideas offered by a citizen on the street who believes he is an expert on education.

Perhaps a legislator is aware that it is a parent's group that wants a certain course of action to be taken in reference to an education issue. If this legislator is concerned about pleasing the largest number of citizens, because numbers equate to votes, then perhaps following the recommendations made by these people is the most popular and advantageous course of action to take. There are more parents than superintendents. One legislator states, "[t] here are too few superintendents. There are many more teachers and parents who vote." Additionally, several legislators indicated that they support teacher groups because they have a larger number of voting power than superintendents (to be discussed at length in a later section).

A legislator must be cautious when following the logic described above. The superintendents from his district may have a large network and influence the voting behavior of hundreds. One legislator states, "[a] small group of superinten-

dents that are organized can have influence way beyond the numbers." Most groups revolve around a small core of individuals who have the trust of the larger group. The core group must learn how to build coalitions and be able to draw on larger numbers at the appropriate time. The smallness of a group becomes a liability only if it remains small and/or is unable to deliver the votes.

The parent groups who expresses their concerns to the legislators and for whom the legislators supported legislation may not have been representative of all the parents, teachers, school board members and other concerned citizens. Therefore, a superintendent who has the ability to network and influence a larger number of people should make the legislator aware of this power in a non-threatening manner. A legislator, therefore, should be cautious in following a band wagon without checking the support this group holds. In fact, the people for whom a legislator supports may not even vote.

(c) Meetings.

Meetings can be a beneficial manner by which legislators and superintendents communicate their concerns about educationally-related issues. As previously cited, there are legislators who indicated that they scheduled meetings to ask superintendents their views about proposed education bills. One legislator, for instance, invited the superintendents from her district to brainstorm about education bills they feel should be sponsored as well as hearing their views about major school concerns such as school district consolidation, administrator recertification, teacher evaluation and minimum teacher's salary. Only one legislator did indicate that the purpose of these meetings is to shape education legislation. Specific proposed bills were discussed in reference to the side effects that could occur in the district. This forum was an attempt to bring together

legislators and superintendents as equal collaborators to shape educational legislation. The actual legislation that was sponsored as a result of this meeting is unknown. The other type of meetings that appeared to take place are more informative in nature. There are legislators who are invited to attend meetings sponsored by school districts. They are usually asked to describe the major bills that are up for a vote in committee. The legislators' roles in these situations are to inform their constituency about current education legislation. However, it does not appear as if the educators are analyzing the impact of the bills at these meetings. In fact, one legislator states that she needs to educate her superintendents about the impact and side effects of proposed bills. She claimed that superintendents for the most part do not analyze the consequences. According to this legislator they need to be taught how to analyze. The legislator states that her background in the legal field was extremely instrumental in teaching her how to critique and analyze bills. Meetings are the optimum place to analyze the side effects of bills with the superintendents from her district.

Superintendents needs to listen extremely carefully at these meetings when a legislator attempts to inform them about education bills. Legislators need to receive feedback from the leaders in the educational field about the impact of a bill. For instance, one legislator indicates that when he is invited to a meeting by the school superintendent, he needs to do his homework because the educational constituents, which include superintendents "bombard him with pages and pages of amendments to a bill." The meeting becomes a forum for him to be "drilled." This situation is an extreme example of one school district which attempts to use the meeting as a forum to provide the legislator with an analysis of the impact of a bill. However, the severity of the session previously described could threaten the

legislator rather than create a climate where he would want to contact the superintendent for feedback in the future. On the other hand, such a session could make the legislator aware of side effects which he may not have thought about when a bill was read. This method is one manner by which a legislator is made accountable to his educational constituents.

Summary

Legislators rely on personal contact to keep their superintendents informed about the status of education bills. Twenty-two legislators indicated that they rely on this method to keep their superintendents updated. Other methods that legislators use to keep their superintendents updated were indicated. They include written correspondence, newsletter mailings, radio, television and newspapers.

2. Telephone.

The survey data revealed that twenty legislators telephone their superintendents to keep them updated about education legislative issues. This number represented sixty-nine (69%) percent of the total sample. During the interview, only six legislators indicated that they telephone their superintendents. In each instance, these legislators indicated that they personally knew their superintendents. In fact, one legislator mentioned that he calls his "buddy" when he needs specific information about an education bill. This particular superintendent lives outside of this legislator's district. The telephone is used as a means of convenience according to these legislators. As one legislator states, "you can accomplish a lot while saving time," when describing why he uses the telephone to communicate with his superintendents.

3. Radio.

Only one legislator indicated, and these data were obtained from the interview, that he relies on the radio to communicate his views to his constituency.

He stated during the interview that he is a regular guest on a local radio show. He did not indicate on the survey that he relied on the radio for communication purposes. According to this legislator, the audience can call the station and ask the legislator questions. All questions are screened by the host and are repeated to the legislator; therefore, he never hears the questions from the audience. According to this legislator, educational issues were raised on only two occasions. The first caller asked the legislator his views about homosexuals teaching children, while the second telephone caller complained about the Pulaski federal holiday.

This legislator is a Senator from a rural community. In this day of mass media--television, cable, radio and newspapers--it was surprising that only one legislator mentioned that he utilizes the radio to communicate his views. Perhaps this legislator, who represents small rural communities, has easier access to the media than those legislators representing large urban districts. In small towns, there is not as much major breaking news as there is in large cities; therefore, the media has more time to give to their elected officials. Other legislators may have just forgotten to mention that they utilize the news media to communicate their views. Legislators may, in fact, receive coverage on the radio, television or even in newspapers, but in their minds these media do not allow for personal exchanges and therefore were not considered as a means of communications with their superintendents.

4. Letter Writing.

The survey indicated that fifteen legislators write letters as the method to communicate with superintendents. This number reflects fifty-two (52%) percent of the total sample.

In the course of the interview, five legislators indicated that they have summarized educational bills that are up for a vote in committee and ask for an

opinion from their superintendents by writing them and asking for a response. According to one legislator, "[o]nly one-half respond by writing back." One legislator indicated that on one occasion, he summarized a series of education bills after they were passed and sent this information to the school districts in his area. He stated that, "only a handful responded to this summary." When asked why he did not send this information on a regular basis, the legislator mentioned that it took a lot of time and he was discouraged by the response. Another legislator did indicate that letter writing in her district is "mutual." She states that throughout the year she receives letters from the superintendents, about once every three weeks or every other week, especially when the legislators are in session. This legislator indicates that she responds to all the letters she receives.

The fourth legislator initiates contacts with his superintendents by sending memos and requesting a response. For instance, this legislator stated that he will outline a proposed bill and ask how the bill will affect the superintendents' district. When asked how often he writes his superintendents memos, he responded, "only if there is a controversial bill." This remark was contradictory to what he indicated on the survey. He stated that he initiates contacts with superintendents from his district about once every two months either by writing to them or seeing them. When asked what kind of personal contact he includes in this category, he mentioned general meetings at which he may be speaking. According to this legislator, "bills usually deal with specific problems that are crisis related," and it is then that he will write his superintendents.

The fifth legislator initiates communications with all the superintendents in his district by sending them "written correspondences at selected times." He states, "I send them position papers about specific bills. I tell them that I represent the views of school boards, school administrators and the community.

These letters are impersonal." When asked what he meant by "at selected times," he responded by saying, "near the end of the session before bills are voted upon." To clarify what he meant when he said that he represents the views of school superintendents, school administrators and the community, he states, "I back up ED/RED." This superintendent clearly stated that he is pro-administration in his legislative views. Throughout the interview, he made remarks concerning his loyalties to the education lobbying groups which represent the North Suburban group of superintendents. He believes that his district highly values education and that they support this particular group. He comments that he backs the community. In his opinion, the community represents the views of ED/RED. He stated that the community and ED/RED as one philosophical group and when he supports ED/RED he supports the community. No mention was made on his views of teachers.

This legislator answers all letters that he receives from superintendents. He encourages superintendents to write him. If he needs more in-depth information to respond adequately to a letter, he calls up his superintendent friend and asks for assistance. On a "limited occasion," this legislator stated that he writes all his school people about the status of educational bills. He mentioned that he writes these letters once a session. When asked to explain the difference between this type of written correspondence to the letters he writes to clarify his position about education bills, he mentioned that the former correspondence is an overview highlighting all the bills that were passed in the General Assembly.

The type of letters sent by legislators to superintendents is an indication that they want the communication process to be opened up. Due to the fact that such little communication occurs between the superintendents and legislators, any effort by the legislators may be an avenue of communication between the two

groups. The superintendent has an opportunity to respond to these letters in one fashion or another. Whether or not these letters appear to be mass produced, the superintendent can use this approach as an opportunity to open up the communication process.

The information contained in the letter may or may not be substantive in nature. Perhaps the legislator only reworded the analysis of the bill made by the legislative party staffer. It is the responsibility of the superintendent to critically review and analyze the content of the information provided in the letter. A conversation between the superintendent and legislator may need to take place so that they can discuss the details and implications of a bill.

5. Newsletters.

Newsletters were not identified as a category within the questionnaire. Rather, this category was brought up by the legislators in the course of the interviews.

Seven legislators stated that they mail newsletters to all the registered voters in their districts. As these legislators said, newsletters highlight the major bills they sponsor. Their latest newsletters highlighted the major components of the educational reform package.

Newsletters from three different legislators were given to the author during the course of the interviews. These newsletters can be viewed as public relation tools. The newsletters highlighted their major legislative accomplishments. The newsletters contained articles highlighting bills they sponsored, information about the Illinois budget and positions about particular bills. These articles were not lengthy; they ranged anywhere from two hundred to four hundred words. They were written in simple language and did not include any analysis. Photos usually accompanied the articles. One newsletter contained articles about an educational

issue but was about another legislator's view about reform. The newsletters are mailed to constituents. Newsletters are usually written by a public relations person whose intent is to publicize the positive. They are not written as scholarly documents. These newsletters did not present the reader with an in-depth analysis of the side effects of a bill, the pros and cons of the bill or the legal, financial or social effects of the bill. However, superintendents can use the information contained in the newsletter as a frame of reference for opening the communication channel with their legislators. Superintendents could contact their legislators and ask for clarification about a position they read that their legislator took on an educational issue.

In summary, the newsletters could be used as devices to open up communication between the superintendents and legislators, in spite of the fact that the contents of the newsletters do not reflect major in-depth analysis of issues.

6. Newspapers.

One legislator indicated that he communicates his views to his constituency through the local newspapers. This category was not an option included in the survey form. Press releases highlighting major events are sent to the local papers. According to this legislator, several articles are highlighted with pictures and captions which read, "Senator co-sponsors [educational] [bill]." The chances of these articles being printed are exceptionally high because he lives in a small town where the newspapers are always looking for news. No other legislator indicated the he/she relies on either the newspaper or television to communicate views.

7. Combination of Methods.

Table 4 displays the comparison of the number of legislators who stated they utilize personal contact, telephone contact and written contact as a means to initiate communication with their superintendents about education legislative issues.

Table 4

METHODS OF COMMUNICATIONS
USED BY LEGISLATORS

	Personal Contact	Telephone Contact	Written
Number of Legislators Responding To This Category	19	20	15
Percentage of Total Sample of Twenty-nine	65%	69%	52%

These data have been derived from the survey. Telephone contact, of the three methods listed, is used most readily by the legislators. Personal contact is used second most frequently. Of the three methods listed, written correspondence is used least frequent. No one method is dominant.

Table 5 displays the combination of methods use by legislators to initiate communications with superintendents.

Table 5

COMBINATION OF METHODS

	Written Telephone Face-to-Face	Face-to-Face Telephone	Telephone Written Correspondence
Number of Legislators Responding Utilizing This Combination	10	55	2
Percentage of Total Sample of Twenty-nine Responding to Survey	34%	17%	7%

As the above Table 5 shows, a total of seventeen legislators use a combination of the three above mentioned techniques. These data were obtained from the survey. Only three legislators stated that they rely on one method to initiate contacts with their superintendents. Ten legislators use a combinations of methods, including: written correspondence, telephone calls and face-to-face interactions to initiate contacts with their superintendents. Five legislators indicated that they rely on a combination of face-to-face interactions and telephoning their superintendents to initiate contacts. Two legislators use the telephone and written correspondence to initiate communication with their superintendents. Each of these combinations reflect less than fifty (50%) percent of the total sample of twenty-nine legislators. The combination of telephone and written correspondence is used by only seven (7%) percent of the legislators. Personal contact is used in combination with both other methods. The fact that none of the combinations of methods is used by a larger percentage of legislators is surprising because the use of all three methods would increase the probability that their communications are being understood by the superintendents. When communications are effective, other benefits could result such as a partnership between the legislators and superintendents.

Following are examples of legislators who described how they utilized a combination of techniques that resulted in ideas for education legislation. The first legislator initiates contacts with the superintendents from her districts by writing letters, telephoning and personal contact. She stated that the superintendents contact her if they have a question, and she will contact them if she has a question. She states, "[t]he contacts I have with superintendents are mutual through letter writing at one time or another." The nature of the communications she has with her superintendents vary. Often, they want to know the status of

certain bills. This legislator indicates that she sends them an analysis of educational bills which has been prepared by a legislative staff person. She mentioned that she, on occasion, meets with some superintendents from her district to discuss education bills. When asked which superintendents she meets with, she stated that she is open to meet with any superintendents, but that she has lunch with those who have initiated or requested the lunch. "These meetings are beneficial," she stated because, "I gather ideas about education bills I may consider sponsoring."

The other legislator who indicated that she initiates contact with the superintendents from her district states that she contacts her superintendents on the telephone, has lunch with some of them and organized a "brainstorming session." This session occurred during the year when the educational reform package was being formulated. According to this legislator, she listened to the comments of the superintendents about key issues such as minimum teacher's salaries. In fact, a bill she sponsored was formed at this meeting. This bill was not passed out of committee. This legislator also stated that she has lunch with some of the superintendents from her district.

No direct answer was given as to how often she communicates with the superintendents although she indicated on the survey that she contacts her superintendents about once every two months. She stated that she has "lots of contacts." This legislator did not indicate if she seeks their guidance on a periodic basis prior to the time when a controversial bill is being voted upon in committee.

8. Unique Methods of Communication.

One legislator described a computer system set up in Springfield which, she stated, "contains status of education bills." The information is fed into the

computer every four hours. She stated that superintendents have access to this computer. They can call the computer and retrieve the information. When asked how often superintendents retrieve information from this computer, no direct answer was given. Also, she did not indicate if the information inputted into the computer contained analysis of the bills.

In principle, the computer system described above can be helpful if the superintendents actually utilized the service. The information inputted into the computer can give superintendents a summary of the status of education bills and where they are in the legislative process. However, this legislator seems to rely on the computer which could replace a personal way of communicating with superintendents. The computer can serve as an excellent source of basic information but the personal touch can furnish deeper levels of information exchange between the legislators and superintendents.

