An Analysis of the Inservice Programs for Board Members of Selected Midwest School Board Associations

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE INSERVICE PROGRAMS FOR BOARD MEMBERS OF SELECTED MIDWEST SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how school boards are provided with inservice education by their state board associations. The inquiry was organized around four main areas: topics that school board associations cover with their member districts, modes of instruction used in the dissemination of this information, resources allocated to school board inservice education and the follow-up activities utilized by the state associations after inservice education is provided.

The sample used in this study was four midwest state school board associations representing Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. Data were gathered through a letter sent to the executive directors of each of these organizations. Follow-up telephone calls were then made to each organization as needed. The data were analyzed in terms of similarities, differences and patterns emerging from the documents received. The data were also compared to the recommendations and processes found in the professional literature relative to school board inservice education.

The conclusions of this study are:

1. None of the state board associations studied has a thorough assessment system to poll school board members so that those school board members have input on what inservice
topics will be offered to them.

2. All of the state board associations studied offer several different modes of instruction to disseminate information to their member districts.

3. All of the state board associations studied have very little differentiation between the programs they offer experienced and inexperienced board members.

4. All of the state board associations designate substantial amounts of their personnel resources to providing school board inservice.

5. All of the state board associations studied have little, if any, follow-up activities for the inservices they provide their members.
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INSERVICE PROGRAMS FOR BOARD MEMBERS OF SELECTED MIDWEST SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATIONS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

JON N. NEBOR

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VITA

Jon N. Nebor was born and raised in South Holland, Illinois, a south suburb of Chicago. He is married to Mary Nebor and they have one son, Jon.

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He began his teaching career in Matteson, Illinois. He taught language arts and reading to junior high school students in Sieden Prairie School District #159 after which he became an assistant principal for the Chaney-Monge School in Crest Hill, Illinois. After his assistant principalship, he became principal of the Wallace School in Parker, Arizona. In 1990, he returned to Chaney-Monge School District #88 as its superintendent. After serving three years as the superintendent of the Chaney-Monge School District, he became superintendent of the Steger, Illinois, Public Schools where he is presently employed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School board inservice education has been an important factor in American education during the last several decades. According to Hanson, board of education members that do attend inservice education activities have better, more productive school districts than those boards that do not.¹ Hanson's findings make sense given the fact that the more the members of a school board are trained and versed in their roles and responsibilities, as well as given adequate background information about the subjects they are studying, the better and more intelligent decisions that they will be able to make.

School board inservice education can come in many forms. Superintendents, books, journals, outside consultants, the State Board of Education, and the state school board associations are only a few of the providers of such services. For the school board members who have a sincere desire to be better versed and more educated in what is expected of them on a school board, there are many

avenues to explore and study. Today, there literally is no excuse for a board member to be unprepared for his school board duties if he really wants to learn. Given the present educational climate of reform, accountability, and state mandates, the need for board inservice will continue and more will be expected from a school board member. Current board members, then, will have to be better trained to meet their obligations to the community they serve.

The state school board associations are the advocates for the individual school boards of each state. They usually have a yearly conference and timely monthly regional meetings. They also tend to be "on call" during the year to assist their member districts whenever needed. Usually, these state associations are able to assist with any problem encountered by a board of education. Within their responsibilities to their member districts, these state associations also provide board inservice education. They conduct seminars and workshops to assist school board members in many subject areas. They also produce literature so that the school board member can study on his own if he is unable to attend the scheduled meetings, or if they are on subject areas that he is not in need of studying. In short, they are a major force in training board members whether that training takes place in formal settings such as

"The use of the masculine is for purposes of writing style and is not intended to be a gender specific reference.
a lecture or workshop, or informally such as reading a pamphlet.

This study is based on four midwestern school board associations: Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana. This is an important sample given the number of school districts in each state. These four states represent roughly one-seventh (1/7) of all of the school districts in the United States. Because of the large number of school districts involved, the research derived from this sample is important in analyzing the orientation procedures for school board members. What each state association does to provide inservice education for its members is analyzed in detail.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to study how school boards are provided with inservice education by their state board associations. This is an important topic for research because of the impact that school board members have on the American public education system. For public school districts to be successful, school board members must be versed in their roles and responsibilities. School boards and state board associations have a tremendous amount of political influence since they are a "grass roots" organization. Their members extend into every single geographic location and because of this, they are an important force to be heeded by politicians. Typically, the main providers of this type of training are the state school
board associations. Many school board associations provide inservice, materials, and speakers to provide new and experienced members with the background and resources so that the individual school boards can do their jobs effectively. This study examines and analyzes what school board associations are doing to achieve that end.

Procedure

Sample

The research sample used in this study is four midwest state school board associations. Four associations representing the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin are analyzed. Executives from each state association were contacted by letter, and then by follow-up telephone call during February, 1994. This sample is relevant in that these states represent about one-seventh (1/7) of all of the school districts in the United States. This sample is important because of the large number of school districts involved. The research gathered from this sampling can be used toward analyzing the inservice procedures utilized by other state school board associations in providing inservice education to their member districts.

Design of the Study

The design of the study is the gathering of data about how state school board associations provide inservice education to their member districts in the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana. The methodology
was to send a detailed letter to each state school board association requesting information about how that association provides inservice education to its school board members. A copy of this letter is in Appendix A, p. 123. Prior to sending this letter, however, an executive from each association was contacted by telephone to notify those persons that a letter would be sent and to get their assurances that they would cooperate in this study. After receiving the material they sent, follow-up telephone calls were made to clarify any questions about their material or procedures in dealing with school board inservice.

The data analysis studied similarities, differences and patterns emerging from the documents received. Possible relationships were sought in regard to the topics presented by the state associations, their modes of instruction used, the resources they committed for this instruction, and any follow-up activities that they do for their members in relation to their initial programs. Where possible, the data were compared to the recommendations and processes found in the professional literature relative to school board inservice education. The associations were also compared among themselves. The four major areas investigated which form the research focus of this study follow:

1. **Topics**: The content areas school board associations consider important to cover for their
members so that the members are well-educated and up-to-date on school related topics.

* Are needs assessments conducted? If so, what is the procedure for conducting them and who does the analysis?

* What is the selection process for topics and materials?

2. **Modes of Instruction**: The instructional techniques used to present relevant material.

* How are materials used? What are the association’s follow-up activities?

* How is material distributed to board members?

3. **Resources Used**: The resources, such as personnel, money or other accommodations that are used by school board associations in the education of their members.

* How personnel resources are allocated to different programs?

4. **Follow-up Activities**: The follow-up activities that are conducted for board members after they receive their initial training.

* Do the associations differentiate information and services for new and experienced board members?

Refer to Appendix A with questions.
**Instrument**

The instrument for this study was a letter sent to each of the four selected state school board associations. To gather the data in terms of the four major topics studied, i.e., board topics, modes of instruction, resources used, and follow-up activities, specific questions were sent to each respondent. A copy of this letter is in Appendix A, p. 123. The following questions were asked:

1. What are the topics of the inservices that you provide to both your new and experienced board members?
2. What use of consultants, staff, and materials are used for these inservices and how is each selected?
3. Which activities are "one shot" in nature and which ones have follow-up activities?
4. How are new board members included in panels or other activities?
5. How are legal services and/or legal updates provided to board members?
6. How are needs assessments conducted?
7. What joint cooperation is there with the state's administrators' association?
8. How are the individual school board's needs matched with the services you provide?

Responses from the four state board associations were
compared for these questions and for the focus questions cited on pages 5 and 6. Similarities and differences were then studied and analyzed as to their relative strengths and weaknesses as determined through an analysis of the materials, per se, as well as the interpretive comments stated in the follow-up telephone conversations. The comparison to what was found in the literature provided a frame of reference for interpreting the data.