Summary

Part I of this Chapter revealed that there are legislators who perceive themselves as initiating contacts with their superintendents to discuss issues relating to education. The data derived from the survey displayed a larger number of legislators who stated that they initiate communications than the data derived from the interview. Nonetheless, there are legislators who indicate that they initiate contacts with their superintendents concerning educationally related issues. The following salient points summarize the important findings of legislators' perceptions of the communications they initiate with superintendents:

1. Eighty-six (86%) percent of the legislators surveyed believe they are initiating communications with superintendents to hear their views about educationally related issues. Less than half of these same legislators when interviewed claimed they are initiating communications with their superintendents.

2. Of the legislators who initiate communications with their superintendents they do so infrequently.

3. Legislators perceive themselves as communicating their views to their superintendents even if they never meet them by sending them newsletters.

4. Legislators rely on letter writing, telephoning and talking to superintendents at public functions as methods of communicating. No one method is dominant.

5. Legislators contact the superintendents they know personally to gather information about educationally related issues.

II. LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERINTENDENTS INITIATION OF CONTACTS.

The previous section discussed the legislators' perceptions of initiating communications with the superintendents from their districts. This section reports the data on the legislators' perceptions of superintendents' initiation of contacts with them.

A. Frequency that Superintendents from Their Legislative Districts Contact Legislators to Sponsor Education Bills.

1. Survey.

According to the survey, legislators are rarely contacted by superintendents from their districts about sponsoring an education bill. Thirteen legislators stated that they are contacted once every six months or less by superintendents about sponsoring an education bill. Eleven legislators are contacted only once every two months. Four legislators stated that they are never contacted by superintendents from their districts about sponsoring an education bill. Only one legislator reported that he is frequently contacted by his superintendents. One legislator

stated that he frequently hears from the superintendents from his district to sponsor education bills only when they are in session. Another legislator checked off both the "frequent" and "sometimes" terms. No qualifiers were made about this answer. There was no indication whether or not these legislators receive requests from the same superintendents or from different superintendents.

2. Interviews.

When this question was asked of the same legislators during the interview, only two legislators gave specific examples of a bill that was sponsored at the request of their superintendents. One legislator comments, "I have not been asked by one superintendent in eleven years to sponsor an education bill." The remaining legislators did not indicate whether or not they were requested to sponsor any education bills. Clearly, the interview data and survey data are contradictory. The survey data revealed that the legislators' perceptions were that superintendents contact them much more frequently about sponsoring education bills than their perceptions when interviewed.

The following statements were made by different legislators which reflect their views when asked about the frequency at which superintendents contact them:

- "If there are no burning issues, I don't hear from my superintendents."
- "A minority contact me. If they do, they write letters around May or June."
- "Some write in to harp."
- "They will not pick up the phone to call me and tell me their views. I have little contact with superintendents but I do with principals."
- "Superintendents are not traditionally in contact with their legislators."
- "They call up and bellyache after the fact."

As these comments suggest, superintendents for the most part are not communicating with their legislators on a regular basis.

B. Frequency That Superintendents From Other Districts Contact Legislators About Sponsoring Education Bills.

According to the survey data, forty-five (45%) percent of thirteen legislators stated that they are rarely (once every six months) contacted by superintendents outside of their district to sponsor education bills. Eight legislators or approximately twenty-seven (27%) percent stated that they are contacted once every two months by superintendents outside of their district to sponsor education bills. Six legislators, twenty (20%) percent, are frequently contacted by other superintendents, while four legislators, fourteen (14%) percent, stated that they are never contacted by other superintendents. Two legislators checked two different categories. They qualified their comments by stating that their answers represent two different superintendents who contact them at different frequencies. The remaining legislators did not indicate whether or not these data represent one or more superintendents.

One of the respondents notes that the frequency terms on questions 19 and 20 were inappropriate. She stated, "[y]our frequency terms are not really appropriate. I may talk to my school superintendents three times in one week, then not talk to them again for several months." This legislator was given an opportunity to clarify her answers but refused to be interviewed.

Only one legislator stated that he is frequently contacted by superintendents from the district to sponsor education bills. However, six legislators are frequently contacted by superintendents outside of their districts. These data appear to suggest that there are superintendents who perceive other legislators outside of their districts as being more influential in the educational legislative process than their own legislators.

In summary, legislators are contacted by superintendents to sponsor bills. Thirteen legislators stated they are contacted once every six months or less, eleven legislators are contacted once every two months and four legislators are never contacted by their superintendents. Only one legislator is frequently contacted by his superintendents.

There are legislators who are contacted by superintendents outside of their districts to sponsor education bills. Thirteen legislators are contacted by other superintendents once every six months or less, eight legislators are contacted once every two months, six legislators are frequently contacted by other superintendents and four legislators are never contacted by other superintendents.

C. Methods Used by Superintendents to Communicate with Legislators.

The survey did not include a question which asked legislators to indicate the methods used by superintendents to communicate with legislators. Rather, the legislators identified the methods used by superintendents in the course of the interviews. There were thirteen legislators, or less than one-half of the legislators interviewed, who stated that their superintendents keep them informed. Of these superintendents, legislators mentioned a variety of methods they use to communicate with them. These methods are described below.

1. Letter Writing.

Letter writing was indicated by nine legislators as means their superintendents use to contact them and communicate their views to them. The comments these legislators made in reference to letter writing include:

- "Letters clarify their position to me."
- "One particular superintendent will send me a list of bills or a position paper from his education association and ask my opinion."
- "I receive a lot of literature and reading from people. I don't have time to read letters including the ones sent to me by superintendents."

- "When I receive communications about educational issues, they are in the form of Xeroxed letters."
- "Letters superintendents write should be more witty."
- "My superintendents send me volumes and volumes of information and want me to take their position. How am I going to read all of it?"
- "Letters are written--does not mean they are read."

One legislator indicated that the letters he receives are very factual. He stated that he would like his superintendents to write witty letters. According to this legislator, the inclusion of wit in a letter by superintendents is an indication that they have more than a surface understanding of an issue. He also mentioned that he would enjoy reading a letter which "stands out" from other letters. He said nothing about the relevance of a humorous letter based upon misinformation.

Another legislator stated that because letters are written does not mean they are read. He has been inundated with volumes of written materials and does not have the time to sift through all of this information. According to this legislator, superintendents should rely on more than one method to communicate their views to legislators. A legislator who is busy may never read all of the mail but will ask his staff to respond to the letter. In these instances, the establishment of a professional relationship between the superintendent and legislator may never begin.

Letter writing can be one manner in which superintendents communicate their views to legislators. Legislators did not indicate that they respond to written correspondence initiated by superintendents. Additionally, according to five legislators letter writing can be one manner which can open communication between superintendents and legislators.

Letter writing was mentioned by one legislator as a formal method of communication. He felt that without the face-to-face dialogue and interchange, the message may never be clearly understood by the receiver. If letter writing is the only communication between the legislator and superintendent, then a substantive interchange may never occur.

Massive letter writing campaigns organized by superintendents would seem to have varying effects. One legislator commented that he received Xeroxed letters from parents about an issue. He claimed that the language contained in the letters was too technical for parents to have written. Furthermore, the mailers of a Xeroxed letter gave him the impression that they really did not understand the issue. However, if a legislator is unaccustomed to receiving large volumes of mail from his schools, a massive mail drive may influence his behavior.

2. Telephone Calls.

Five legislators stated that they receive telephone calls from their superintendents throughout the legislative session, although three of these legislators indicated that they hear from their superintendents at the end of the legislative session. One of these legislators stated, "I only hear from my superintendents when there are burning issues. They call me on the phone." The nature of these phone calls varied. For instance, two of the five legislators indicated that they have lengthy conversations with the two superintendents who called them. Both of these legislators mentioned these two superintendents by name. One of the superintendents does not live in the district which the legislator represents. These two legislators indicated that the superintendents are their friends. They also mentioned that they consult with them whenever they need "advice" pertaining to a bill. They stated that they have face-to-face meetings with these superintendents. The remaining three legislators described their conversations with these superin-

tendents was brief. The conversations were centered around the position each was taking on a bill.

3. Personal Contact.

The face-to-face interactions appear to have the most influence in establishing a bond between legislators and superintendents, according to three legislators who were interviewed. They gave examples where they and their superintendents met either for lunch, dinner or at meetings and where a personal/professional relationship developed. They stated that their opinions are more likely to change when they have face-to-face interactions with superintendents, because of the exchange of ideas. If their opinion does not change then at least they believe the superintendents may have a better understanding as to the reason. The non-verbal communication can play an important role in face-to-face interaction. They believe this para-language--touching, speed of speech, grunts, sighs, smiles, laughs--can have either a positive or negative effect on the communications.

4. Analysis of Methods Based Upon Findings.

The utilization of written medium appeared to allow legislators to read for comprehension concerning a particular stand or position. For instance, legislators did state that when superintendents send them written information, it helps them understand their position. However, an extreme example was given by one legislator who was sent, as he stated, "volumes and volumes" of materials about one superintendent's position concerning an education bill. This legislator stated that he realized this superintendent was a very intelligent educator, but felt offended by this superintendent's attitude and insensitivity toward his work. He said that for the most part he finds written materials sent by superintendents

helpful, especially for understanding the content but not when materials are sent in great volume.

There are legislators who are not experts in the field of education and therefore may not be able to comprehend the gist of the materials. It appears as if this particular superintendent attempted to use coercive means to either change the opinion of his legislator or gain the support. The technique utilized may or may not result in the legislator supporting the views of the superintendent. Even if the legislator does vote in favor of the superintendent, he may remember the tactics utilized and in the future avoid further communication with this person. In essence, this superintendent may have won the battle but he might have lost the war. It would seem obvious that when superintendents make demands on their legislators and they respond to those demands, the legislators may have a less favorable opinion of the superintendents. The legislators may view the superintendents' behavior no matter how well intended it may be, as a means of coercion. Some resentments may result.

As was previously discussed, the utilization of both written and oral media is most effective.⁵⁴ The combination increases the accuracy of message transmission. The data suggest that only three legislators mentioned that their superintendents utilized a combination of written and oral communication.

One legislator stated that he would like wit and humor to be included in the letters he received from superintendents. He used the terms wit and humor synonymously. Indirectly, this legislator seems to be saying that there are many advantages if superintendents can communicate important issues in a witty manner

⁵⁴ Kipnis, David, The Powerholders, University of Chicago Press (1976) Quoted in Professional Training Associates, Inc., Practical Supervisor/1316 Sam Bass Circle #22 (1/15/85).

rather than communicating messages/ideas in a threatening and hostile manner. For instance, the use of wit can be effective in relieving tension often perpetuated by serious problems. Communicating in a witty manner can also serve as a bridge builder. When people laugh together, a bond is often created. Thus, the attitude of a person making a witty remark makes the difference. Humor can help the legislator or superintendent to get some distance on their problems and see them in perspective, thus serving as a perspective restorer. The inclusion of wit in a letter can be an indication that superintendents have an understanding of an issue. Lastly, a funny letter may "stand out" from other letters. Letters which stand out from the rest may be remembered by the legislator.⁵⁵

Letters appear to be a widely used medium, yet according to Dale A. Lead,⁵⁶ written communication is least powerful. If all that superintendents are attempting to do is to clarify their position to their legislator, then perhaps the utilization of written medium is appropriate. However, other forms of communication, such as the use of face-to-face interactions, and the combination of written and oral media could be more effective in persuading a legislator to change his opinion on an issue. The appropriate medium thus depends on the purpose of the communication.

The utilization of a telephone does not prevent a misinterpretation of the message by the receiver. Unlike the advantages of face-to-face interactions where both parties can observe the nonverbal communication, one is unable to read these messages over the phone. However, at least the speed of speech and the tone and

⁵⁵ Peter, Lawrence J. and Dana, Bill, The Tools of Humor and How to Use Them, Ballantine Books (1982).

⁵⁶ Lead, Dale A. Jr., Communication Effectiveness: Method and Situation, *Journal of Business Communication*, 9 (1972), pp.19-25.

pitch of the voice can be heard. The two superintendents who have lengthy conversations with their legislators over the phone are friends. If two people already know each other, then perhaps the misinterpretations are minimized. In these two cases, the telephone meetings seemed to be convenient and an efficient manner to communicate views. Additionally, these two legislators do not rely totally on the use of telephone conversations to communicate views.

They also schedule face-to-face meetings with their superintendents. The other three legislators claimed that their conversations with superintendents were brief. If there are no other types of interactions, and without knowing the legislator, the superintendent can never be certain how his message is interpreted. These legislators mentioned that they hear from these superintendents when there are burning issues. Perhaps these phone calls were timed to leave a lasting impression on the legislators so that when they vote they will remember the call and vote in their favor. Yet, the legislators may already have made a commitment to the party, an education association or another group. This notice may not give the legislator or superintendent enough time to discuss and communicate their views.

In summary, communication skills, knowledge of subject and personality factors such as attitudes, values, interests and motivational needs affect how the message is encoded as well as the quality of messages sent. It seems obvious that several medias should be used, especially if a superintendent and/or legislator want to communicate an extremely important viewpoint so that the message is clearly understood by the receiver. Yet, it appears that many of the attempts described above made by superintendents to communicate with their legislator are unperceived communication. For whatever reason, attitudes, values, interests, timing of message, demanding demeanor, lack of subject matter, legislators did not

appear to have an awareness of their superintendents' views, concerns or positions concerning education bills and issues.

An example was given by a legislator who claimed that one of his superintendents attempts to persuade him to vote a particular way by presenting him with volumes of facts concerning a bill. Yet, facts alone may not be effective in changing the opinion of a legislator whose emotional predispositions run in a contrary direction. The stronger the psychological factors, the less the impact of the communications utilized by superintendents to influence the opinions of their legislator. Facts alone are unlikely to win many converts where controversial issues are involved.

Summary.

Part II of this Chapter was concerned with reporting the legislators' perceptions of superintendents' initiation of contact with them. As the data suggest there is a clear inactivity on the part of superintendents. One legislator who serves in an extremely important role on one of the committees states, "I have not been asked by one superintendent in eleven years to sponsor an education bill." Thirteen legislators state that they are rarely contacted by superintendents and four legislators are never contacted by superintendents from their districts about sponsoring an education bill. The number is smaller when this question was presented to the legislators during the interview. Only two legislators gave specific examples of bills that were sponsored at the request of the superintendents.

A pattern which emerged is that the leadership of the committees receive the majority of contacts from superintendents even if these superintendents live outside of their districts. The six legislators who receive frequent communications from superintendents outside of their districts serve in leadership positions.

The methods used by superintendents to communicate with their legislator are similar to the methods used by legislators to initiate communications with their superintendents. Letter writing, face-to-face interaction and telephoning are the most frequently used methods.

The salient points derived from this Section include:

1. Legislators perceive superintendents as not being active in initiating communications with them.
2. The leadership of the committees receive the majority of contacts from superintendents outside of their districts.
3. Letter writing, telephoning and face-to-face interaction are the methods used by superintendents to initiate contacts with legislators.

II. SUPERINTENDENTS' LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS: AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS.

The data presented thus far have indicated that legislators depend upon superintendents to initiate communications with them. However, as the previous Section indicated, only a small percentage of superintendents are actually contacting their legislators. The purpose of this Section is to provide more detailed comments made by legislators regarding the superintendents' lack of involvement in the political process. This lack of involvement was the single salient pattern which emerged. Eighteen of the twenty-one legislators believe that superintendents are inactive politically. The following Section will report and analyze these data.

The major patterns which emerged in reference to legislators' perceptions regarding superintendents initiating contacts with them are:

1. Superintendents are inactive.
2. Superintendents are bureaucrats.

3. Superintendents could become extremely powerful if they get involved in the political process.

4. Superintendents are uninformed about legislative issues regarding education.

Representative comments made by eighteen different legislators reflecting these patterns cited above are:

- "As long as superintendents do not get involved they won't have an impact."
- "Superintendents, get off your dead asses. There is more to being a superintendent than sitting behind your desk."
- "Superintendents, get off your phony cloud. If you are concerned about your job, be part of a system."
- "Superintendents could be a powerful group in Springfield but at this time are ineffective in the legislative process."
- "They need to take more initiative."
- "We need to hear from superintendents on a one-to-one basis. We do not now."
- "Big problem out there. Very few superintendents make themselves available."
- "They have been standoffish."
- "Superintendents feel they don't have to get involved in the political process, but they do. Education is politics."
- "Superintendents should become involved with the process of legislative actions. Most will sit back and complain."
- "We need to hear from superintendents on a person-to-person basis."
- "Superintendents need to take more initiative."

- "They need to take more initiative in finding out about the status of education bills. They can't blame us after the fact."
- "Individual constituents need to take the initiative by contacting their legislators. Superintendents should mention that they have parents who would like to lend them a helping hand."
- "Superintendents must take the initiative and contact their legislator."
- "Impossible to attend to all groups I represent, but I am attentive when I know their concerns."

Each of the comments cited above reflects the position that these legislators believe that superintendents should become more active in the political process. In the interview, no other viewpoint was clearly stated by all legislators. These comments suggest that legislators perceive superintendents as acting only as bureaucrats when they should be actively involved in the legislative process. A comment such as, "[s]uperintendents, get off your dead asses. There is more to being a superintendent than sitting behind your desk," (emphasis added) reflects this attitude.

Superintendents' inactivity in the legislative process serve to their disadvantage. Whatever legislation becomes mandated has to be followed at the school district level. If these mandates are the creation of other groups such as the nonadministrative education associations and legislators then the pragmatic implications from an administrator's point of view may not have been considered. Practicing administrators have a major stake in the results of educational legislation. If they do not provide their expertise and experience, they cannot share in the decisions made. At this juncture, it appears that superintendents' behavior is reactive in nature. One legislator commented that once a bill is

mandated and the superintendents are in disagreement, it might be too late to complain after the fact.

A situation occurred during the course of the interview which illustrated the point described above. While a legislator who serves in a leadership position on the Education Committee in the House of Representatives was being interviewed on the Chamber floor, a messenger from the Illinois State Board of Education brought him a letter. Prior to his opening the envelope the topic of superintendents' lack of involvement in the political process was being discussed. After he opened the letter, he chuckled and shared the contents with the interviewer. Inside the envelope was a letter from the Illinois Association of School Administrators addressed to the Illinois Joint House/Senate Committee on Education Reform and State Superintendent, Ted Sanders. The content of the letter had to do with the lack of administrative input in reference to how the new reform programs would be implemented.

Whatever the intent of the legislator or the desire of the State Board of Education, it will be the local districts which ultimately carry out these new programs. Practicing administrators have both the knowledge and the experience to make a contribution to the implementation process . . . but the process will not be well served in an environment of frustration at the local district level.

The content of this letter demonstrated the lack of superintendents' involvement in the legislative process. For instance, the remark, "[w]hatever the intent of the legislature or the desire of the State Board of Education, it will be the local districts which ultimately carry out these new programs." If superintendents as a group are actively involved in the legislative process during the year of education reform, then they would know the intent of the legislature because they would have been a participant in the formulation of the bills.

Superintendents' actions are reactive in nature. Comments such as, "they call up after the fact and bellyache," and "it might be too late to complain after the fact," reflect this belief. An additional comment such as, "superintendents need to be pro-active," reinforces this notion. These two category comments appear to reflect that legislators believe that: (1) superintendents are reactive; and (2) superintendents are not pro-active in reference to the legislative process. None of the legislators alluded to the fact that perhaps superintendents' reactions to particular bills could serve as the impetus for the creation of new bills; thus making their reactions pro-active behaviors. It would seem in the point discussed above, that there are situations when something constructive can be born out of adversity. Thus, a legislator could potentially create a positive situation out of the superintendents' negative reactions by using their feedback to create new legislation. If superintendents disagreed with a bill that is mandated, the type of feedback given could potentially make their actions pro-active. Typically, one tends to view actions as being either pro-active or reactive, but depending on the feedback given to the reaction, it can be both. It appears, however, that the superintendents are losing out on both accounts. They are only reacting to the bills. These actions are not serving as an impetus for pro-action.

As previously discussed, the utilization of feedback could turn reactive behaviors into pro-active behaviors. Feedback can be defined as information about what a person has done or the effect of what has been done.⁵⁷ It seems, however, that superintendents are not providing constructive feedback to the legislators

⁵⁷ Kipnis, op. cit.

concerning educationally-related issues. Likewise, there was no indication that legislators for the most part, are providing feedback to the superintendents. Remarks were made throughout the interview process by legislators that indirectly stated that they want reassurance or fresh direction from superintendents which will let them know whether they are doing the right thing and doing it correctly. Feedback provided by superintendents to legislators could tell them how to work smarter. Likewise, legislators who provide feedback to superintendents about how they can be more effective in the legislative process could be of extreme value to the superintendents. Feedback, if positive, lets the recipients know that their work is appreciated. Even if the feedback is negative, as in the discussion above--concerns, reactive-pro-active behaviors--it lets the recipients know that what they are attempting to do really matters--matters enough for either the superintendent or legislator to be personally interested.

In summary, the data suggest, however, that a "zone of silence" exists between legislators and superintendents.

This theme was emphasized by five legislators and indirectly stated by six other legislators: superintendents could become a very powerful group if they become active in the legislative process. There are various types of power which the legislators could perceive the superintendents as holding. They may be expected to have the professional knowledge, information and skills of an educational leader. Because of this knowledge, they are considered experts in administering educational systems. Their input is needed when formulating education bills because they would have the knowledge necessary to make a contribution in not only the implementation process, but also in the pragmatic implications of the

bills at the school district level.⁵⁸

Legislators' comments about superintendents becoming a powerful group if they become active could also be interpreted to mean that they hold power that can be rewarding or punishing to the legislator. There are several ways that a superintendent can mobilize power which can be used to reward or punish a legislator. For instance, if a legislator believes that superintendents can mobilize large numbers of people to vote against the legislator if they vote in a contrary manner, then the superintendents' power is coercive. Examples were given by legislators who stated that they have been invited to visit schools when the entire room was filled with large numbers of people. The ability of superintendents to mobilize numbers was demonstrated. If superintendents can mobilize a large number of voters to support an issue that a legislator represents, then the consequences can be rewarding to the legislator. Other means superintendents have to exert power are mobilizing people who hold important, credible positions in the community; developing literature; talking to the press; speaking on the radio; and speaking before a camera. In summary, legislators would be responsive to superintendents who have power. The three fundamental items needed by superintendents to develop enough political power to influence change are information, numbers of people and widespread political activity.⁵⁹ Superintendents who utilize their power can influence change and thus be pro-active.

Legislators through direct and indirect comments perceive superintendents as being informed about legislation issues regarding education. More specifically,

⁵⁸ Sergiovanni, T.J., Supervision Human Perspective, McGraw Hill (1983), p.110.

⁵⁹ Moss, D. Conrad, W.J., Advocacy, Management Monographs from Voluntary Management Press, (1973), p.8.

the legislators indicated that they have to give information to the superintendents about education bills because they do not keep updated. This notion was even reinforced by a superintendent who seeks out the legislator's advice and opinion about specific education bills. One superintendent sends his legislator the position of an education association and asks for his opinion. It seems that in this situation, the superintendent is putting himself or herself in a role of listening to the advice of a legislator who may not be an expert in education. Another legislator stated that she also has to explain to her superintendents the education bills and help them analyze the implications. She also claimed that she has to tell her superintendents why they should favor or oppose a bill.

An example of this type of situation was described in a previous section when a legislator got her superintendents involved in a brainstorming session. Together they formulated educational legislation which she sponsored. It appears in this situation that all parties felt a high level of cooperation because they all felt invested in the legislation they formulated.

When a superintendent is active in legislative matters, the situation is different. One legislator who is extremely active in sponsoring bills which are passed represents the district in which an extremely active superintendent lives. This legislator and the superintendent keep in close contact due to the acknowledged power and influence of this superintendent. In fact, this superintendent was mentioned by three legislators as being an extremely effective lobbyist. Throughout all the interviews only four superintendents were identified on a first-name basis. In every case, these legislators mentioned that those superintendents were their personal friends as well as their professional friends.

The superintendents who are friends of these legislators appear to have their "ear." They are called when their legislator needs advice about an education bill. Additionally, when these superintendents visit their legislators in Springfield, they are introduced to other legislators. They are called to give testimony to the Education Committee. Most importantly, these superintendents can get educational legislation sponsored by these prominent elected officials. During the interview, examples were given by one of these legislators of education bills he sponsored for his superintendent friend. These bills passed. The examples given above clearly indicate the advantages superintendents who have legislators as friends have over superintendents who are unknown.

The superintendents who are described above made friends with legislators who appear to be the most powerful in education. These legislators are in leadership positions; vice-chairs, speakers on the Education Committees in either the House of Representatives or Senate. The chairmen have the most influence on the committee and these superintendents become friends with these legislators. These legislators has the principal responsibility for organizing and managing the work of the committee.⁶⁰ The chairman of the committee has influence over the bills that will be heard. The role of the chairman is described below.

When the committee on the assignment of bills refers the bills to a standing committee, the chairman receives the bills. The chairman arranges for notices of all meetings, together with a list of bills to be heard at those meetings, to be posted within the time required by the rules before the meeting is held. The chairman arranges with the sponsors for the scheduling of hearings on their bills,

⁶⁰ Preface to Lawmaking, Legislators' Introduction to the General Assembly.

conducts the meetings and sees to it that the minutes of the meeting are taken by the clerk; and at the conclusion of the meeting, sends the committee report on the bills which received committee action to the clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate . . .⁶¹

As described above, the chairman has control over the committee's agenda. Hundreds of bills are assigned to the Education Committees in both Chambers which may never be read. One legislator stated during the interview that the politically astute superintendents develop a working relationship with the chairman because they want their bills to have priority and be scheduled to be heard within the allotted time frame. If a bill is not set for a hearing within the allotted time frame, the bill is automatically reported out, "did not pass," which tables the bill. A superintendent wanted it to succeed. In the few examples where superintendent and legislator worked together, it appears that the cooperation led to more involvement in the legislative process. It also appears that each of these legislators developed trust and respect for their superintendents, which was demonstrated by the usage of the word "we" instead of "me" or "I."

The data also suggested that if superintendents have information, ideas and viewpoints regarding the implications of particular education bills, then this information is not being shared with the legislators. As previously discussed, legislators have information about education bills that for the most part has not been shared with superintendents unless it was requested. This information and knowledge are power. The data indicate that both superintendents and legislators may have information which could be mutually beneficial, but it is not shared. Information is vital but unless it is exchanged, communication does not happen.

⁶¹ Illinois General Assembly Legislative Research Unit Publication 191 (October, 1984).

The twenty-one legislators interviewed all stated that they believe it is the role of the superintendents to contact them and when they are contacted they will respond. Thus, legislators have information which would be beneficial to superintendents, but they feel it is the role of the superintendent to establish the relationship. If this viewpoint is shared by superintendents then it should be communicated.

The legislators who are in leadership positions on the Education Committees and who were interviewed stated that they hear from the "politically active" superintendents. A superintendent who makes his bill the chairman's priority insures that the bill will most likely be read, because the chairman has the power to table or get a bill out of committee. These superintendents described above appear to be extremely astute in the political process. In fact, it seems that they are the superintendents who are really making a difference in the type of legislation that eventually becomes law.

There are 1,000 districts in Illinois which are administered by superintendents. During these interviews only four superintendents were identified by name. None of the legislators interviewed could identify all of the superintendents from the districts they represented. In fact, one legislator who was interviewed claimed that he had only two school districts within his district. He was unaware that he represented other school districts. These unique superintendent-legislator relationships represent a very small percentage of the total possible relationships. Even if other legislators know their superintendents but failed to describe the close relationship, only five legislators indicated that they communicate directly with their superintendents. These data suggest that a major communication gap exists between legislator and superintendent. Furthermore, if these legislators are voting on specific bills one must conclude that the input they receive while researching

the implications of a bill is not given by superintendents but by other groups.

The following conclusions can be drawn from this Section.

- Legislators perceive superintendents as inactive in the political process.
- Legislators perceive superintendants as not performing their political role in the state legislature in a way the legislators consider to be effective.
- Superintendents do not take a pro-active stand in reference to the passing of educational legislation. They are more reactive once the bills are passed.

IV. OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATION.

The data derived previously concerning the communications between legislators and superintendents strongly show that there is a gap. For the most part, legislators and superintendents are not communicating about educationally related legislative issues, even during the legislative session when landmark education reform legislation was developed. Part IV will analyze the obstacles to communication which evolved from the interviews.

A. Time Constraints.

A recurring theme throughout the interviews as to why legislators stated that they do not initiate contact with superintendents was that they have too much work and not enough time. Comments made by seven different legislators about the lack of time include:

- "I do not initiate contacts . . . I have no time. I can't keep up."
- "Impossible to contact all groups I represent. I am too busy."
- "I can't do everything."
- "There are so many issues, it is hard for a legislator to keep up."
- "It is difficult for legislators to meet with superintendents. It is because of the lack of time."
- "There are so many issues that it is hard for a legislator to keep up."

— "I am super-saturated and without the time to read all of them."

It was apparent throughout the interview process and during the stay in Springfield that legislators are extremely busy and have many duties to which they must attend. Legislative service is not a leisurely way of life. They are in session many hours each day. Prior to that time, they attend sub-committee meetings which begin early in the morning. Throughout the day, lobbyists, concerned interest groups and individual constituents speak to the legislators either at scheduled appointments or after they call them off the Chamber floor. Additionally, phone calls have to be returned, dinner meetings have to be attended and bills have to be read and analyzed. One legislator states, "[t]his environment is very fast paced. Sometimes you do not know if you are coming or going."