Administration of the Interviews

The telephone interviews were completed during the months of November and December, 1993, and February, 1994, after receiving the responses to the letter sent to the state board associations of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan. The time was chosen because many new school board members were elected to office in November. Therefore, all of the state associations may be involved in preparing to deal with the needs of these new, as well as experienced school board members. All four of the state school board associations responded to the interviews and gave in-depth information about the inservice process.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were the number of state school board associations contacted. Although these associations were selected because of the large number of school districts they serve, the study may have had more impact if the study were national in scope. A second
limitation is the possible misunderstandings of the letter sent to each association. Although the letter was specific, there was room for different interpretations on the part of the reader and the limitations of not having the identical type of material as another state board association may have. Follow-up telephone calls attempted to overcome this limitation. Although specific questions were made where thought appropriate because of the different material received, the people responding might still in fact have answered in the ideal rather than what was in fact happening in their respective associations.

Chapter I presented the background, rationale and methodology for this study. Chapter II presents the review of related literature. Chapter III presents the presentation and analysis of data and Chapter IV presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In analyzing the orientation processes of the Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin school board associations, many topics were examined. In support of these topics, this chapter of related literature is organized as follows: the need for school board inservice, current board inservice practices, inservice topics, modes of inservice instruction, resources allocated for board inservices, follow-up activities for board inservice, state mandated board inservice training, and corporate (business) board inservice philosophies.

School board membership is an important responsibility. As a school board member, one must be ready to face many challenges, and the board as a whole must be prepared for them. Individual board members and the board as a unit must learn how to be effective--that is, how to anticipate difficult situations, how to proceed when problems arise, and how to evaluate actions and responses. Following is a review of related literature on the subject of board

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inservice and its importance to the American educational process.

The Need for School Board Inservice

The need for inservice training for school board members has been supported by a variety of literature both before and after the Reform Movement of 1983. As early as 1924, Chapman and Counts stated that education has become such an intricate enterprise that persons should be well trained for the task of governance.⁴ Then, as now, school boards have been expected to govern and set general policy for the school districts in which they are elected. According to Schlechty, if boards assert strong leadership and respond constructively to criticisms being leveled against them and the schools they oversee, public education could emerge as a source of national pride.⁵ This is an important point because boards must exert a leadership role, and not a subservient one, if the quality of education in the public schools is going to be improved. Since Reform, notably 1983, school boards are constantly being challenged and although they are empowered to hire a superintendent of schools to oversee their affairs, board members must still have a fundamental knowledge of what their role is in the school corporation, and how they can best achieve their


goals within the confines of their authority. Very little has changed since 1924 regarding the fact that board members need to receive inservice education in order to effectively do their jobs.

In his research Ashby states, "the school district is an arm of the state.... School officers are state officers.... School money is state money and not local money.... School property is state property.... Teachers are state employees." By the very nature of the position, school board members have a great deal of authority. In order to govern wisely, board members must consistently be trained so that they are prepared to make the best possible decisions for their school districts. There is a need to overcome each board member's individual differences and lack of knowledge on the general roles and responsibilities of board members. This need can best be met through inservice training of board members and those candidates seeking board positions. Johnson's work supports Ashby's in that the responsibility of membership on a Board of Education is great and that a board member's lack of knowledge must be overcome if that board member is to govern wisely.

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According to Drury and Ray as early as 1965, it was determined that each board member should be familiar with and observe the laws governing the functioning of the board of education. He should be acquainted with the general pattern of organization which has been developed by other boards of education.\(^8\) The need for board members to be acquainted with the laws governing them is still here today. According to Schlechty, boards need to continually review how they operate and establish criteria to show how they are meeting student and parent needs.\(^9\)

In short, board members are expected to know what issues are important, and know how to implement change legally within their respective school systems so that these issues are addressed.\(^10\) School board members need more knowledge of more subjects. Moreover, these persons, in order to be effective school board members, need intensive orientation training and inservice growth throughout their terms on the board.\(^11\) All of this research is consistent in the fact that there is no substitute for inservice

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\(^9\) Schlechty, p. 28.


education and study. The literature supports the contention that board membership is a heavy responsibility and one that continually needs to receive current information. Both Schlechty and Fricklin are in agreement on this point.

Briefly reviewing the history of school board inservice, in 1949, Davis and Hesler published a book that stressed the importance of school board members being kept up-to-date on developments within a school system. Additionally, they emphasized that board members must acquaint themselves with national trends and developments in education, as many of the decisions members may be asked to make depend on their awareness and knowledge of such matters.\(^\text{12}\) In 1954, Reeder emphasized the personal initiative of board members with this statement:

> He must desire to increase his knowledge of present, new and better school practices. If he does not have these desires and abilities, he cannot give the best services to the schools and community.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1975, Steere examined the need for school board member training. He concluded in part:

1. School boards spend more hours in the decision making process than large industries.

2. There is a significant need for board members who are trained to recognize appropriate and inappropriate (a) educational processes and (b)


knowledge of school district assets and liabilities.

3. Be alert to alternate solutions to a variety of problems.\(^{14}\)

He further stated that untrained board members are not likely to make as rational and effective decisions as trained board members schooled in educational processes. School board members should be knowledgeable about the educational process and concept, the current issues and trends in education, and the projected needs of the community. Steere concluded by saying, "We wouldn't want an uninformed group making decisions and budgeting monies for our own businesses. Why should we, the people, tolerate a similar situation in the business of education?"\(^{15}\) This statement is as relevant today as it was when it was made. Decisions made by school boards are more complex today than in years past because of state mandates and complicated social issues. Board members need to receive inservice education on relevant topics so that they are prepared to try to make relevant well thought out decisions.

In 1980, Schuster polled, by a written survey, 322 school board members in forty-six school districts in the State of Michigan. These board members had an average of four years and two months experience as a school board


\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 43.
member. Schuster found that while more than eighty percent of the board members surveyed agreed that continuous inservice education is initially important to all who desire to perform their duties in a competent manner, nearly two-thirds disagreed with a proposal calling for the completion of a required orientation program by school board candidates prior to running for office. He also found that more than two-thirds of the members agreed that newly-elected or appointed members should be required to complete a locally determined inservice program during their first year of service.\textsuperscript{16} The significance of Schuster's research is that the majority of currently seated board members do not believe they need additional training to be effective in their positions because their existing programs are adequate. These board members overwhelmingly agree that new board members should receive inservice education. There is an inconsistency in what board members are in fact doing, and what they think they should be doing.\textsuperscript{17}

Selby found that generally, board development activities vary from the informal, sporadic, and non-systematic to simple distribution of reading materials, and then attendance at regional, state and national

\textsuperscript{16} Jon A. Schuster, \textit{An Assessment of Perceived Needs and Participation of Board Members in Programs of Inservice Education}, Unpublished Dissertation (Michigan State University, 1980), p. 82-84.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 87.
Hayden's research supports the contention that the superintendent and board president must take the initiative if board development is to be effective. Especially important is their leadership in planning orientation programs. It is the superintendent and board president who should make sure that board members are receiving the training that they need to have. Hayden suggests that the superintendent and board president usually guide board inservice because of their background and experience. Neubauer has a different point of view. She states that the state school board associations become the main suppliers of this type of education. Neubauer writes that local school districts too often delegate the authority to the state and national associations to develop inservice education programs. Much of the research supports Hayden's view.

Board Inservice Practices

Public interest in quality education naturally lends

18James O. Selby, Superintendent and Board President Perceptions of Inservice Training for Kansas School Boards, Unpublished Dissertation (Kansas State University, 1984), p. 46.


20Selby, p. 58.

itself to a look at those who are in charge of setting policy.\textsuperscript{22} According to Kinder, school board inservice is too much of an omitted necessity in the school districts of this nation, and as a result, expectations of board members may be somewhat lacking considering the emphasis of inservice training.\textsuperscript{23} As educational reform has swept through the nation to upgrade our schools from the "The Nation at Risk" report in 1983, training practices for board members are being examined, as well as those for administrators and teachers. Most board members when first elected to office have little or no experience with school district operations. To combat the lack of experience factor, an inservice program can lessen the time needed by the new board member to adjust to his new role.\textsuperscript{24} This statement is supported by Kara and Richard Funk in their 1992 research.