In summary, legislators are harried people. They have more work to do than the time available and this makes it impossible to do a thorough job. During the time the legislators are in committee, hundreds of bills are assigned to them for which they have to vote. Legislators are required to serve in multiple committees. The Education Committee is only one committee on which they serve. One legislator states about the Education Committee, "[w]e are super-saturated with bills to read and without the time to read all of them." "There is not time to explain each and every bill to my superintendents." "There are so many for which we have to vote," states a different legislator. A third legislator comments, "[w]e are forced to make decisions in a timely manner. If you don't hear from superintendents you have to make the best judgment you can. Things happen quickly here in Springfield."

B. Legislative Overload.

One legislator explained that there are so many education bills that were assigned to the Education Committees during the reform year that he felt

inundated with bills he was supposed to read, understand and vote upon. He stated this situation was "overwhelming." The year of education reform required legislators to vote on many bills. Yet, the legislator may not have been able to keep pace with all the reading and analysis. An example of a legislator who became overwhelmed with the process was described by a fellow legislator. This legislator walked out on a sub-committee meeting before all the bills were acted upon and asked the fellow legislator to cast his votes. According to the legislator who told the story, his friend had no time to read the bills and therefore voted according to party affiliation. This legislator stated that unless a bill becomes a priority he votes according to the position of the party. The role of the party will be discussed in a following Section.

Clearly, legislators have an extremely heavy workload. It is apparent that their workload may be the cause of other problems such as proxy voting and inadequate researching of bills, lack of opportunity to develop any expertise regarding the legislation for which they are required to vote.

The apparent competition of demands for a legislator's time can be seen just by the number of committees for which they serve--perhaps three, four or more committees. In addition to attending all the committee meetings and hearings, hundreds of bills are assigned to each committee and legislators are required to vote in support or opposition to the proposed legislation. With their attention so divided, it would be unlikely that they would have the time to become an active participant on the committee and also to develop any expertise regarding the education legislation on which they are required to vote. Because of a legislator's heavy workload, individual legislators must be extremely reliant on subject area specialists--their peers, lobbyists, legislative staff. In fact, the survey interview

data validate this point. (The role of lobbyists and fellow legislators will be reviewed in the next Section.) The data reveal that there are legislators who are not contacting superintendents to hear their input. As one legislator comments, "[i]f you do not hear from superintendents you have to make the best judgment you can. Things happen quickly here in Springfield." Superintendents, consequently, if they become more active in the process, can have an inordinate amount of legislative power due to their expert knowledge.

The data also suggest that the members of the Education Committee do not have time to adequately research all bills. The comments suggest that during the year of education reform bills were processed with unseemly haste, especially at the end session. The volume of bills and the haste of process may mean that there could have been a lack of sufficient information for legislators to develop a reasoned judgment concerning the merits of proposed legislation. Even if the bills are being analyzed by professional staff, it appears as if there are legislators who are making decisions on bills without the knowledge of the problems to which the bill is addressed, without knowledge of the manner in which the bill will be implemented, without a professional analysis of the language in the bill, and without a reasonable prediction of the probable consequence at the local school district level that would be developed if the bill were passed. The data indicate that once the education legislation is mandated, administrators are largely on their own to interpret and implement the law. State legislators may not be passing bills in specific enough detail to give full guidance to administrative implementation. An example of the letter sent to the Illinois State Board of Education and the legislators which was previously reviewed is one example of this analysis.

To make good decisions, legislators need to research the implications of bills. Researching the implications of bills is hard work. It takes time, analytical

ability, creativity and fortitude to choose and become committed to a position. Yet, there can be benefits to conducting this research. It can be a learning process for the legislators because they get to know their superintendents and hear their views from the districts they represent. If legislators consult with superintendents who are affected then unpopular decisions that are made may be much more palatable.

Once the legislators gather the facts there is information on which to base a decision, and the steps of deciding how to vote can be followed; recognizing and defining the problem or issue, analyzing the difficulties in the existing solution, analyzing and comparing alternatives and selecting the plan to follow.⁶²

Clearly, legislators do not have the time to research all bills that are assigned to the Education Committee. At least, those bills that could potentially create a public stir at the school district level should be thoroughly researched. The steps of decision making apparently are not followed by legislators when voting on education bills. If the steps of decision making were thoroughly followed then there is a good chance that legislators would anticipate problems that could develop. Impulsive decisions could be avoided if legislators try to anticipate situations and think about them in advance. Hence, legislators need to anticipate the problems and think through the alternatives because everything should not be based on their current popularity because their popularity could diminish if they make poor decisions. An example of legislators not anticipating a reaction was when the General Assembly mandated school district consolidation. Serious rebellions occurred at the school district levels and eventually the Governor

⁶² Knezivich, S.J., Administration of Public Education, Harper and Row, New York, p.61.

reversed this mandate. Perhaps if legislators (1) researched the facts, (2) followed the steps of decision making, and (3) anticipated the problems, the mandating of such a bill could have been avoided.

There were seven legislators who did state during the interviews that they have no time to initiate contacts with their superintendents but once they are contacted they will respond. This comment is an indication that there are legislators who are willing to be cooperative with superintendents. Legislators appear to believe that rational communication is possible between superintendents especially if they initiate the contacts. Also, these comments indirectly imply that legislators respect the right of superintendents to express a differing point of view, even if their viewpoints are different from their own. Lastly, the fact that legislators stated that they would respond to requests initiated by superintendents could suggest they value the importance of their job. The legislators stated that they feel it is their responsibility to respond to all the requests initiated by superintendents.

The method used by the legislators to respond to superintendents' requests could affect how the message is interpreted. For example, a form letter could be interpreted by a superintendent as being impersonal. On the other hand, a legislator who takes the time to write a personal letter may be perceived as being sincere by the superintendent. If a telephone is the method used, then the phone manners used by the legislator could influence the interpretation of the message. A legislator's response to a superintendent's on the spot visit to Springfield could also leave a lasting impression on the superintendent. For instance, a legislator who is so busy that during the meeting between the superintendent and legislator he receives several interruptions could make the superintendent feel uncomfortable. The superintendent may feel that he is an intruder. Thus, the comments

made by legislators that they will respond may be true, but their way of responding to the superintendents will either leave a positive or negative impression on the superintendent.

C. Attitude Toward Superintendents.

Another recurring theme that became evident throughout the interviews is that there are legislators who have negative attitudes toward superintendents.

According to one legislator, superintendents are,

. . . stuffy and have their own ideas of things. They control the Board, cry, and believe everyone should jump and respond to their requests. Everything is a demand. They do not think of alternative solutions. Superintendents tell us that we do not understand because we are not educators. They underestimate our ability. Superintendents treat everyone as students. They have little management experience. Superintendents are afraid of people who are trained.

He continued to state that,

[o]ther legislators feel the same way. Superintendents need to alter their egos. They have poor communication skills and effective communication skills are important. They do not listen. Everything is a demand. Superintendents do not look at the logical base nor do they listen. They are arrogant. If I receive communications about schools, it is usually in the form of Xeroxed letters from parents which the superintendents have them write.

Another legislator openly discussed his feeling about the manner in which superintendents communicate with legislators. He states that "for the most part superintendents are unwilling to see other viewpoints. They need to learn how to compromise."

Other comments made by different legislators which reflect this attitude include:

- "Superintendents complain after the fact."
- "Superintendents do not listen."
- "They do not know how to compromise."

One of the comments made by this legislator is that superintendents treat legislators as students. The perception of this legislator is that superintendents are

confusing their roles with legislators. It is a fact that the nature of the political system--more specifically the committee system--can be compared to a school system. For instance, the legislators are in a position similar to the students because they need to be educated by persons with expert knowledge, but unlike the student in the conventional school system, the legislators are not subordinate to the person with the expert knowledge. The superintendent, who possesses the expert knowledge, is in a subordinate position to the legislator because they have the votes. The comment made by this legislator indirectly suggests that superintendents' communications should reflect this understanding. Apparently, legislators are not pleased that superintendents do not relate specific issues to how they affect the children's education. For instance, it was said by legislators that superintendents will often discuss everything about education such as more money, employee rights, school district boundaries. They seldom mention the students. Another legislator states, "[s]uperintendents care about one thing, MORE MONEY. They never even mention the children." (Emphasis added.) When a superintendent does not mention the idea of children in their communications, it may lead the legislator to believe that the superintendent is just another business advocate who is insensitive to the needs of the children. Education is a unique field. It takes into account private business concerns as well as public concerns. It seems as if the issues of public interest concerns should be included in the discussions. Hence, the superintendent is in a unique position of communicating the concerns of business persons while not losing sight of the public interest--the education of children.

These comments also reveal that these legislators perceive superintendents as unskilled listeners. Legislators stated emphatically that superintendents never listen to their points of view. Consequently, superintendents may fail to leave a

favorable impression on legislators because they do not listen attentively. These legislators are saying that at the end of their conversations with superintendents, their views were never heard. Superintendents may be so determined in communicating their views that they interrupt legislators, contradict them and/or even irritate them. The comments made by legislators about superintendents needing to learn how to compromise is another indication that they are perceived as ineffective listeners.

Legislators may be concerned about their inability to persuade superintendents to their point of view. Perhaps legislators are fearful that superintendents may be able to create bad press if they do not change their point of view.

There may be occasions when a superintendent is well informed and communicates his message in a professional manner and listens, that a legislator may not listen or has a negative attitude toward that position. It is a fact of life that some people may just have prejudices towards a certain group of people because of their own personal experiences. Perhaps a legislator had a bad experience with a principal or superintendent when he/she was in school and in some instances a legislator may be unable to separate the personal feelings from the professional feelings. The superintendent must attempt to avoid reinforcing the image that they are hard-nosed, uncompromising and self-serving professionals by becoming more skilled communicators. There will be occasions, however, where a superintendent may not be respected because of the prejudice of a legislator. Dale Carnegie states that the emotional views of legislators may outweigh this logic.⁶³ There may be legislators who are blighted with preconceived notions, with jealousy, suspicion, fear, envy and pride.

⁶³ Carnegie, Dale, How to Win Friends and Influence People, Pocket Books (1982), pp.84-98.

Summary

This Section attempted to analyze the obstacles to communication between legislators and superintendents. The salient points are summarized below:

1. Legislators lack the time to initiate communications with all of their constituents, including superintendents;
2. Legislators have an extremely heavy legislative workload causing such problems as proxy voting, inadequate researching of bills and lack of opportunity to develop any expertise regarding the legislation for which they are required to vote; and
3. There are legislators who have negative attitudes toward superintendents which could affect this communication or lack of communication with them.

V. LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER SOURCES THEY UTILIZE AND COMMUNICATE WITH REGARDING EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED ISSUES.

A major pattern which emerges in reference to legislators' perceptions regarding superintendents initiating contact with them is that SUPERINTENDENTS ARE NOT TAKING THE INITIATIVE, especially during the Legislature General Assembly when sweeping educational reform was formulated. Clearly, these communications listed below reflect a very serious problem. If legislators are not initiating contacts with superintendents because they believe superintendents should be contacting them and if superintendents are not taking the initiative to contact superintendents, then who are the sources of information.

Parts I, II, III and IV of this Chapter dealt with the legislators' perceptions of their initiation of contacts with superintendents and their perceptions of superintendents' initiation of contact with them. Part V will report and analyze the data

stated by legislators concerning their perceptions of other sources they communicate with regarding educationally-related issues.

A. Types of Publications Read to Keep Legislators Informed About Current Educational Issues.

1. Survey Data.

This question dealt with the type of publications legislators read to keep informed about current educational issues, not the number of publications read. For instance, a legislator could potentially read twenty different education journals but will be given credit for the one type of publication read. Similarly, a legislator could potentially read six different newspapers per day, but he will only be given credit for one type of publication.

The following Table displays the type of publications legislators read to keep informed about current educational issues.

Table 6

TYPE OF PUBLICATIONS READ TO
KEEP LEGISLATORS INFORMED
ABOUT CURRENT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

	News- papers	Educational Journals	General Interest	National Reports	Business Journals	Trade Journals
Number of Legislators Who Read This Publication to Keep Updated	26	18	17	9	5	2
Percentage of Legislators Who Responded to Survey	90%	62%	59%	31%	17%	7%
Percentage Out of Twenty- Six who Res- ponded to this Question	100%	69%	65%	35%	19%	8%

As Table 6 suggests, twenty-six legislators read newspapers to keep them informed about current educational issues. This number reflects ninety (90%) percent of the twenty-nine legislators who responded to the survey. The reading of newspapers reflects thirty-three (33%) percent of the total publications read by the legislators who responded to this question. Of these twenty-six, four read only the newspaper to keep updated. All the legislators who responded to this question indicated that they read newspapers. These legislators did not indicate how they keep updated about educational issues if there are no articles written about the subject.

Newspapers appear to be more event-oriented than analytical documents. Reading the newspaper, if it is the only publication read, may not be the most effective way to keep updated because the articles are not scholarly documents. Most of the education articles contained in the newspapers are a synopsis of what has already occurred. Yet, legislators who are busy may only have the time to read newspapers. If they read a combination of daily local newspapers and national newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal, they might be keeping up with current local, state and national news.

Eighteen legislators read educational journals to keep updated. As Table 6 suggests, this number reflects sixty-two (62%) percent of the twenty-nine legislators who responded to the survey and sixty-nine (69%) percent of the twenty-six legislators who responded to this question. Educational journals represent twenty-two (22%) percent of all the publications read by the twenty-six legislators who responded to this question. One of the legislators stated that he reads the school board association journal.

Table 6 indicates that general interest publications are read by seventeen legislators. The number of legislators who read general interest publications

reflect fifty-nine (59%) percent of the twenty-nine who responded to the survey and sixty-five (65%) percent of the twenty-six who responded to this question. This category represents twenty-one (21%) percent of the total responses indicated by the legislators as publications read. Specific general interest publications were not indicated.

Nine legislators read National Education Reports as sources of information as reported in Table 6. This number reflects thirty-one (31%) percent of the total sample of twenty-nine and thirty-five (35%) percent out of the legislators who responded to this question. National Education Reports include eleven (11%) percent of all the publications read by legislators who responded to this question. No specific report was indicated, yet one legislator indicated that he reads, "special reports from educational groups." Again, no specific report was cited. There was also no indication of how many of these reports were read or where they get the information which appears there when a new nationwide report is released.

Five legislators read financial journals to keep updated about educational issues. This number reflects seventeen (17%) percent of the total sample surveyed and nineteen (19%) percent of those legislators who responded to this question. The Chamber of Commerce publication was the only specific business publication listed. This category of publications comprise fifty-nine (59%) percent of the total publications read.