Kara and Richard Funk have studied superintendents and board members for a year and a half. They have found three board principles to be true. First, board member training is the most important service boards can do for their


members. Without it, a board is a group, not a team. Second, board member training is everyone's business. Third, there has never been a more critical time for board member training. According to the Funks' research, board turnover is at the highest it has ever been so boards need more inservice than they have received in the past.

Anderson also supports this thinking. In his research, he has found that effective boards require inservice training in order to succeed. For example, boards need to be able to distinguish between policy and administration, avoid making decisions on single-issue processes and recognize the expertise of the administration. Some of his specific findings are

Most Effective School Board Members

The board members most highly rated by all groups of respondents were those who demonstrated:
. ability to distinguish between policy and administration;
. willingness to ensure superintendent opportunities to recommend action on policy matters;
. insistence on policies that are sensitive to broad public need;
. willingness to avoid making decisions on the basis of single-issue pressures;
. concern that schools be free of prejudice and discrimination


27Ibid., p. 20.
Least Effective School Board Members

The behavior profile for the least effective board members was not as clear as for the most effective; however, the majority of all respondents agreed on several common behaviors. Least effective board members:

. do not seek knowledge of state and federal laws affecting education;
. do not distinguish between policy making and administration;
. display inconsistency in policy implementation;
. allow policies to impede effective educational practices;
. do not insist on compensation plans that draw and retain high quality employees.28

Anderson’s work supports the Funks’ research in that it specifically details what the role of a board member is and what that board member should be doing in his role. Anderson also goes further than the Funks in that his research is much more specific and makes detailed suggestions and recommendations.29

Board members desire inservice training to be worthwhile and relevant, accessible, and to be taught by both lay and professional people.30 Public interest in education has been heightened by the reform movement of 1983. Training practices for teachers, administrators, and board members have been scrutinized and examined to make

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28 Ibid., p. 21.
29 Ibid.
sure they are effective in their jobs.\textsuperscript{31} If people are not allowed the opportunity to gain the needed practical knowledge, frustration and fear set in which may curtail positive movement for a school district.\textsuperscript{32} Failure to promote inservice programs for new and experienced board members does not create the proper atmosphere for board members to be successful. According to Banach, to be an effective school board member and board of education, the concept of what to do and what is good must become more than a mission.\textsuperscript{33}

Generally, board development occurs in one of two ways. Either the superintendent or the state board associations will provide it.\textsuperscript{34} These points are reaffirmed in Hayden's research when he states what boards can expect in the way of inservice education from their superintendent and board associations.\textsuperscript{35} According to Neubauer, "exemplary board members are not born; they are made and thoughtful examination of the role is one thing that makes a good board


\textsuperscript{34}Neubauer, "Educating the Board...", p. 16.

\textsuperscript{35}Hayden, p. 20.
As noted in the citations attributed to Neubauer, inservice education has to be relevant and that it should be constantly provided to board members. These points are consistent with the literature that has been reviewed.

Surveys throughout the last decade have shown that board members want practical, real-life information that pertains to their immediate responsibilities. Areas of interest that reappeared at the top of many of the findings were roles and responsibilities, school law, finance, board/superintendent relations, collective bargaining, and school/community relations.\textsuperscript{37} In their research, the Sharps found that board members need to receive inservice education on the board manual, district practices, school codes, and school law.\textsuperscript{38} Anderson expanded the Sharps’ list to include distinguishing between policy and administration, curriculum, energy conservation, buildings and grounds, board decorum, and the overall role of the school board.\textsuperscript{39}

The Sharps’ and Anderson’s research is very detailed in that it identifies what school board members want to learn about. Their research clearly states the topics that board members want to learn about.

\textsuperscript{36}Neubauer, "Here’s Quick Help...", p. 14.
\textsuperscript{37}Wiles and Bondi, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{38}Sharp and Sharp, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{39}Anderson, p. 16.
Selby studied superintendent and board president perceptions of inservice training for Kansas school boards, and delivery methods of inservice training for board members. He found that both groups ranked reading material as the most often used delivery method. Attending conventions ranked second as the most commonly used method for inservice training. He noted that reading materials were shown to be most often used while ranking only fourth in effectiveness of inservice delivery methods. The relevance of Anderson’s work is still applicable.

Kleinstiver’s study of inservice needs of school board members included which delivery systems for school board training sessions/programs have been used and what is the most preferred method by board members and superintendents. She concluded that the state board association was the most utilized for providing inservice training for school board members, but local training by the superintendent was the preferred method of acquiring inservice education.

Both Selby’s and Kleinstiver’s research state that board members receive their inservice education from sources other than the superintendent and/or board president. These sources are clearly different from where board members would

\footnote{Selby, p. 51.}

prefer to obtain their information according to Kleinstiver.

In 1970, Francois surveyed board presidents and superintendents in forty-five school districts nationwide. The districts were selected on the basis of pupil enrollment, size and geographic location. Most of the respondents (69%) indicated that their districts had a minimum of orientation, generally consisting of a private meeting with the superintendent, a tour of the facilities, and reading materials. Thirty percent (30%) indicated a desire to have received a better orientation and felt they received only limited training after they were on the job.\textsuperscript{42} Research conducted twenty years later by Kara and Richard Funk in 1992 supports that Francois' research is still accurate today.

Kara and Richard Funk have found that the more successful boards start their inservice activities quickly. School Board orientation activities start as soon as new members are elected. The more successful boards use the expertise of school board veterans. They have found that veteran board members are sometimes more successful in getting some points across than the superintendent. Board members are more successful in defining board roles and responsibilities than superintendents. According to the Funks' research, successful inservice practices always focus

on the big picture and always on the present and the future. It never focuses on the past to rehash old arguments.\textsuperscript{43}  

From the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, it is emphasized that members of school boards continue to receive additional information to stay current with what is occurring in the field of education. To acquire this needed information, this state association notes that "competent school board training is a critical element."\textsuperscript{44} The New Jersey School Boards Association, in its board handbook, encourages local boards to provide manuals to newly chosen members that include board policies, budget, functioning committees, contracts, and administrative and teaching functions. This point was recognized as far back as 1982.\textsuperscript{45}  

In Illinois, Goins found superintendents, school board association executive directors, and board presidents agreed that school board associations should have the primary responsibility for providing inservice education. He found inservice sessions should be mandatory for new board

\textsuperscript{43}Funk and Funk, p. 17.  


members, and that they should be paid for attending them.\textsuperscript{46} None of the other research studied suggested payment of board members. Much of the literature reviewed supports the fact that superintendents and board presidents must take the initiative to supply inservice activities if inservice education is going to be effective. This strategy is successful because the Board President and Superintendent have the closest working relationship with the other board members and, therefore, are best able to determine what types of inservice education would best fit that board's needs. Goins stated that since most board presidents and superintendents are not equipped to do the most effective job in providing this type of service, Goins' research is inconsistent with other researchers discussed previously. Goins has found that the best source of this training is the state school board association, not board presidents and superintendents.

\textbf{Inservice Topics}

To emphasize the need for inservice for newly elected/selected board members, it should be noted that an individual who is just beginning a term on the board of education must be ready to address immediate issues. There

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{46}Manuel W. Goins, Perceptions on Inservice Training for Illinois School Board Members, Unpublished Dissertation (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1985), p. 46.}
is very little preparation time for this office. Therefore, there is a strong need to select relevant and important topics for board members to be taught.

Kleinstiver found that training in roles and responsibilities were the main areas of board training in Arizona. Carpenter, in his research in Indiana, states that board members should receive inservice education in what a board member's responsibilities are. Carpenter also reports that board members should receive inservice education so that they understand that they are policy-makers and not administrators and also that they should work to insure adequate funding.

Board members and superintendents in Colorado were interviewed by Kerrins to identify the areas of skills that they thought were important. Her research concluded that role and responsibility were the main areas of training needs. Kerrins further concluded that these perceived needs had nothing to do with the respondent's sex, years on the board, inservice or geographic location.