Trade journals are the least read publication. Only two legislators claimed that they read these types of publications to keep updated. This category represents 2.4% of all the publications read by legislators. This number reflects seven (7%) percent of the total sample and eight (8%) percent of the respondents to this question.

Two legislators wrote comments about publications that are sent to them from superintendents. One legislator wrote in large, capital letters that were pressed deeply into the paper, "[v]olumes are sent to me." No reference was made, however, to the type of publications he receives or if he read them. Another legislator wrote, "[m]any reports are sent to me to read." This person also did not specify the types of reports that are sent to him or if he reads these reports.

The manner in which these legislators wrote the above information, large, capital letters that were pressed firmly into the paper, is an indication that they are emphatic about this point. Perhaps they feel that superintendents, by sending them volumes of reading material, are forcing them to take their positions. In summary, all legislators indicated that they read one or more different types of publications to keep updated.

There are legislators who read more than one type of publication to keep them informed about current educational issues. Twenty-two legislators read up to four different types of publications to keep updated. All three publications, general interest, educational journals and newspapers, are read by thirteen legislators.

If these data are accurate, superintendents should consider writing more editorials to their newspapers about educational issues, because ninety (90%) percent rely on the newspapers to keep them updated. Also, superintendents who create a lot of press (good or bad) appear to have one way of attracting their legislator's attention. (The use of the press in relation to power and the superintendents is discussed in a later section.) Legislators appear to be public relations conscious since they are paying a great deal of attention to the press in their districts. They may be utilizing the press as a means of gauging public sentiment.

Summary.

Legislators keep updated not only through contact with members of various groups, education associations, superintendents, fellow legislators and legislative staff, they also read various publications. Ninety (90%) percent of the legislators read newspapers for purposes of keeping updated. A majority of legislators claimed that they also read education journals to keep updated in the educational field. The National Education Reports are read by nine legislators. There was no indication of how many of these reports they read. Other publications read are general (49%), business/financial journals (17%) and trade journals (7%).

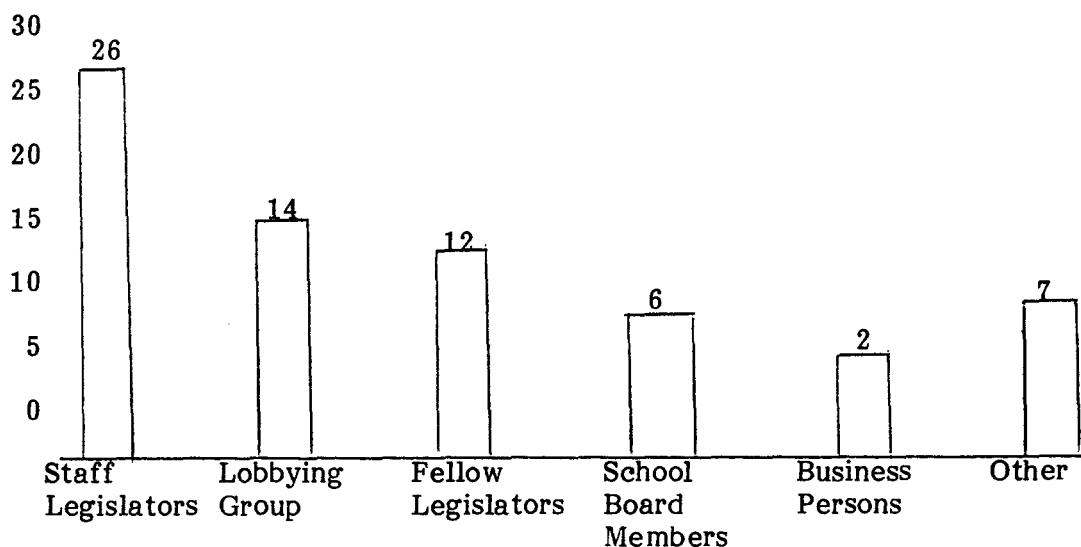
B. Sources Utilized by Legislators to Gather General Information About an Education Bill Before It is Voted Upon in Committee.

1. Survey Data.

The following Table displays the sources utilized by legislators to gather information before a bill is voted upon in committee.

Table 7

SOURCES UTILIZED BY LEGISLATORS TO GATHER ABOUT A BILL



As Table 7 displays, when needing "general information" about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee, twenty-six legislators (approximately 90% of the total sample) seek assistance from legislative staff; fourteen legislators (48% of the total sample) seek assistance from education lobbying groups; twelve legislators (41% of the total sample) seek assistance from fellow legislators; six legislators (approximately 35% of the total sample) seek assistance from school board members and school superintendents (5% of the total responses); two legislators (approximately 7% of the total sample) seek assistance from business persons and two legislators seek assistance from community leaders. Seven legislators (24% of the total sample) indicated that they seek assistance from sources not listed on the survey which include the State Board of Education, the Illinois Information Service and the Education Committees. Three of these seven legislators indicated that they rely on their own judgment rather than to seek assistance from the sources listed on the survey. One legislator wrote in the space provided the following remark, "[i]ndependent judgment of my work," when referring to where she seeks assistance when she wants general information about an education bill. Another of these legislators stated, "I usually provide the information rather than seeking it." One legislator indicated that he seeks no assistance when gathering general information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee.

A total of seven legislators rely on only one source when gathering general information about bills. For instance, six legislators seek assistance only from legislative staff when they want general information about an education bill. One legislator indicated that he seeks general information about education bills from education academicians.

Sixty-eight (68%) percent of the legislators did not rely on just one source to gather information about an education bill. Twenty legislators seek assistance from legislative staff in addition to one or more of the following sources: education lobbyists, fellow legislators, school board members and superintendents. As previously reported under Part I, six of these twenty use superintendents to gather information but not as their only source. There are no legislators who use the information provided by superintendents as a sole source.

Consistent with the data derived from the previous survey questions, legislative staff are sources utilized by legislators regardless of the purpose. Legislative staff, whose qualifications in the field of education are probably less than superintendents and education academicians, have much more influence in the outcome of bills than these two groups because their ideas and analysis are sought after by legislators and may be the basis of their decision.

The data also suggest that there are legislators who rely strictly on their own judgments, experiences and philosophies to make decisions. These findings imply that voting decisions must be made without the researching of relevant facts. The researching of general information should lead to specific information. If there are legislators who are not gathering information about education bills then there is a chance that the specific information is not gathered also.

Summary.

In reference to the sources used by legislators to investigate bills they consider sponsoring, superintendents are contacted by twenty-two legislators. They rank behind legislative staff, education lobbying groups and fellow legislators as sources used by legislators to gather either general or specific information about education bills. Six legislators contact superintendents if they want general information about a bill, while ten legislators contact superintendents if they want

specific information about education bills.

C. Sources Used by Legislators to Investigate the "Pros and Cons" of an Education Bill that They May Consider Sponsoring.

Table 8 lists the sources used by legislators to investigate the pros and cons of education bills. This Table lists the number of legislators using the source, the percentage of the total sample of twenty-nine legislators who responded and the percentage of legislators who responded to this question.

Table 8

SOURCES USED BY LEGISLATORS TO
INVESTIGATE THE PROS & CONS
OF AN EDUCATIONAL BILL
(Survey Question No. 12)

	Legislative Staff	Lobbying Group	Superintendents	School Board Members	Professors or Educators
Number of Legislators Utilizing This Source	24	22	22	17	5
Percentage of the Total Sample of Twenty-nine Who Responded To Survey	82%	75%	75%	58%	17%
Percentage Total of Legislators Who Responded to This Question	25%	23%	23%	17.5%	5%

*Numbers are rounded to nearest tenth

As Table 8 indicates, legislative staff are used by twenty-four of the legislators who responded to the survey to investigate the "pros and cons" of an education bill that they consider sponsoring. As the Table suggests, this figure

represents eighty-two (82%) percent of the total sample of the twenty-nine legislators who responded to the survey. Legislative staff represent twenty-five (25%) percent of the total responses for Question 12. Twenty-two legislators (23% of the total answers given for this question) used educational lobbying groups to investigate the pros and cons of educational bills. This figure represents seventy-five (75%) percent of the total legislators who responded to the survey. One respondent stated that educational lobbying groups get special consideration when they investigate the pros and cons of educational bills. No further clarification was made about this statement. According to the data, and as previously reported in Part I, superintendents are contacted by twenty-two legislators, 22.60% of the total responses given, when they want information on the pros and cons of bills. This figure represents seventy-five (75%) percent of the total sample. School board members are contacted by seventeen legislators; 17.52% of the total responses, 58% of the legislators who responded to the survey; when they want to hear about the pros and cons of educational bills. The group that is contacted least by legislators are professors of education. Only five legislators, 5.1% of the total responses to the question and 17.24% of the legislators who responded to the survey, indicated that they consult with professors of education to investigate the pros and cons of a bill they may consider sponsoring. One legislator stated, "[y]ou got to be joking," when referring to using professors of education to investigate the pros and cons of educational bills.

Local meetings, the legislative reference bureau and citizens were stated as other sources used by legislators to investigate educational bills. Likewise, a legislator's personal philosophy and knowledge were listed as being the sources used to research the effects of a bill they may consider sponsoring.

These data indicate that legislative staff are widely used (82% of the legislators) by legislators to analyze bills. Education lobbying groups are clearly used by legislators as sources of information (75% of the legislators of the twenty-four who responded to the survey). The survey did not indicate the specific lobbying groups that were consulted with by the legislators. Of the twenty-nine legislators who responded to the survey, twenty-two (75%) consult with superintendents regarding educational bills. This number is extremely high. The data did not indicate whether these superintendents lived in their districts or were superintendents outside of their district. According to these data, professors of education are the least likely group that legislators consult with when they need information concerning educationally-related matters.

None of the legislators indicated that they rely on their co-workers to investigate bills. Legislators need to research the implications of how a bill would affect their own district. It would seem they would want more detailed information for their party leaders or at least find out the support that would be given. Perhaps the legislators who are serving in leadership already have that indirect input because if they do not want a particular bill assigned to committee, it can be killed.

Twenty-eight of the respondents indicated that they use more than one source to research the advantages and disadvantages of bills they are about to sponsor. Of the sources listed above, four legislators use five sources, nine legislators use four sources and six legislators use two sources. Only one legislator used a single source. Legislators who stated that they use four or less sources excluded the category of professors of education.

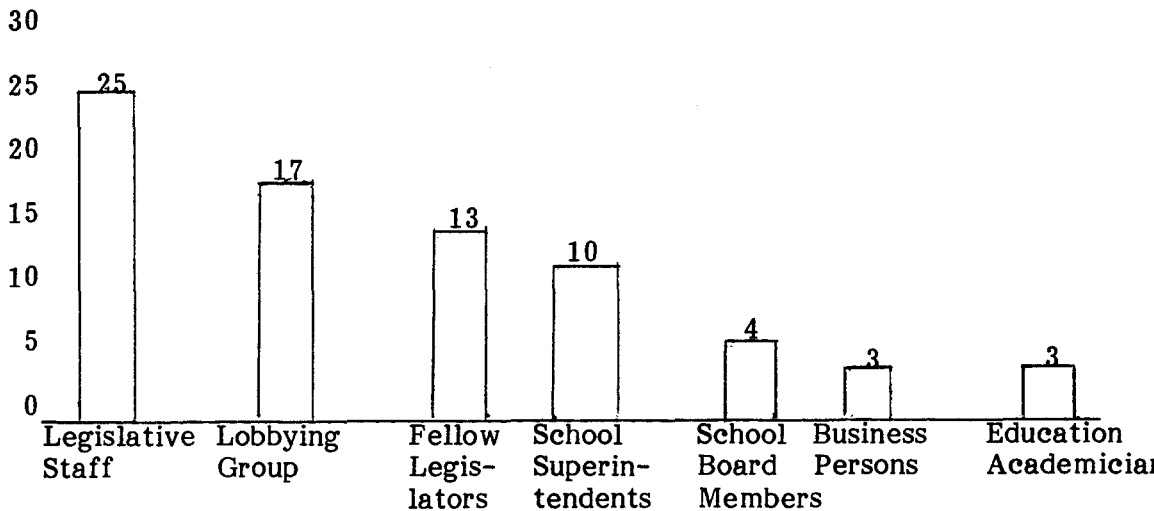
D. Sources Utilized by Legislators When They Want to Know More Specific Information About an Education Bill Before It is Voted Upon in Committee.

1. Survey Data.

Table 9 refers to the sources utilized by legislators to gather more specific information about an education bill.

Table 9

SOURCES GATHERED BY LEGISLATORS TO GATHER SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATION BILLS



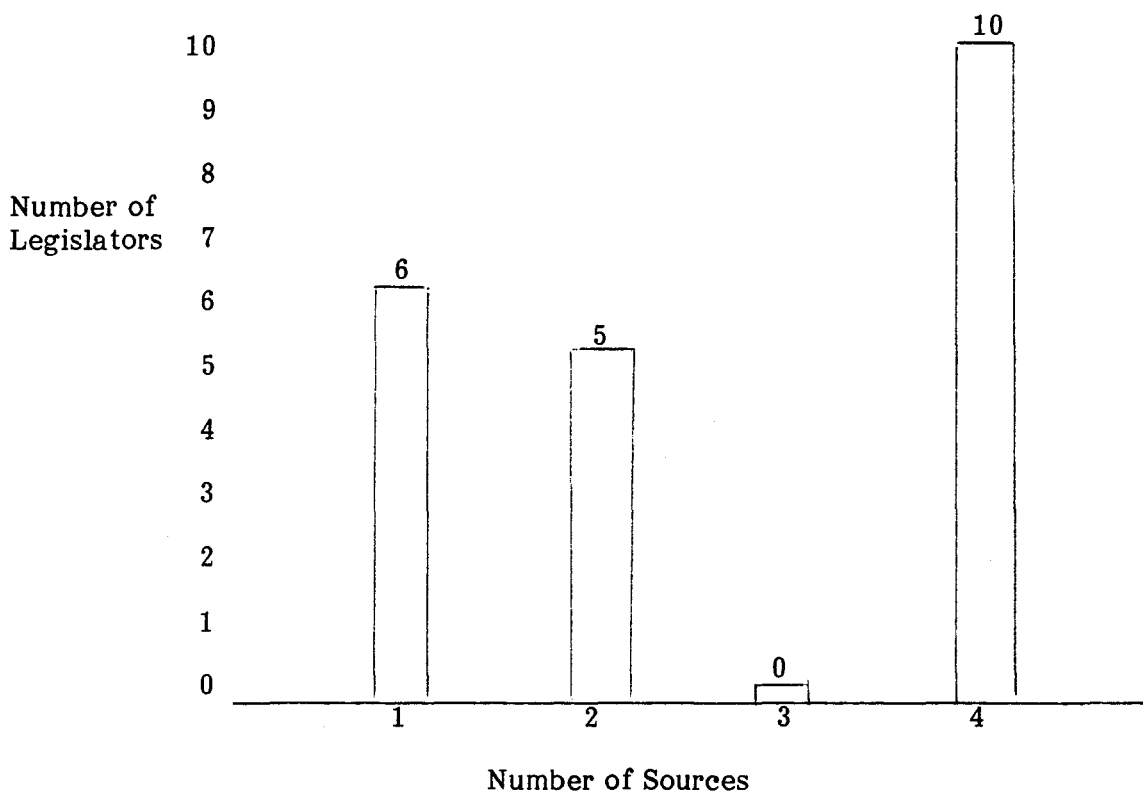
As the bar graphs suggest, twenty-five legislators (86% of the total sample) seek more specific information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee from legislative staff. Seventeen legislators (59% of the total sample) seek specific information from education lobbying groups. Thirteen legislators (49% of the total sample) indicated that they contact fellow legislators when they want more specific information about education bills. School superintendents are contacted by ten legislators (34% of the total sample) when they need specific information about education bills. Approximately fourteen (14%) percent or four of the legislators seek specific information from school board members. Business

persons and education academicians are contacted by three legislators (10%), while community leaders are contacted by two legislators (7% of the total sample).