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48 Kleinstiver, p. 70.


research, Shannon states that inservice programs should allow board members interaction on topics that have practicality toward board member roles and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{51}

All of these researchers agreed that the main focus of board member inservice should emphasize clarification of their role. This emphasis is important because most people assume the office lacking the necessary experience for this complex a role. This research proves that board members see a need and are aware of the fact that they have to learn how to perform their role within the school district settings.

Local control has been a key ingredient in the establishment of educational philosophy, goals, and objectives. According to Killian, state and federal mandates have slowly eroded local authority and control. Because of these new state and federal mandates, board members have had to become policemen of outside authority rather than "creator and director" of local policy.\textsuperscript{52} As a result, boards are also having to receive inservice education on what the state and federal government expects from them, as well as how to "combat" some of these mandates which those boards feel are not in their district's best interests.

\textsuperscript{51} Thomas A. Shannon, "What Every New Board Member Must Learn," \textit{The Endpaper} (1986), p. 35.

In his writings, Hill states that inservice education should include training on leadership. He thinks that school board members are leaders in the community and that they should be taught the necessary skills so that they are the best that they can be in their roles.\(^{53}\) He also states that board members should be taught how to work within a group to achieve what they feel needs to be done.

As can be seen from this research, the board member's role is expanding. A board member needs to be aware of his role and responsibilities. He also is expected to take an aggressive stance to make sure all state and federal mandates are in his district's best interests and be a leader. Developing expertise in the aforementioned characteristics is important if a board member is to be successful and all of this involves inservice education as Kerrins, Shannon, Killian, and Hill recommend.

Hayden has written that he has found that board members need to work with veteran board members in order to learn how to be a board member. His research states that all board members be given the policy manual and then be updated on what is going on within the school district by the superintendent and other board members. He also thinks that reviewing the board member pledge is critically important because it reminds board members of their roles and

responsibilities.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{Modes of Inservice Instruction}

Goble found that it takes at least two years of school board service before board members gain the background and confidence to perform effectively and confidently. Consequently, the pre-service time period and first few years of board service are the most important in developing board leadership.\textsuperscript{55} The Funks' research suggests that it takes between six and twelve months before a board member can function effectively.\textsuperscript{56} There are many ways in which inservice education can be taught to school board members.

Harold Webb, the former executive director of the National School Boards Association, had some additional suggestions for new and experienced board members during the inservice process. Although dated, they are common-sense in nature and still applicable to school members today. They are

1. As soon as possible after being elected/selected, meet with the superintendent of the school district to discuss the overall role of the school board.
2. Read the board policy manual.

\textsuperscript{54}Hayden, p. 19.


\textsuperscript{56}Funk and Funk, p. 16.
3. Review the minutes for the past year for all board meetings.

4. Review current studies and surveys relative to the school district which you serve.

5. Visit other school districts, particularly those which have been known to have reputable schools.

6. Begin immediately to strive to become a member of the entire board.

7. Attempt to find the needs of all students of the district.

8. Refrain from using the board member position for personal gain.\(^{57}\)

The Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association did a survey in 1981 that was used successfully in its districts. Among the ideas used were

1. Urge all candidates to attend board meetings prior to election.

2. Have informational discussion sessions for new and veteran board members.

3. Have short sessions scheduled with administrative personnel and new board members to discuss selected topics of business.

4. Prior to first meeting, review parliamentary procedures with new board members.

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5. Have a seminar that deals with school-community relations.

6. Develop a tape/slide presentation of special school topics and/or projects.

7. Provide board members with all school related publications.

8. Extend invitations to board members to attend staff development activities.

9. Extend invitations to board members to visit school buildings and activities.58

All of these ideas are common-sense in nature and still useful today because they deal with the type of activities that enhance communication. For any board to be successful, all of the members need to work together and start with clear lines of communication. This information, although over a decade old, is as relevant today as when it was first published.

The approach to the inservice of board members may involve many different individuals and groups. In some districts, board inservice starts before the election. For example as early as 1982, in Monmouth County, New Jersey, people running for board seats had been invited to a free seminar on what is expected of school board members. After this seminar, some decided to drop from the election.59


59 Simon, p. 33.
Generally, board member training encompasses a training period after the board election. In Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1983, the inservice process began with the following by-law:

A structured orientation program will be provided to familiarize new board members with Nevada school law and Clark County School District rules.... Experienced board members, appropriate school administrators ... will be called upon to present portions of the programs.... The board policy committee will review the program every two years to adopt necessary changes.60

Webb, the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association, and the state of Nevada all agree on one fundamental idea: open communication. Whether one is reviewing board policies to bring oneself up-to-date, or participating in a board inservice activity, that person is communicating. Open communication is the one fundamental idea that all of these writers and organizations have in common. It is an important element to successful board inservice and is as relevant today as it was when many of these sources were first written. If board members are not open with the people providing the inservice programs, then it will be difficult to address their concerns.

Neubauer examined inservice programs in Pennsylvania. In her study, she randomly administered questionnaires to 505 school districts in Pennsylvania. These questionnaires were sent to experts in the field, superintendents, board

presidents, and board vice-presidents. The average age of the participants was 47.5 years old, sixty-five percent were male and thirty-five percent were female. The average length of service of each person in his respective professional capacities was five years. She came to six conclusions:

1. No single inservice design or model applied to all districts.
2. More board development is needed at the local level, particularly in rural and small town districts.
3. The state school board association played a crucial role in board development activities and resources, but it does not replace the local responsibility and needs.
4. A wider variety of people and groups needs to be involved in attending and conducting local board inservice with "hands on" emphasis.
5. Stability is promoted in a district when there is a strong board development program. The community, superintendent, and board members experience less frustration when all have participated in board development activities.
6. Creative board development programs in which participants had pride and ownership existed despite traditional constraints. Both board
members and superintendents desired more local inservice regardless of time or pressure to conserve funds.⁶¹

In research for the National School Boards Association by Paul Blanchard, it was noted that the superintendent of schools was found to be the most significant contributor to school board inservice regarding hiring, budgeting, policies and other considerations.⁶² These findings were also found to be true by Morgan in 1989. In his research, he found that the majority of school board members regarded the superintendent, rather than the school board, as the primary formulator of school district policy.⁶³ Boards of education have the option to hire outside consultants to design and direct the inservice activity. By using this method, the program for board members may be developed to meet specific local needs.⁶⁴

Neubauer's research is relevant in that it details concisely what board members and superintendents need to know in order to have effective board inservice programs. Her research outlines what happens to a district when a strong board development program is in place. Her research


⁶²Blanchard, p. 15.


⁶⁴MacDougall, p. 2.
also addresses that there is no one inservice design applicable to all districts, that more board development is needed in rural and small town districts, and that the state board association plays a crucial role in board development. Hiring outside consultants is not done as often as using the state board association or the district’s superintendent.

**Resources Allocated for Board of Education Inservices**

Typically, the resources available for board of education inservices are limited to central office administrators, other administrators, veteran board members, state and national school board associations. Other individuals such as attorneys, architects, and teachers are also involved in providing inservice activities for a school board.\(^{65}\)

In their 1992 research, Kara and Richard Funk have further reinforced this message by stating that, "board member training is everyone's business--and it's especially the business of the veteran members of your board."\(^{66}\) This emphasis is reflected in the current Reform movement.

For inservice training to become a reality for boards of education, it is imperative that adequate resources, such as money and personnel time, be put aside for this purpose. In West Virginia an inservice program was established in 1983 on a voluntary basis with the West Virginia Department

\(^{65}\)Kerrins, p. 11.

\(^{66}\)Funk and Funk, p. 16.
of Education placing emphasis on this program. To elaborate on the desirability and benefit elements, G. Warren Mickey, then president of the West Virginia School Boards Association, said,

In our state, we often find that most boards that are 'impaired' or 'in trouble' do not participate in voluntary training or are not members of our association. Usually, both factors are the case. That is why we have embraced what amounts to a multi-part effort to promote board development. If a school board is not performing up to its potential, it reflects on all of the school boards in the state. 67

Though the personnel previously mentioned are likely choices to provide inservice education, many people agree that "the superintendent is usually identified by all new board members as the planner, implementor, and responsible for board member orientation." This conclusion was identified by Kerrins who found that the "superintendents are often seen as having the first line responsibility for orientation of school board members." 68

For board inservice education to be relevant and worthwhile, adequate resources have to be allocated. In most school districts, board inservice typically means using the district's personnel to train the board members in the different areas in which they need to be informed and


68 Kearns, p. 72.
knowledgeable.\textsuperscript{69} Some districts do use outside consultants, but using outside consultants seems to be the exception rather than the rule mostly because of the financial considerations of hiring someone who is not presently on the district's payroll.

According to Herman, districts should use the central office staff in preparing their inservices. The superintendent can assemble the material, review it, and then distribute it to the board.\textsuperscript{70} Herman further states that this is an efficient and economical use of the district's central office staff.

There is not a clear consensus on who or what organization should be responsible for providing the board with its inservice education. The literature states that anyone from the superintendent to fellow board members to the state board associations can and should provide it. All of the literature is in agreement, however, in that all available human resources should be targeted for inservice education because of its importance in helping board members make effective decisions.

Follow Up Activities for Board Inservice

Much inservice education provided school board members has little planned follow-up activities. Time is a precious

\textsuperscript{69}Funk and Funk, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{70}Jerry J. Herman, "All the Right Moves," The American School Board Journal 177 (1990): p. 45.
commodity and because there are many things a board member must do, it just is not possible for many of the inservice activities to be more than a day or two. Inservices usually teach the board member his responsibilities on the board and this instruction can be done with the superintendent. There are also state and national conventions that board members attend. The information disseminated at a convention, however, is meant to be absorbed by board members in a few days, the length of the convention.

School board associations, in addition to the conventions they sponsor, do generally have periodic meetings during the year and also publish their own newsletters to keep board members up-to-date. There are also private companies that publish items such as books and pamphlets which also serve to keep board members informed about their roles in education and what is specifically expected of them. Activities and publications, though, are meant to be able to stand by themselves in terms of being useful to school board members. Activities and reading materials continue to be effective, but having read materials or participated in past workshops is not a prerequisite to benefit from whatever is presently being offered.

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State Mandated Board Inservice Training

Due to a cry for educational reform, a movement has developed to provide mandated inservice training for board members.\textsuperscript{72} Since 1985, several states have legislated mandatory inservice to insure a more uniform system of training within their state.\textsuperscript{73} Other states, such as Ohio, are considering restructuring boards of education. Restructuring could include requiring qualifications such as a college degree and mandated inservice education.\textsuperscript{74} Whether boards receive formal college training, or specialized workshop instruction, the public is aware that people elected to a board must have a specialized knowledge base. Public interest in the election of qualified and competent board members has caused state legislative bodies to enact or consider statutes that mandate school board member training. The states of Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Texas have state statutes that mandate training for school board members.\textsuperscript{75} Board members and superintendents have recognized a need for formal training and the fact that it may be necessary to mandate the training to insure that all board members will participate

\textsuperscript{72}Fricklin, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., p. 35.
in the learning experience.  

Georgia has passed legislation in 1985 which requires all new board members to receive inservice training before or during the course of their first year after being seated. Specifically

new members must be trained in the educational objectives of the State of Georgia, school finance, school law, the Georgia Quality Basic Education Act, ethics, responsibilities, and other areas determined by the State Board of Education. This mandated inservice program specifies that all board members attend at least one full day of training to effect positive management of local school districts. Additionally, the Georgia State Board of Education has the authority to mandate additional board member inservice activity if it is thought to be prudent and appropriate.  

In her article, Laffey notes that, "the mandated education requirements in several states seek to strengthen the accountability of school board members for the provision of quality education in their districts." There are two additional reasons that can be noted in favor of mandated board inservice training. First, many board members only serve one term and never really develop into effective school board members. The second reason for encouraging mandated inservice education is the fact that governance is a skill required to be a prudent and efficient board

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76 Ibid.

77 Fricklin, p. 36.

member. 79 For the educational reform movement to be as effective as possible, board members need to be prepared for the job.

Governance of an organization is inherently a teaching and learning situation. Thus, to provide a profitable experience for the board member and school district, it becomes very important for board members to receive inservice education. Failure to promote inservice programs for new board members does not set the proper tone for managerial situations. Hanson notes that, "if people are not allowed the opportunity to gain the needed practical knowledge, frustration and fear set in which may curtail positive movement for a school district." 80

Kentucky was the first state to legislate mandatory school board member inservice in 1985. At that time, Kentucky required fifteen hours of annual inservice for its board membership. All fifteen hours needed to be substantiated through documentation. Kentucky did not, however, provide funding for the inservice. The Kentucky legislature required that these inservice programs be sponsored by the Kentucky School Boards Association, as well as activities provided by national, state, and regional meetings. This requirement in Kentucky does not exclude the superintendent's role in inservice, but it does not

79 Hanson, p. 3.

80 Ibid.
emphasize his role. In 1990, Kentucky amended the number of hours required for school board members. For members with three or less years of board experience, twelve hours were required. For members with four to seven years of experience the inservice hour requirement decreases to eight hours and for over eight years of experience only four hours of inservice are required for board members.\textsuperscript{81} All of these mandated inservice hours were intended to sharpen a board members skills so as to make him as effective as possible.

Texas has taken an even stronger stand on required inservice. Texas requires:

all board members shall participate in a local district orientation session within 60 days before or after their election or appointment; and shall complete a minimum of 120 hours of training from approved sponsors to gain a working knowledge of all statewide standards on duties of a school board member prior to the end of their first year of service.\textsuperscript{82}

After the initial training, board members are required to take an additional six hours of training annually. Additionally, regulations were set forth on how the board members were to receive training in terms of a group setting as opposed to individual learning sessions. For example, board members are not allowed merely to read journals or books. They must participate in meeting with other board members.

\textsuperscript{81}Kentucky, Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 34, Section 20, 1990.

\textsuperscript{82}Texas, Texas Code Annotated, Chapter 24, Section 7, 1987.
members which are set up as inservice activities.\textsuperscript{83}

Oklahoma has regulations that begin when a person declares himself an official candidate. When the candidate declares himself to want to either be elected or selected, he must also agree upon confirmation that he will participate in a two day inservice activity sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Education in conjunction with the state school board association. Participation in the two day inservice activity must be within the first thirteen months of being seated on the school board. Funding for this training is not supported by the state, rather the local school district pays the costs.\textsuperscript{84} Should a new board member not fulfill his obligation for training, the local school board is required by law to declare that person's board seat vacant after the thirteen month period.\textsuperscript{85}

Required board member inservice in Arkansas was enacted in 1987. After that date, all board members elected to office in subsequent elections were mandated to receive a minimum of six hours of inservice in school law and the responsibilities, duties, and powers of school boards. This law also provided for the training to be received from institutions of higher learning, the state department of

\textsuperscript{83}Texas Education Agency. \textit{Statewide Standards on Duties of a School Board Member} (Austin, TX: TEA, 1989), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{84}Oklahoma, \textit{Oklahoma Statutes Annotated}, Chapter 29, Section 15, 1989.

\textsuperscript{85}Ibid.
education, or the state school board association. Arkansas did stop short, however, of requiring any additional training after the initial six hours.\footnote{Arkansas, \textit{Arkansas Annotated Code}, Chapter 25, Section 10, 1989.} Arkansas' legislation takes a step that other states do not take and that is consistent with the Reform Act of 1983. It could go further, however, like the state of Kentucky. If the required inservice training were more extensive, board members might be better prepared to assume their roles.