Table 10 displays the number of different sources utilized by legislators to gather more specific information about education bills.

Table 10

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SOURCES UTILIZED BY
LEGISLATORS WHEN THEY WANT TO KNOW
MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT BILLS



As the data suggest, six legislators indicated that they rely solely on legislative staff to gather specific information about an education bill. Five legislators utilize two different sources listed above when gathering specific information about education bills. Ten legislators indicated that they use four or more sources to gather specific information about education bills.

Again, these data indicate that legislative staff is used by more legislators as sources of information than any other group. Legislative staff members who analyze bills for the members of the Education Committee who are of the same party affiliation would appear to present a skewed analysis. Legislators who rely solely on the analysis of bills by legislative staff may not receive a thorough presentation of all viewpoints. Consequently, it appears as if there are legislators who base decisions on information that could be skewed.

Consistent with the previous question about sources utilized by legislators to obtain general information on bills, the sources utilized by legislators to gather specific information rank in the following order: legislative staff are first, lobbying groups are second, fellow legislators are third, school superintendents are fourth and school board members are fifth. There appear to be legislators who are basing decisions on the input from fellow legislators, legislative staff and the Illinois Education Association staff. On issues that are heavily related to educational administration, there may be legislators who are making decisions without receiving the input from superintendents about the practical administrative implications.

According to the data derived from these questions, legislators seek out information from superintendents more often than they do from school board members. The data derived from a previous question concerning lobbying groups legislators would be inclined to support, school board associations received more support than school administrators' associations. There are many possible explanations for this apparent inconsistency. Explanation No. 1: legislators perceive superintendents as being more expert in educationally-related issues than are school board members. The school board members may be perceived as having only

information about the district they serve and are not experts in the field. Therefore, if legislators want detailed expert information, they will contact superintendents before they contact school board members. On the other hand, there are legislators who would support and/or sponsor legislation proposed by the Illinois School Board Association before they would support legislation proposed by the Illinois Association of School Board Members. First, school board members in most cases are elected officials. They may be perceived as having wide community support and power. Board members may be perceived as politicians who represent votes. Superintendents, on the other hand, are employees of the district who do not represent votes. Explanation No. 2: there are school board members who are prominent business persons who may be viewed as potential major financial contributors. Superintendents, on the other hand, may not be viewed in this manner. They do not represent for-profit businesses. Therefore, legislators may be more likely to support school board legislation over school administrative legislation because they may believe supporting the first would enhance their political career.

A previous question asked how a legislator initiates contacts with his superintendents. The data obtained from that question indicated that twenty legislators use the telephone to initiate contacts. However, when a more specific type of contact was defined, as with this question, none of these same legislators indicated that they use the telephone for the purpose of updating their superintendents about the status of education bills. Clearly, there is a discrepancy with the data. Personal contact was used by twenty-two legislators to update their superintendents about the status of education bills but only nineteen legislators claimed they use personal contact when the question did not define the type of

contact initiated. Again, another discrepancy was noted. None of the legislators indicated that they rely on the radio and television to initiate contact with their superintendents when the type of contact was not defined in the questionnaire. However, two of these very same legislators utilized the radio and television to keep their superintendents updated about the status of education bills. Perhaps these two legislators believed that if there is no face-to-face interaction then these views do not qualify as a means of initiating contacts. These legislators did utilize other means to keep their superintendents updated. The use of written correspondence appears to be widely used by legislators regardless of the purpose of the communication. Personal letters and copies of education bills and the relevant data were stated by two legislators as the types of written correspondence they send.

1. Education Associations.

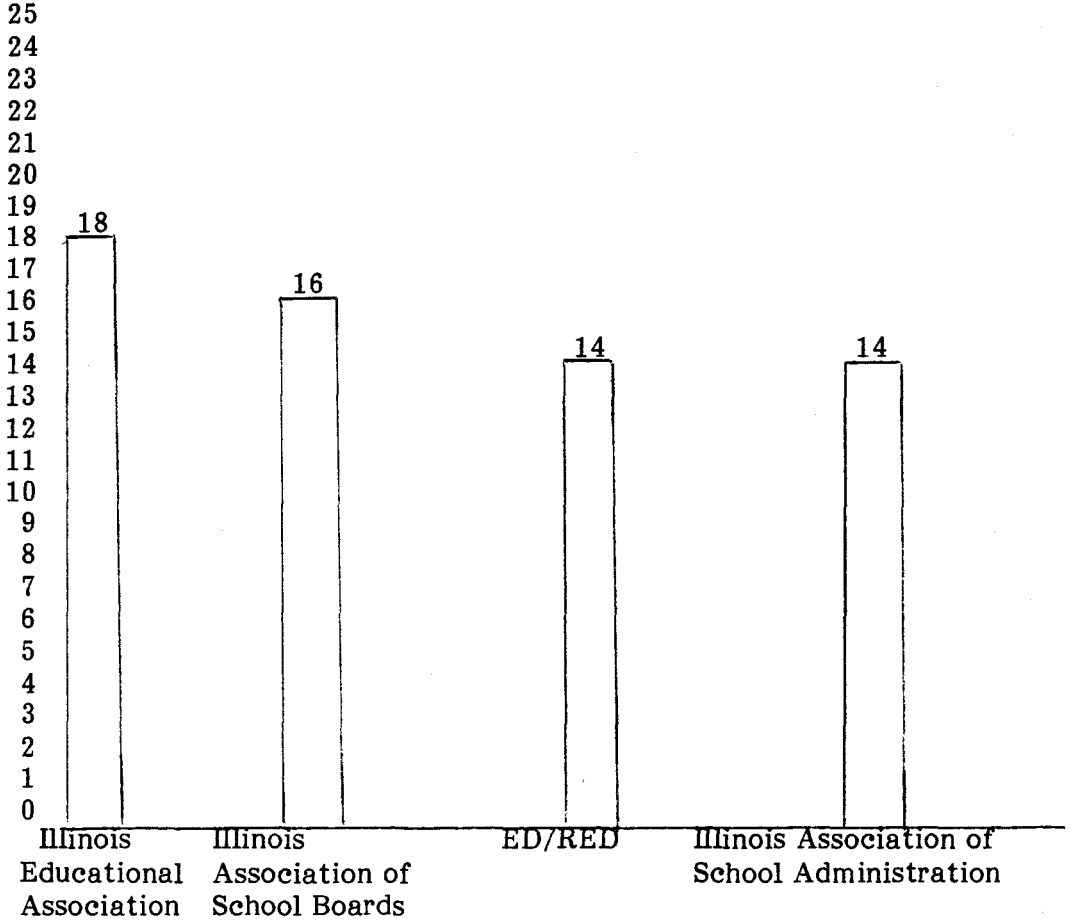
Lobbying Groups Legislators Would Be Willing To Support If Approached About Sponsoring an Education Bill.

- a. Survey Data.

Table 11 pictorially displays the number of legislators who would be willing to support legislation proposed by the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Association of School Boards, ED/RED and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

Table 11

LOBBYING GROUPS LEGISLATORS WOULD
BE WILLING TO SUPPORT IF
APPROACHED ABOUT SPONSORING AN EDUCATION BILL



As Table 11 suggests, the lobbying group which was supported by the largest number of legislators was the Illinois Education Association. Eighteen (62% of the total sample of twenty-nine legislators) indicated that they would be inclined to support an education bill if approached by a lobbyist from the Illinois Education Association. The Illinois Association of School Boards received potential support from sixteen legislators (55% of the total sample). Fourteen legislators indicated that they might support education bills (49% of the total sample of twenty-nine), if

approached by lobbyists from ED/RED. The Illinois Association of School Administrators also received potential support from fourteen legislators. Ten legislators (34% of the total sample of twenty-nine) consider sponsoring an education bill if approached by a representative from a teacher's union. No indication was made, however, of a specific teacher's union. Only two legislators stated that it would depend on a specific proposal before they would consider sponsoring any education bill. It seems surprising that other legislators did not make this distinction. Clearly, these data indicate that the legislators rely heavily on the professional opinions of lobbying associations; perhaps even more than their own philosophical beliefs. One possible explanation could be that legislators believe the representatives of the education associations are experts in the field of education and trust that the legislation they propose as being needed. One legislator stated that she would consider sponsoring an education bill proposed by a citizen. Two legislators had no preference for any group.

Only four legislators indicated that they might sponsor an education bill if approached by only one lobbying group. The Illinois Education Association was preferred by three legislators while the School Board Association was preferred by one legislator.

The following Table displays the number of legislators who might sponsor the legislation of more than one education association.

Table 12

NUMBER OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS
THAT LEGISLATORS WOULD SPONSOR

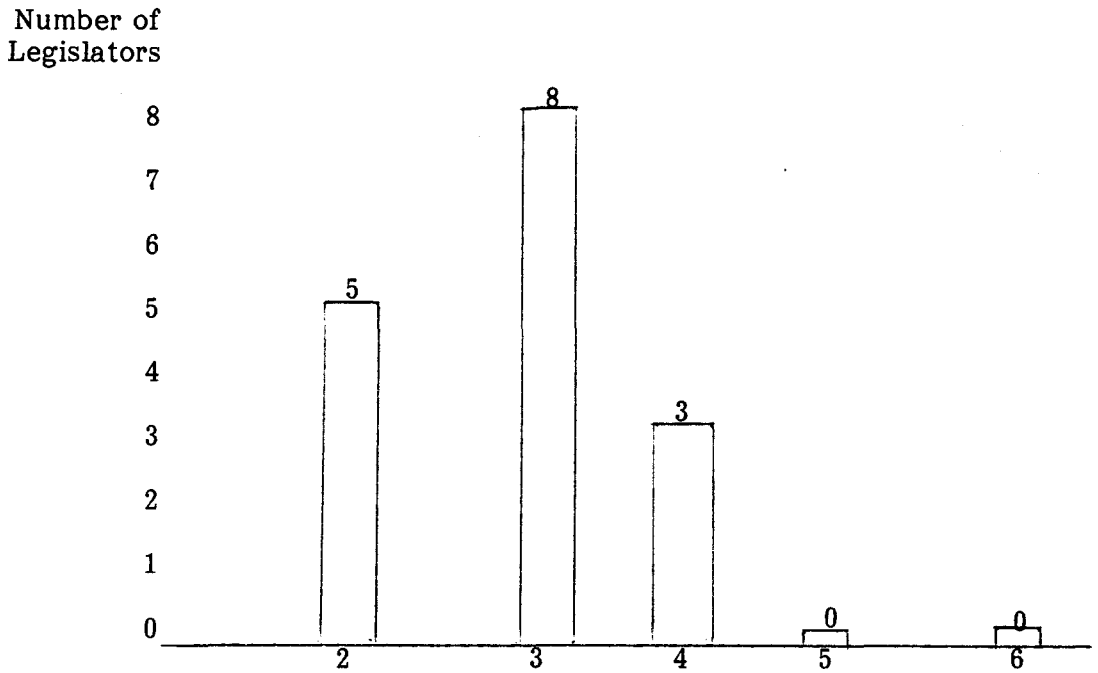


Table 12 displays the legislators who indicated that they might support legislation sponsored by two or more education associations. As Table 12 suggests, five legislators stated that they might sponsor education bills proposed by two lobbying groups. More specifically, two legislators might sponsor a teacher's union and the Illinois Education Association proposals; one legislator might sponsor legislation proposed by the Illinois Association of School Boards and the Illinois Association of School Administrators; one legislator might sponsor legislation proposed by the Illinois Education Association and ED/RED; and one legislator might sponsor the legislation proposed by the School Board Association and ED/RED. Table 12 indicates that eight legislators indicated that they might sponsor bills proposed by three different lobbying associations. Of the eight, three legislators might sponsor proposals suggested by the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Association of School Boards and the Illinois Association of School

Administrators; three legislators indicated that they might sponsor legislation proposed by ED/RED, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, and the Illinois Association of School Administration; one legislator might sponsor teachers' unions, the Illinois Education Association and ED/RED and finally, one legislator stated a partiality for the Illinois Education Association, ED/RED and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

Three legislators indicated that if four groups approached them about sponsoring an education bill, they would consider sponsoring their proposal. The Illinois Education Association, ED/RED, teachers' unions and the Illinois Association of School Boards were groups favored by two legislators, while the teachers' unions, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Association of School Boards and the Illinois Association of School Administrators were favored by one legislator.

The previous data indicated that the Illinois Education Association is the most popular group (62%). The Illinois Association of School Boards (55%) ranked second. Both groups represented extremely large numbers of constituents. The Illinois Association of School Administrators (34%) ranked behind all the education associations listed. This lower ranking could be an indication that they are one of the least effective lobbying groups in Illinois. In fact, the Illinois Association of School Administrators rank behind other groups that represent administrative interests.

One clear pattern which did emerge was that there were four legislators who claimed that they would sponsor legislation only representing administrative interests. They were of the same party affiliation. Likewise, there were five legislators who indicated that they would only sponsor education bills which

represent the interest of teachers. They were all of the same party affiliation.

Legislators who lived downstate or in suburbs outside of Cook County did not mention that they support ED/RED as did those legislators who represent northern suburban districts of Cook County. This lobbying group represents a specific geographical area. All the legislators from that area claimed they would sponsor this association's legislation. They were all of the same party affiliation.