Mandated board inservice is an important responsibility that many school boards have. Many school board members willingly accept the notion that they need inservice education. For these board members, state ordered inservice is unnecessary. Other boards, though, do not accept this responsibility and because of their important roles in the community must be forced to receive certain types of training.

\textbf{Corporate Board Inservice Education}

Corporate boards and school boards differ in their approach to inservice education. At the onset, most corporate board members have a background in business where school board members very seldom have a background in education. Corporate board members are typically selected from the ranks of corporation presidents and other high ranking executives who need a formal business education to
obtain their initial positions. Also, corporate board members are generally paid for their services where school board members usually are not. Therefore, there is an entirely different motivation for being a member of either of these types of boards.

For corporations, about half of all executive training for board members involves participation in programs developed by professional associations, universities and colleges, and highly specialized consultant groups. 87 Researchers for the Carnegie group found that the curriculum for these groups center around: 1. managing time, 2. managing people, 3. managing money, and 4. managing production and operations. 88 Also, there seems to be two emerging trends in this type of education:

1) The increasing use of information technology is causing organizations to be information based and data dependent.

2) Senior managers are playing a more direct part in the development of management training and development courses. 89

In 1985, Bolt found in his research that:

1) Senior executives are playing a much more direct

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role in shaping management training.

2) Due to external forces, there is a greater demand for management training at the executive level, and

3) Senior managers are involved in the design of the programs and in teaching the programs.⁹⁰

Chenault concludes that corporations deliver training through methods that resemble products. For example, their training typically provides the answer first rather than teaching the thought process involved in order to make that decision. By providing the board member with opportunities for development and practice of cognitive and other strategies, managers can originate novel solutions to complex problems.⁹¹

Verlander writes in his research that programs should be:

1. Learner centered.
2. Participative in learning design.
3. Applications-oriented.
4. Focus on participant’s learning needs and problems.
5. Require that participants be prepared beforehand.⁹²

A more recent trend in executive development and board


training programs, however, is toward bringing the programs inside the company to provide an environment that is more specific to each organization's culture and more conducive to developing teamwork.\textsuperscript{93} For example, a board may attend a workshop together in their own offices rather than going to individual seminars outside the company.

Brunetti has noted that "understanding can unlock the opportunity to affect the implementation of a strategy by bringing consideration of the human implications to the front."\textsuperscript{94} When Brunetti researched corporate philosophies, he found that management must be prepared to support education and training on a very large scale and this begins with the board of directors.\textsuperscript{95}

In her writings about Motorola Corporation, Galagan states that it is the heavy training investment in people that "has fostered deep loyalty among its employees and contributed to the company's success."\textsuperscript{96} Motorola's Chief Executive Officer and son of the founder have attended training classes as participants. At Motorola, "A skilled and educated work force is seen as a competitive weapon in

\textsuperscript{93}Carnevale, et al., p. 125.


\textsuperscript{95}Ibid., p. 12.

\textsuperscript{96}Patricia Galagan, "Focus on Results at Motorola," \textit{Training and Development Journal} (May 1986): p. 43.
There are many similarities between corporate boards and boards of education. Both are essentially policy makers and both need to receive inservice education in order to keep current and up-to-date. The Carnegie Foundation found that corporate boards are concerned with managing time, people, money, and operations and Drucker found that information technology is a big concern. Verlander and Chenault's research dealt more with thinking skills and learning processes. Lastly, Galagan discussed Motorola's commitment to training people and the importance of trained and educated people in a competitive workplace. The importance of this review is that corporate boards, like school boards, have to have an understanding of what they are supposed to be achieving if they are going to be successful. Corporate boards, as a group, must be updated in the current management trends in their particular fields and the learning processes that they should be following so as to make correct decisions. This training naturally leads to more productive and effective businesses and corporations.

Summary

This chapter has presented a brief summary of literature related to the inservice process of boards of education. The chapter began with research of why school

\[97\text{Ibid., p. 44.}\]
board inservice training is important. The subject then moved into current board inservice practices, inservice topics, modes of inservice instruction, the resources boards of education allocate for inservices, and then what follow-up activities are done after an inservice exercise. The chapter then focused on what some states are doing by way of making legal mandates. Finally, the chapter concluded with how the corporate world gives inservice education to its corporate boards.
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The samples providing data for this dissertation are the state school board associations for Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The study of how state school board associations provide inservice education for their member districts is an important topic for research because of the impact that school board members have on the American public education system. For public school districts to be successful, school board members must be taught their role and responsibilities. Typically, the main providers of this type of training are the state school board associations. Many school board associations provide inservice, materials and speakers to provide new and experienced members with the background and resources so that board members can do their jobs effectively. This study has examined and analyzed what the above mentioned school board associations are doing to achieve that end.

The four state board associations mentioned above were contacted by letter requesting documents on how they inservice their new and experienced school board members. This sample is significant because these states represent
about one-seventh (1/7) of all of the school districts in the United States. Follow-up telephone interviews with state board association executives were then made as needed.

School board associations are very active in providing services for their member districts. They are accommodating organizations which tend to try to be "all things to all people." In gathering the information provided by them, and then analyzing it, it was found that for the most part they offer a well rounded list of services. From their yearly conferences to the year-round seminars and inservices that are offered, they try to provide a complete list of services in a timely manner to their members. They also are accommodating if any special requests are made by their member districts. Examples of special requests would include guest speakers or materials.

The areas analyzed in this paper are Topics covered by the school board associations for their members, Modes of instruction, Resources used, and Follow-up activities. The areas selected were chosen as a result of analyzing the literature and selecting areas which would affect how school board members receive inservice education. This analysis is qualitative in nature and focuses on similarities, differences and patterns emerging from the documents.

Areas of Study

The data presented are analyzed and organized by the four broad areas requested in the original letter sent to
each association requesting information (see Appendix A, p. 124). The board association executives responding were encouraged to send whatever they deemed relevant that would best represent their efforts in servicing their member districts. The areas of study are as follows:

*1. **Topics**: The content areas school board associations consider important to cover for their members so that the members are well-educated and up-to-date on school related topics.

*2. **Modes of Instruction**: The instructional techniques used to present relevant material.

*3. **Resources Used**: The resources, such as personnel, money, and other accommodations that are used by school board associations in the education of their members.

*4. **Follow-up activities**: The follow-up activities that are conducted for board members after they receive their initial training.

**Narrative Presentation and Analysis of Board Associations' Responses**

An analysis, comparison and contrast of the data for each topic follow the data. Also, strengths and weaknesses are noted in terms of recommendations found in the literature.

*1. **Topics**

The Illinois Association of School Boards has a long
list of topics that it covers over the course of a year for its member districts. Many of these topics are covered at its state conference each November. However, the association also sponsors regional and area seminars and these topics are covered there as well. The list is extensive, but the general topics are

* Teacher retirement packages  
* Superintendent evaluation  
* Change  
* Leadership  
* Public relations  
* Collective bargaining  
* Communication  
* Referendums  
* Curriculum  
* Disaster removal  
* Employment law  
* Energy performance contracting  
* Extracurricular activities  
* Fair labor standards  
* Illinois Fiscal Future  
* Gang activity  
* IASB Services  
* Parental Involvement  
* Legal Issues  
* Legislature update  
* State and Federal Mandates  
* Middle level education  
* Parental Involvement training  
* Planning and goal setting  
* Technology  
* Robert’s Rules  
* Cooperative Buying Programs  
* Board policy  
* Consolidation  
* Seeking the Superintendency  
* Student Rights and responsibilities  
* Students at Risk  
* Technology for Education  
* Board evaluation  

The topics cover most of the major areas of study that a school board member would need to have at least a working knowledge of in order to be able to make informed decisions at the board table. A school board member from the Chicago area may not find these items as beneficial as a board member from rural downstate Illinois. Whether this list is relevant to board members representing the varying social, economic and political factors in the state is questionable.
There is no indication in the list of topics, nor the accompanying materials, that differentiation is made for board members representing urban or rural districts. In addition, there is no differentiation made for new and experienced board members.