According to the data, if a legislator has a strong philosophical view he will represent either a teacher's union or an administration lobby. Additionally, it appears that legislators who have a strong philosophical view toward one association are of the same party affiliation. Based on these data, the Democrats appeared to favor teacher associations, while the Republicans appeared to favor administration associations. These data indicate that certain associations have the same philosophical orientation as do the legislators of the same party affiliation. The teachers' unions, as the data show, have more support from legislators than do administration lobbies. There is not a large discrepancy in terms of support between the teacher's union (IEA) and the Illinois Association of School Board members. The large discrepancy is between the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

The data appear to be in contradiction with the previously reported data. The previously reported data, i.e., initiation of contacts, investigation of bills, groups associated with to keep updated, indicate that legislators value the superintendents' expert knowledge. For instance, twenty-five legislators associate with superintendents to keep them updated, twenty-two legislators ask superintendents to investigate the pros and cons of education bills and twenty-five legislators initiate contact with superintendents. Yet, seven of these very same legislators would not sponsor superintendents' legislation. There are potential reasons for this

apparent discrepancy. First, perhaps these seven legislators (24%) did not contact their superintendents but indicated that they do on the survey. Second, these legislators may feel they need to hear the views of their superintendents but are unwilling to support their legislation because it may be in opposition to their own philosophical beliefs. Third, the legislation proposed by the IASA may be associated with one particular party philosophy while the legislator represents the other party. These legislators may be obligated to vote according to the wishes of their party.

Three legislators indicated that they would consider sponsoring legislation proposed by all the lobbying groups listed on the survey. These lobbying groups include: Illinois Education Association, Illinois Association of School Boards, ED/RED, Illinois Association of School Administration and the teachers' unions. It appears that these three legislators may sponsor legislation that they believe is needed regardless of the legislation's affiliation.

ED/RED is an association which represents administrators who live in the northern suburbs of Cook County. The data suggest that as an association representing administrators, they would receive as much support as state-wide administrators' association. It appears that the members of ED/RED are extremely active lobbyists. This data suggest that they are as well supported as the larger associations.

Summary.

The education association representing school administrators, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, would be supported by less than one-half (49%) of the legislators if a member from that association contacted them. This association ranks behind the Illinois Association of School Boards in reference to

the support they would receive by legislators. The association of ED/RED received as much support as the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

2. Interview Data Relative to Educational Associations.

During the interview, nineteen of the twenty-one legislators (or 90%) interviewed mentioned their views of education associations. Patterns emerged from these comments which are described in the following Section. There are legislators who appear to sponsor either a teacher association or an administrator association. For instance, six legislators indicate that they endorse teacher associations while five legislators indicate they endorse administrator associations. These data are consistent with the data derived from the interviews. The five legislators who endorse administrative education associations are Republicans. Four of the six legislators who endorse teacher associations are Democrats. Clearly, according to the data, administrative education associations represent the philosophical views of Republicans while teacher associations represent the philosophical views of the Democrats. Further study is advised before this general conclusion can be made. Comments made by legislators reflect this tentative conclusion:

- "IEA represent the Democrats."
- "ED/RED represents the Republican view."
- "Democrats are with the IEA/AFT while Republicans are represented by the school board association or ED/RED."
- "Democrats are affiliated with the IEA/AFT."

It also appears that there are legislators who will support the legislation proposed by the association they endorse regardless of the issue. These data are consistent with the data derived from the interview data. Only one legislator

indicated that it would depend on the issue before deciding whether or not he would support a particular bill. One legislator comments: "Some legislators are in the bank" when referring to the IEA. This comment again reflects that there are legislators who support the association, not necessarily the merits of the issue. The remaining legislators indicated that they would sponsor legislation proposed by the associations they support irrelevant of the issue.

A second pattern which emerged is that there are legislators who have a personal/professional friendship with lobbyists from the education association they support. Such comments include:

- "The lobbyist from the IEA is smart. The IEA lobbyist gives feedback and listens. This lobbyist is active . . . knows how to compromise."
- "You get to know the lobbyists. Lobbyists respond to policy. They are substantive."
- "You always hear from lobbyists while you are in Springfield."
- "I am personal/professional friends with _____ of ED/RED."
- "Lobbyist talks to people. When he talks, people listen. The school board has an effective lobbyist. He knows how to compromise, listen and clearly state his viewpoint."

These comments were made by different legislators. Comments such as, "lobbyists are (1) substantive; (2) smart; (3) accessible; (4) listeners; (5) communicators; and (6) effective" reflect the viewpoint that legislators respect their opinion with high regard. According to legislators, these lobbyists appear to be effective communicators. They clearly state their viewpoints. They are perceived to provide feedback to the legislator as well as to listen. Additionally, these legislators appear to respect the professional opinions of these lobbyists. For instance, the legislator who perceives a lobbyist as "smart" must believe he has a

great deal of knowledge about the subject matter at hand. Perceived knowledge is power and power can have influence over the actions of others. Similarly, the legislator who commented that lobbyists are effective indirectly would have been saying that they influence the behaviors of legislators. The role of a lobbyist is to influence the voting behavior of a legislator. If they are effective in their roles then they are affecting the voting actions of legislators. In summary, these data suggest that the actual strength or influence of the education association largely depends on the status of their lobbyists. No indication was made if the status of the lobbyists in the eyes of the legislator is dependent on whether or not the issue represents something important to their constituents or a cause with which the legislator identifies.

From these comments it can be concluded that the contact between these lobbyists and legislators take on the character of cooperation between like-minded individuals. These legislators and lobbyists may have similar values and philosophical viewpoints regarding education issues. Thus, legislators who have similar philosophical beliefs as the lobbyists may be more easily swayed toward the lobbyists' viewpoint than those legislators with a different philosophical viewpoint.

The data did not indicate whether or not the legislators perceive lobbyists as successful in influencing the opinion of the undecided or opposed. Perhaps, lobbying does cause a legislator to question a previously held opinion, to lean toward the views of the lobbyists, or even to change from one position to another. Yet, none of the legislators alluded to the fact that lobbyists sway or influence their decisions.

These legislators stated during the interview that in their opinion the IEA controls the legislature. When asked for clarification, one legislator stated that many legislators are "in the bag of the IEA." This legislator was indirectly saying

that they are legislators who are influenced by the perks offered by the IEA -- money, votes and campaign assistance. The tone of this legislator's voice indicated that he was disturbed by this phenomenon. A legislator who is committed to supporting an association because of obligation may not be voting in the best interest of his constituents or according to his own values and interests. There appears to be trade-offs if a legislator accepts the assistance of education associations.

Education associations use various strategies to gain the support of legislators. More specifically, the strategies utilized by lobbyists include making financial contributions to campaigns, sending legislators position papers, volunteering services during their campaign and providing legislators with interns. All of these strategies were stated by legislators as being used by the Illinois Education Association. The data derived from both the survey and interview point out clearly that the IEA is the association that receives the support from the largest number of legislators. It remains unclear if the legislators who accept the assistance of an education association remain independent in their voting. Based upon the comments of these legislators, it appears highly unlikely that these legislators who accept perks remain free to vote their conscience. One possible explanation for this support by these legislators of the IEA is that they receive the assistance they need in their election campaign. As one legislator states:

The IEA and teachers have been cooperative. They campaign for you by going door to door. They give money to your campaign and help get you elected. They are willing to help . . . Whether I initiate contacts or not they appear to be willing to give . . .

Legislators who receive the assistance of an education association most likely feel a sense of commitment to them. This commitment may take on the form of voting their position. A comment made by another legislator validates this viewpoint. He

stated, "I am endorsed by the IEA. They give me their support by giving money to my campaign. I owe them some allegiance . . . I may vote their position even if I am not solidly behind it."

One legislator described a strategy by the IEA which appeared to anger him. He admitted to being a strong supporter of the IEA and agreed to accept an intern from the association. In his opinion, the intern became a spy because he told him how to vote on specific issues and after he voted this intern would report his position to the membership of the IEA. This legislator expressed his anger by making such comments as, "the intern irritated and insulted me." The scenario cited above illustrates an extreme example of a strategy utilized by an education association to influence a legislator's voting behavior. It remains unclear, however, if the legislator voted according to the positions held by this intern. This legislator obviously did not establish ground rules for this intern to follow. For instance, the legislator did not appear to make it clear to the intern that his allegiance and loyalty was to him during the practicum and not the IEA.

The data did not indicate that the education association representing school administrators utilized these methods to influence the legislators. At least none of the legislators gave examples of any methods used by the Illinois Association of School Administrators. However, the lobbyist who represents this association was mentioned by three legislators as being an effective lobbyist. According to these legislators, effective was described as being able to cause legislators to question a previously held opinion, to sway the views of the lobbyists and/or to change legislative positions.

E. Groups Legislators Associate With to Keep Informed About Current Educational Issues.

1. Survey Data.

Table 13 displays the groups legislators associate with to keep informed about current educational issues.

Table 13

GROUPS LEGISLATORS ASSOCIATE WITH TO KEEP INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

	Educational Lobbying Groups	Legislative Staff	Superin- tendents	Fellow Legis- lators	School Board Members	Community Leaders
Total Number of Legislators Responsibility to This Group	27	26	25	21	21	15
Percentage of Responses out of All Groups Listed	17	19	15	13	13	9

A total of twenty-seven legislators responded to this question. As Table 13 displays, twenty-seven legislators associate with education lobbying groups to keep informed about current educational issues. This category represents approximately seventeen percent of the total responses. Twenty-six legislators associate with legislative staff. This category represents approximately sixteen (16%) percent of the total responses. Twenty-five legislators associate with school superintendents. This category represented 15.24% of the total responses.

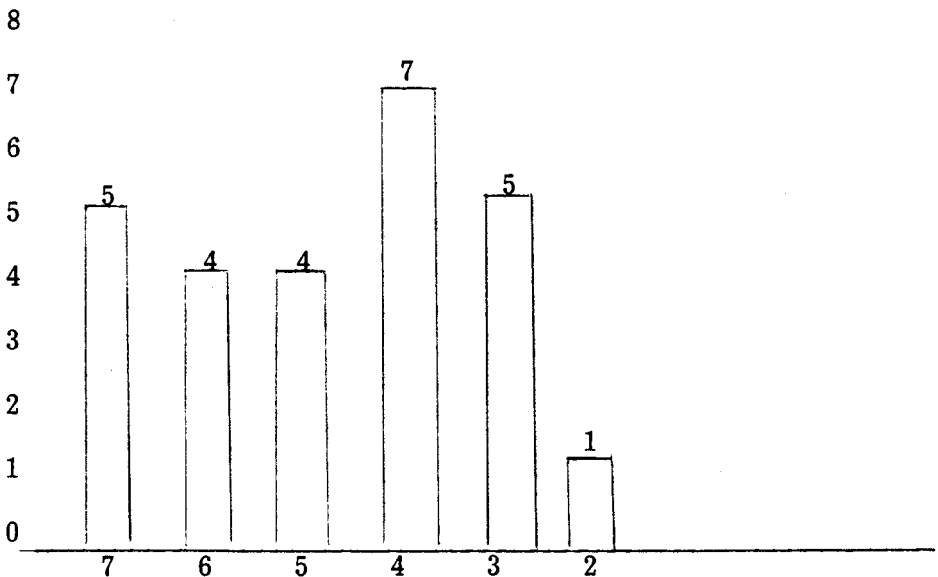
Twenty-one legislators associate with fellow legislators to keep informed. This category represents approximately thirteen (13%) percent of the total responses. Twenty-one legislators associate with school board members to keep informed. This category represents thirteen (13%) percent of the total responses.

Fifteen legislators associate with community leaders to keep updated about current educational issues. This category represents nine (9%) percent of the total responses. Thirteen legislators associate with business persons. Three other groups were listed representing less than nine (9%) percent of all the responses indicated. Eleven legislators or thirty-eight (38%) percent associate with education academicians and three legislators or ten (10%) percent associate with State Board of Education staff or citizens who "testify before the Education Committee." The last quote is not a group but this legislator listed it under this Section. The last three groups listed each represented less than seven (7%) percent of the total responses.

This following Table displays the total number of groups utilized by legislators to keep informed about educational issues.

Table 14

TOTAL NUMBER OF GROUPS UTILIZED BY
LEGISLATORS TO KEEP INFORMED
ABOUT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES



All of the legislators indicated that they associate with two or more different groups to keep updated with current educational issues. A variety of different combinations of groups is indicated. The largest combination of groups used by legislators included legislative staff, school superintendents, school board members, education lobbying groups, education academicians, business persons and community leaders. As Table 14 indicates, the following figures represent the number of legislators and the total number of sources of groups they use: four legislators associate with six groups; four legislators associate with five groups; seven legislators associate with four groups; five legislators associate with three groups; and one legislator associates with two groups. Five legislators associate with all seven of the listed groups. This Table indicates that legislators use a variety of different groups. The range from two groups to seven groups shows a great variety of possible value of group input by the legislators surveyed.

Fellow legislators and legislative staff are widely used sources of information by legislators. Legislative staff members are assigned to committees by the party. If legislative staff and fellow legislators represent their party, then it seems as if the party could be an extremely influential source of information. In combination, these two groups are dominant. Fellow legislators and legislative staff are easily accessible to the legislators when they are in Springfield. If the legislators are busy and are unable to communicate with other groups, then it would appear as if their co-workers and party staffers would be the next logical people with whom to discuss current issues. These people are with them every day when they are in session.

These figures are consistent with Question 12 which concerned the sources legislators use to investigate the pros and cons of bills. For instance, the data obtained from Question 12 revealed that twenty-four legislators rely on staff to do

the specific investigations, while the data obtained from this question revealed that twenty-six legislators rely on staff to keep them updated. These data lead to the conclusion that there are legislators who associate with lobbying groups to keep them updated but not to have them research implications of bills. These data may be an indication that legislators would rather have their own party research the implications because the education-lobbying groups may not represent their party's philosophies.

Superintendents ranked third behind education-lobbying groups and legislative staff. According to the data legislators value the information shared with them by education-lobbying groups and legislative staff more than the superintendents' information. Education academicians ranked the lowest of all groups. This low ranking is a clear indication that legislators do not value the information of education academicians as much as they value other groups.

2. Interview Data - Fellow Legislators and Legislative Staff.

Relative to the sources utilized by legislators when they want to know not only general information but also specific information, the data derived from the interview data are consistent with the data derived from the survey data. Fellow legislators and legislative staff are widely used by legislators to analyze bills and keep them updated about educationally related issues. Specifically, all the legislators indicated during the interview that they rely on legislative staff to analyze education bills. Then legislators stated during the interviews that they communicate with fellow legislators to keep updated on educationally related matters.

It appears that the advice of fellow legislators has an extremely influential role in the formulation of education policy. The data show that legislators who serve on the Education Committees in the House and Senate accept advice about

educational matters from fellow legislators who are perceived to be friends, experts on particular policy matters or party leaders. For instance, the survey and interview data both revealed that the chairperson of both Education Committees in the House and Senate are perceived by legislators and leaders in the field from whom they seek advice. The vice-chairperson of the Senate Committee was cited in the survey by nine legislators as a leader with whom they seek advice, while three of the same legislators claimed that this legislator is a leader. A total of eleven legislators were cited by co-workers as persons with whom they seek advice. Only one legislator indicated during the interview that there are no legislators on either Education Committee who are experts in education from whom advice is sought.