In a telephone interview with John Allen, a field service director for the IASB, he was asked how the IASB decided on its topics. He responded that there was no real scientific method in how topics were decided. He said that the IASB would informally poll members of its executive board and just generally "keep their ears to the grindstone" for any important topics. Basically, he said that the IASB was aware of what board members should know and that they would provide the necessary inservice education based on what the IASB thought appropriate. Although it is positive that the IASB is willing to assert a leadership role in determining what topics should be offered, it lacks detailed study in its method of reassessing what programs should be offered. The input is one-sided in that opportunities for input from member districts is limited. Its method amounts to no more than a "brainstorming" session in which IASB executives discuss what they think is important and then implement those ideas for their member districts. Because of the high turn-over rate of school board members, though,

it is doubtful that the vast majority of the IASB’s members are even aware of how the selection process is implemented.

The Indiana School Board Association also offers a complete list of topics to its member districts. Although it has different topics than the one supplied to its members by the Illinois Association of School Boards, it still is thorough. Among the items or topics covered are

*Pupil Counseling Programs
*Expanding opportunities
*Community relations
*Technology
*Outdoor education
*Gangs
*Parenting
*Job Sharing Programs for Teachers
*Geography
*Parent Involvement in the schools
*State spending on education
*Superintendent evaluation
*Legal issues
*Board evaluation
*Student Self Esteem
*Gifted education
*Teachers as trainers

*Inclusion (special education)
*School Politics
*Transportation
*Purchasing
*Insurance
*Food Service
*School Construction
*Maintenance
*Financial Planning
*New Board Member Training
*Student Due Process and Discipline
*Collective Bargaining
*Board policies

Like the Illinois list of topics, many of the Indiana list of offerings have to do with generic topics and topics in which board members would be interested. In a telephone interview with Noel Baker, an inservice director with the ISBA, he explained how the topics were decided.\(^{99}\) The process was unscientific at best and was surprisingly similar to that used by the Illinois Association of School Boards.

Boards. Essentially, the ISBA offers the programs that it believes should be offered. It does ask for program suggestions when it does its evaluations at the end of the programs, but this is a limited way to get input. Perhaps the reason for this limited input is that staff members of the ISBA believe that board members, particularly new board members, are not sophisticated enough in their roles to be able to clearly identify what special training they may need. Board members sometimes do not see the "big picture" regarding their function in the system. Many are single issue people who got elected to the board to change one particular area of the school program so they have little knowledge of what is expected of them in other areas. Because of this lack of understanding of what their entire role is, the ISBA staff tries to determine the inservice training which would best fit their needs.

The Michigan Association of School Boards has covered the following topics in inservicing its members:

* Site Based Management
* Managing Complex Change
* Building Team Excellence
* Technology
* Curriculum
* Future planning
* Building restoration
* Computers
* Bond financing
* Employee benefits
* Public/Private Partnerships
* Role of the school board
* School privatilization
* Sports
* Michigan High School Proficiency Test

* Collective bargaining
* Total quality management
* Standards and expectations
* Increasing Parent Involvement
* Inclusion
* Health Care Cost Containment
* Board meeting agenda
* Religion in the Schools
* Early Childhood education
* Borrowing and Investing District funds
* Administrator
The Michigan list of topics is longer than the Illinois and Indiana ones, but it is not as similar in subject areas as the other two. As in the two other state association lists, the Michigan list does not differentiate among the various types of school districts and experiences of school board members served by the association. Clearly, the topics are chosen to provide relevant information to the member districts, but there is no evidence in the list or materials provided to reflect individualized or regional needs. In a telephone interview with Ron Ciranna of the MSBA, Mr. Ciranna was asked how inservice topics for the MASB were decided. The answer was two-fold. First, the staff "brainstormed" to determine what school board members should know about. Second, the MASB offered its "basics" such as legislative, legal, finance and new board member inservices.

Like Illinois and Indiana, the method of deciding what to offer is dependent primarily upon the decisions of the MASB staff. Certainly the MASB has a professional staff, but it does not conduct a comprehensive assessment of what

school board members need to know. Mr. Ciranna also indicated that the MASB follows the National School Board Association to help determine what the MASB deems important for inservice education. The MASB also looks for developing trends in education and then expands on those to offer programs that its member school boards will benefit.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards list of inservice topics that is offered to its member districts is as follows:

*Leadership  
*Strategic and Site-Based Planning  
*Self-esteem  
*Year-Round education  
*Curriculum  
*Early Childhood Education  
*Youth apprenticeship  
*Total Quality Management  
*Collaborative Decision-making  
*Cooperative Purchasing  
*American with Disabilities Act  
*Portfolio assessment  
*Interagency collaboration  
*New building construction  
*Business/Education Partnership  
*Technology  
*Finance  
*State goals  

*Schools for the 21st Century  
*Communications  
*Untracking H.S. English  
*Environmental services  
*Public library collaboration  
*Practical skills for the work world  
*Accountability through teacher assessment  
*Health Care Cost Containment  
*School Law  
*Crisis management  
*Collective bargaining  
*School breakfast programs  
*Passing a referendum  
*Sexual harassment  
*Playground safety  
*Evaluating school administration  
*School age child care  
*Superintendent searches  
*Global education  
*Outcome based education

The Wisconsin list of inservice activities is slightly longer than the other three state board associations. Like the Michigan Association of School Board Association, it
offers many specialized areas of study that may not be of
interest or value to all member districts. As in the other
associations, individualization of topics is not apparent to
meet specific needs of a diverse membership. The generic
topics are deemed important by the staff members who
selected them and their general relevance cannot be ignored.
There is no evidence that attempts have been made to modify
or individualize these topics.

In reviewing the list of topics offered by the four
board associations several of them appeared on all of the
lists provided by all four state school board associations.
They are

*Superintendent evaluation
*Leadership
*Public/community relations
*Referendums
*Legal issues
*Buildings and grounds
*New Board Member and President Orientation
*Employee benefits
*Board evaluation/agendas
*Finance
*Collective bargaining
*Technology
*Curriculum

These similarities were not surprising to see. The
above list represents a basic core in which all school board
members would have to have some knowledge if for no other
reason than to have a working knowledge of the state laws
and mandates with which their districts must comply. Also,
all four state board associations have a long list of
offerings. This list of offerings is intended to meet the
needs of its member districts in spite of minimal efforts to
gain input from the membership. The long lists do provide a
variety of material and information to draw upon if and when
the need for such material arises. In this respect, the lists can be valuable for board members.

Another similarity had to do with the number of topics presented. All of the four board associations had about the same number of their "stock" topics. Since all four follow the topics of the NSBA, this is not surprising. By the nature of a school board, and the constant turnover of board members, there are only so many topics that the average board member can study in a reasonable amount of time. The school board associations have chosen to stay with the tried and true topics rather than soliciting school board member input. It is possible, however, that the state associations consider the NSBA topics as sufficient input for their members.

In researching the topics provided its members, it was also discovered that all four school board associations do provide leadership in the way topics are selected. This is an important similarity. All board members must have a fundamental understanding of the operations of a school district and of exactly what their role is within the system. What they all are doing is consistent with the review of literature presented in Chapter Two. The literature stated that there is very little time for new board members to prepare so that they can address the immediate issues. By the board associations taking the lead in providing inservice instruction in what the board members
should know, they are providing a service to those board members. Nonetheless, these associations are not analyzing adequately their members' needs once these same members have received fundamental inservice training. Examples of this point include following the NSBA’s lead in selecting topics for board members to learn about and the fact that all four associations do not actively solicit input from their members other than some informal polling or some follow-up evaluations.

Nonetheless, the variety of topics offered seem to meet the needs of the membership. For the astute school board member who wants to be as informed as possible, there is ample opportunity to be kept up-to-date on what is new and progressive within the field of education. In the topics that were studied, board members could study all of the basics like finance, superintendent evaluation and collaborative decision making. Also, they could study subjects like global education, high school English, sports, site based management and job sharing opportunities. The topics offered for inservice education provide a good selection to choose from.