Patterns emerged from the above data. One pattern that emerged is that none of the legislators who were cited as educational leaders are teachers or school administrators. The legislator who was cited most often as an educational leader in the survey and interview is an attorney. The second most cited legislator is a farmer. Clearly, their professional background is not in education. None of the comments made by the legislators would indicate that these perceived legislative leaders have expert knowledge in the field concerning teacher education, curriculum issues, special education, finance, staff development or other areas of education. However, no conclusions should be drawn concerning the expert knowledge that these leaders have in the field of education since this dissertation was not designed to study this topic. Comments such as, "the chairperson of the Senate Education Committee is our leader," and, "the chairpersons of the committees are the leaders of education in the Legislature," suggest that these perceived leaders have obtained their leadership status because of their positional power. These legislators could be appointed to these key positions by the executive

committees, chairperson or vice-chairperson because of their knowledge in the field, political clout, seniority of friendships with party leaders. Therefore, there are numerous reasons which could explain why these legislators are appointed to these positions and why three members of the committees perceive them as leaders.

3. The Role of the Legislative Leaders.

Another pattern which emerged is that positional power of the perceived leaders seems to have an influence on how the legislators of the same party affiliation vote. For instance, one legislator stated that he votes "his party line regardless of the issue." He continued to say that for the most part they relate to areas that are not of interest to him. Another legislator who serves in a leadership position on one of the Education Committees stated that he "tells" his fellow legislators of the same party affiliation how to vote on particular bills especially when they are unknowledgeable about the subject matter. These comments may be interpreted to mean that there are legislators who vote their party line when they are ignorant of the issues at hand. On education issues where there is little or no constituency opinion a legislator votes his party line. They may not see any conflict between their own opinion and that of their political party. The party with which these legislators identify is a creature of their constituency. However, some issues raise such strong feelings among a legislator's constituency that he can ignore them only at the risk of losing his office. Three legislators stated that most bills are related to party affiliation. It remains unclear whether the role of party affiliation has a direct influence on the voting behavior of all the legislators, but it is clear, at least from the comments cited above, that the role of positional power, which is party related, is significant and further study on this topic is recommended.

4. Role of Legislators' Value System.

The analysis has been concerned with the legislators' perceptions of their communications with superintendents and other educationally related sources. Yet, one other very important factor must be considered. Throughout the interviews, reference was made to the legislator's personal views and judgments. For instance, one legislator stated that he communicates with superintendents and educational lobbies but the final decision is based on his own philosophy and judgments. Eight other legislators stated this same attitude during the interviews. Consideration, therefore, must be given to the individual legislator's personal dispositions and values in understanding his behavior. A legislator's value system, personal history and analytical skills as well as his motivation affect behavior.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

During this period of massive educational reform, legislators have been expected to make decisions about legislation that affect the governance of schools at the local level. More than ever, it was important that legislators and superintendents work together in formulating this legislation. Educational leaders, such as school superintendents, need to have input in this process.

The purpose of this study was to report and analyze the legislators' perceptions of their communications with school superintendents during this period of massive educational reform. Perceptions were the focus of the surveys and interviews because no attempt was made to gather documentation for their responses given.

The members of the Education Committees of the House and Senate were sent surveys which dealt with communication issues. Those legislators who responded and met criteria were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to ask follow-up probing questions. A total of twenty-nine legislators responded to the Survey and twenty-one legislators were interviewed.

The structure of the presentation of data was organized according to major topical areas which included:

- Section I - Communications Initiated by Legislators' to Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators
- Section II - Communications Initiated by Superintendents as Perceived by Legislators
- Section III - Lack of Communication Between Superintendents and Legislators
- Section IV - Obstacles of Communications Between Superintendents and Legislators

Section V - Legislators' Perceptions of Other Sources They Utilize and Communicate with Regarding Educationally-Related Issues

The data derived from the survey and interview which deals with the appropriate topic are included in that Section. Whenever the data are presented a reference is made as to the source it was obtained--survey or interview. Tables, charts and graphs are included to display the results wherever appropriate.

Many interesting facts and points of view became apparent during this study. The major findings that related to a particular above mentioned Section have been previously made. The following list of conclusions is an attempt to summarize the salient points into broader and more general statements:

CONCLUSIONS

COMMUNICATIONS INITIATED BY
LEGISLATORS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS

Major Findings:

- (a) Legislators are not initiating contacts with superintendents as a regular practice regarding educational legislation.
- (b) Legislators depend on superintendents to initiate contact with them concerning educational legislation.
- (c) Communications between superintendents and legislators are apparent when both groups are personal/professional friends.

COMMUNICATIONS INITIATED BY
SUPERINTENDENTS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATORS

Major Findings:

- (a) Superintendents are not initiating contacts with their legislators regarding educationally-related issues.
- (b) Superintendents do not perform their political role in the state legislature in a way legislators consider to be effective.

**OBSTACLES OF COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND LEGISLATORS**

Major Findings:

- (a) Legislators are extremely busy and lack the time needed to contact their superintendents from their districts regarding educational legislation.
- (b) Legislators are extremely overloaded with hundreds of bills and with their attention so divided, it is difficult for them to develop any expertise regarding the education legislation on which they are required to vote.

**LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
OTHER SOURCES THEY UTILIZE
AND/OR COMMUNICATE WITH
REGARDING EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED ISSUES**

Major Findings:

- (a) In reference to legislators' communications with education associations about educational issues, the IEA has the strongest support from legislators. Administration Education Associations ranked the lowest among the associations.
- (b) Legislators turn to colleagues for information related to education bills.
- (c) Legislators turn to legislative staff to analyze bills and keep them updated about educational issues.

The results of this study provide the basis for recommendations for the improvement of communication between superintendents and legislators.

The respondents in this study represent a small sample of legislators but to the degree that their comments are indicators of their colleagues can be valuable. The list of recommendations is not in terms of a priority ranking.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS BASED UPON FINDINGS
AND SUGGESTIONS DIRECTLY MADE BY THE LEGISLATORS**

Initiate communication with your legislators.

Utilize Every Opportunity to Open Up the
Communication Process With Your Legislators

- (a) Respond to material written in the legislator's newsletters.
 - (b) Write for information. Follow up with a phone call.
 - (c) Invite legislators to open houses.
 - (d) Sponsor forums and invite superintendents from surrounding districts.
- Superintendents need to show unity whenever possible.
- (e) Write information letters why you favor or oppose a bill. Ask for a response, personalize the issue.
 - (f) Visit your legislators in Springfield. However, be aware of taking too much of your legislator's time. Springfield is a busy place. Major meetings should take place in the district office.
 - (g) Attend committee hearings.
 - (h) Present testimony to the Education Committee.
 - (i) Arrange for your legislator to visit the students from your district.
 - (j) Invite your legislator to lunch.
 - (k) Be available and accessible. Communicate effectively your knowledge of the subject matter.
 - (l) Hold seminars on educationally-related topics.

Improve Communication Skills

- (a) Never take such an ironclad position which prevents bending or compromising at appropriate times.
- (b) Discuss alternative solutions.
- (c) Learn how to compromise.

- (d) Become an active listener.
- (e) Be honest, candid and accurate when communicating your position to legislators. Present factual information in a personal manner.

Keep Abreast of the
Status of Important Education Bills

- (a) Ask for a summary of bills from education associations. Do not depend solely on these associations to keep updated.
- (b) Ask for staff analysis of education bills from legislators.
- (c) Attend committee hearings.
- (d) Read proposed education bills.
- (e) Keep in constant communication with the lobbyists of education associations.

Maintain Relationships with your Legislators
Once They Have Been
Established and Throughout the Year

- (a) Present awards to legislators who have been instrumental in passing important education bills.
- (b) Provide positive publicity for legislators who have been champions of your cause.

Become Professional Friends with Legislators
Who are Powerful and Successful in
Passing Bills. Approach These
Legislators for Sponsoring Education Bills

- (a) Do not rely solely on education associations to get bills sponsored.
- (b) Become known.

Develop a Strong Power Base
Of Support on Important Issues

- (a) Mobilize the support of community groups, parents and businesses.

(b) Use the media to your advantage. Learn how to develop brochures and literature, talk to the press and write to the editorial columns of newspapers.

Become Knowledgeable About the
Process of Legislative Decision Making

(a) Read and understand the rules and policies of the legislative process.

Learn the process of how a bill becomes a law.

(b) Learn the informed rules of the legislative process.

Unite With Other Professionals
of Education and Present a
Cohesive and Supportive Image

(a) Develop education coalitions.

(b) Work behind the scenes with lobbyists from teacher groups and develop compromise bills.

(c) Meet regularly with executive directors and lobbyists from the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

(d) Develop a legislative agenda with superintendents from around the State. Work actively in accomplishing those goals.

Recommendations for Legislators

1. Initiate contacts with superintendents to hear their views about educational bills. Ask for an analysis of the bills from their point of view.

2. Thoroughly research the implication of education bills which affect your district. Use a vault of sources. There are research studies which can aid the legislator in discovering and selecting alternative solutions to problems.

3. Keep current in the literature of education. Confusion about the implications of various mandates can be eliminated through professional reading.

If the legislator is well informed about the implications, the risks and the potential problematic consequences of using them are minimized.

4. Expand the variety of methods used to communicate your views to your superintendents. Use a combination of letter writing, telephone calling and personal contacts.

Implications for Further Study

1. Analyze the decision-making process used by legislators of the Education Committees.

2. Analyze the perceptions of superintendents in reference to legislators' communications with them.

3. Analyze and compare the most influential sources of information used by legislators.

4. Analyze the most effective method of communications used by superintendents and legislators.

5. Analyze the perceptions of superintendents concerning the decision-making process of legislators.

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APPENDIX A

Section I
General Information

Name _____

1. Please identify your educational background.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | |

2. Please list your occupation.

3. Please list the committees on which you are presently serving.

4. Please list the committees on which you have served and provide with the corresponding dates.

() **YES, I AM WILLING TO BE INTERVIEWED**

5. Please summarize your political background (i.e. public offices held, etc.)

6. Please summarize the makeup of your constituency, including geographical area and income level.

7. Have you sponsored or co-sponsored an education bill within the past 5 years?

_____ Yes _____ No

8. If you responded yes to question No. 7, which bills did you sponsor? Please indicate if you sponsored or co-sponsored the bill.

Section II
Legislative Fact Gathering

9. During a legislative session, do you initiate contact with the superintendents from your district to hear their views about educationally-related issues?
 _____ Yes _____ No
10. If you answered yes to question No. 9, how often do you contact superintendents to hear their views about educationally related issues?
 _____ Frequently (twice a month)
 _____ Sometimes (once every two months)
 _____ Rarely (once every six months)
 _____ Never
11. If you answered yes to question No. 9, what kind of contacts do you initiate?
 _____ Telephone
 _____ Written
 _____ Personal contact
 _____ Other (Please specify) _____
12. Upon whom do you depend to investigate the "pros and cons" of an education bill that you may consider sponsoring?
 _____ Legislative staff
 _____ Educational lobbying groups
 _____ Superintendents
 _____ School board members
 _____ Professors of education
 _____ Other (Please specify) _____

13. How do you inform superintendents from your district about the status of education bills?
- Newsletters
 Professional journals
 Television
 Radio
 Personal contact
 Other (Please specify) _____
14. What types of publications do you read to keep informed about current educational issues?
- General interest
 Educational journals
 Trade journals
 National education reports
 Business/financial journals
 Newspapers
 Other (Please specify) _____
15. With which groups do you associate that keep you informed about current educational issues?
- Legislative staff
 Legislators
 School superintendents
 School board members
 Education lobbying groups
 Education academicians
 Business persons
 Community leaders
 Other (Please specify) _____
 None

16. If any of the following groups approached you about sponsoring an education bill, which group(s) would you be inclined to support?
- Teacher unions
 - Illinois Education Association
 - Ed/Red
 - Illinois Association of School Boards
 - Illinois Association of School Administrators
 - Other (Please specify) _____
17. If you want "general" information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee, where do you seek assistance?
- Legislative staff
 - Legislators
 - School superintendents
 - School board members
 - Education lobbying groups
 - Education academicians
 - Business persons
 - Community leaders
 - Other (Please specify) _____
 - None
18. If you want to know more specific information about an education bill before it is voted upon in committee, where do you turn to seek assistance?
- Legislative staff
 - Legislators
 - School superintendents
 - School board members
 - Education lobbying groups
 - Education academicians
 - Business persons
 - Community leaders
 - Other (Please specify) _____
 - None

19. How often do superintendents from your district contact you about sponsoring an education bill?

- Frequently (twice a month)
- Sometimes (once every two months)
- Rarely (once every six months)
- Never

20. How often do superintendents from other districts contact you about supporting an education bill?

- Frequently (twice a month)
- Sometimes (once every two months)
- Rarely (once every six months)
- Never

21. In which of the following areas relating to education do you have a particular interest?

- Legal
- Financial
- Administrative
- Curricular
- Special services
- Other (Please specify) _____

22. Where do you turn for help relative to the items checked in response to question No. 21?

Section III
Nation At Risk

23. Which recommendations, if any, made in the Nation At Risk report do you support?

Improving curriculum content

Improving standards

Increasing time for learning

Improving teacher performance

Improving leadership

I do not support any of the recommendations made in the report

24. In response to question No. 23, do you plan to initiate any bills relevant to those items checked above?

Yes No

25. If you do not intend to sponsor any bills relevant to the Nation At Risk report, please explain why.

Section IV

Personal Recommendations

26. Please suggest several ways in which superintendents can become involved in the legislative process.

27. List two fellow legislators serving on the Elementary and Secondary Committee, who in your opinion, have taken a leadership role in legislative matters relating to education.

APPENDIX B

SENATE COMMITTEES
84TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE PRESIDENT
PHILIP J. ROCK

Elementary and Secondary Education 400

<u>Democrats</u>		<u>Republicans</u>	
CH:	Berman	MS:	Maitland
VC:	Holmberg		Dunn
	Collins		Fawell
	Demuzio		Keats
	Jones		Kustra
	Netsch		Rigney
	Newhouse		Watson
	Poshard		
	Welch		

HOUSE COMMITTEE
84TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MICHAEL J. MADIGAN
SPEAKER

CH:	Mulcahey	Cowlshaw - Spokesman
VC:	Satterthwaite	Deuchler
	Brunsvold	Didrickson
	Curran	Kirkland
	DeJoegher	Koehler
	Hanning	Oblinger
	Huff	Slater
	LeFlore	Stephens
	McNamara	Weaver
	Steczo	Williamson
	White	
	Younge	

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Charlene Bennett has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Melvin P. Heller, Director
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Education.

December 9, 1986
Date

M. P. Heller
Director's Signature