A pattern that all of the four board associations have developed with their programs has to do with time. All of the topics presented were usually handled in one meeting, one to three hours long. With very few exceptions did this pattern deviate. In analyzing the length of these programs,
the motivation for having programs this length of time on
the part of the school board associations is logistics.
Based on the comments from the respondents, school board
members can seldom make a time commitment past one evening,
or a weekend, for continuing education or inservice
instruction. With this in mind, the school board
associations studied try to keep their topics to a
manageable period of time.

Comparing what was studied to the literature reviewed
in Chapter Two, the material that was studied is consistent
with the research. In the review of literature several
points were noted. To start with, the literature cited in
Chapter Two has stated that most board members, when first
elected to office, have little or no experience with school
district operations. This view was corroborated from
conversations with association executives from all four
school board associations. The associations offer workshops
and special sessions for new and experienced board members,
but there is no clear differentiation among the topics
offered. All sessions are open to all board members
regardless of experience. This catchall approach may be
working, but there is little evidence that the needs of
experienced and inexperienced board members are being
addressed through the topics offered. Also, the literature
has documented that board members desire inservice training
to be worthwhile, relevant, and accessible. The information
supplied by the school board associations meets these criteria.

Based on the literature presented in Chapter Two, the material also states that exemplary board members are not born; they are made and thoughtful examination of the role is one thing that makes a good board member. This is to say that successful boards need inservice activities to keep their members informed on the current trends and research. The topics provided by the state school board associations are ample in addressing the needs of their member districts. They provide a substantial list of "core" topics that a board member would need to be taught in order to be effective on the board. They are not, however, as thorough as they might otherwise be if experienced board members were solicited for their input on what other topics should be offered to them and to new board members. All four associations make their decisions on what topics should be offered essentially by themselves usually following NSBA guide topics with little regard to what board members feel that they should be learning.

Also stated in the review of literature in Chapter Two is that since 1983 surveys have shown that board members want practical, real-life information that pertains to their immediate responsibilities. Areas that keep reappearing in the data gathered were roles and responsibilities, school law, finance, collective bargaining, and school/community
relations. All four state school board associations offer these topics to school board members. Also found to be within the subject areas offered were superintendent evaluation, leadership, referenda, buildings and grounds, employee benefits, technology, and curriculum. The state board associations, then, are offering even more topics than the surveys would indicate are requested by their member districts. In this respect, the associations are providing an enriched service.

According to Kerrins, role and responsibility are the main areas of training needs for board members. If this is the case, then again all of the state school board associations that were studied are providing topics for their inservice education that is consistent with the literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two. This provision is a strong point for the associations. All of the state board associations not only offered workshops and inservice education on board evaluation and what is expected of board members, but also sponsored new board members and new board president inservices so everyone who was new to his role would know exactly what was expected of him. Kerrins' research is consistent with what was found in studying the material supplied from the state board associations.

The American Association of School Administrators has stated that board inservice training should be practical, related to appropriate topics and fit the needs of the individuals receiving the training. The information given by the board associations is relevant and useful because it addresses today's programs. Rather than being philosophical, it is practical so board members can immediately use what is taught. The material from the state board associations that was analyzed was consistent with recommendations found in the literature pertaining to what board members need to know. All of the topics supplied by the school board associations were "hands-on" oriented.

Using the AASA's third criterion of fitting the needs of the individuals receiving the training, a potential weakness was noted. As stated previously, although there are some strong points related to the topics provided by the associations, it appears that the topics are not derived from a systematic assessment of the needs of the members. All of the associations provide an effective "core" of basic offerings, but they do not necessarily meet the needs of more experienced board members who are beyond the level of basic inservice education. An analysis of the materials received and telephone discussions with association executives bore out this point.

In determining the actual needs of its members in order to provide appropriate topics adequately for its inservice activities, none of the four state board associations studied had a clear and definite way to poll its members to get their input. This fact was confirmed in follow-up telephone calls to each of the four state associations studied. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards had nothing printed even remotely looking for a response from its members as to what those members might want to learn. In reviewing its inservice material on the topics it presents, there was no mention that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards sought any feedback of that nature from its member districts. This fact was confirmed by Kathy Rosovics of the WASB in a telephone interview with her.103

The Michigan Association of School Boards also has basically the same type of assessing system as the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Nowhere in its literature does it solicit any type of feedback from its member districts or ask for any other type of response. In a telephone interview with the Michigan Association of School Board’s policy director, he was asked how the state’s board association matches the needs of its member districts with what the MASB provides. The response was that if the MASB

is contacted by a board member or a superintendent, it will customize a program for that board. This type of inservice for board members can be valuable, but if it detracts from attendance at the state conference, efforts can be made by the state staffs to minimize this possibility. For example, sessions based on previously treated topics can be developed further. As to critiquing the individual programs or regional meetings, however, this is not done often. The MASB stated that it asks for program suggestions only in its program evaluations. This method of soliciting this type of information may be helpful, but is merely one approach.

The Illinois Association of School Boards communicated more with its members than the state board associations of Wisconsin and Michigan. In its materials it asked for suggestions and comments regarding its state-wide conference. People participating were requested to comment on the conference and how it could be improved. Although the information requested is reviewed by the IASB, the topic selection is still exclusively decided upon by the IASB. It does, however, use other informal polling usually utilizing brief conversations with school board members to decide on what topics to offer.

In analyzing these methods, they do not appear to be innovative. Although the bottom line is that a few people in the IASB office are acting as the gatekeepers for what the majority of the state’s school board members will be
taught, no comments were made by state board association executives concerning member dissatisfaction.

The most thorough of all of the state board associations studied is the Indiana School Boards Association. Several times in its literature it requested that its members critique and/or comment on the programs that it offered. It even provided areas at the conferences where the material would be picked up similar to "suggestion boxes." For those who wanted to mail the material directly to the ISBA office, a contact person's name and address was provided. This information was readily available and easy to find. This approach is somewhat different than the other state board associations studied in that the ISBA made an effort to solicit information from its board members where the other state organizations did so much less formally.

In analyzing each association's method for seeking input and feedback from school board members, it is obvious that all of them with the exception of Indiana do not regularly seek meaningful board member input. Michigan and Wisconsin appear to want to provide inservice programs as they see fit and do not give any indication that they want any suggestions from their membership. Wisconsin does not give evidence of seeking program suggestions from its members. Michigan only asks input from its members concerning its program evaluations. Illinois does ask for some input, but has managed to hold tight control over which
programs will be offered. Indiana is the only association studied that seems to give a concerted effort to find out what its board members want to learn about.

The board associations are intended to be service organizations serving as a back-up to their member districts. After studying their methods, however, it is apparent that they do not always see themselves in this role. They are asserting their influence and it seems that they are the ones directing board members. As stated previously, however, the topics provided have value and at least generically meet the needs of board members.

Overall, all of the state board associations are receptive to helping those who need their services. They are accommodating and open to providing special services, i.e., inservice, as needed. These services are usually at an additional cost beyond the membership dues. As far as the inservice topics that are held at the state conventions, or at regional meetings, however, they themselves exercise the leadership role and decide what will be presented with little input from their member districts. The one exception to this statement is the Indiana School Board Association. The ISBA does try to include its membership in deciding what programs to offer. Lastly, although the concerns and insights of new and experienced board members are unlikely to be the same in terms of their roles and responsibilities, this point was not addressed by any of the association
executives. Other than new board member workshops, the board associations do not differentiate among the types of inservice activities that are planned for its members.

*2. Modes of Instruction

There are several media in which the state school board associations disseminate information to its member districts. The Illinois Association of School Boards has its state-wide conference every year. At that conference representatives from member districts from all over the state visit Chicago to participate in three days of seminars and meetings. There also is a delegate meeting in which the membership votes on its positions on various topics. The meetings generally are from one to two hours long and usually are not related to other meetings. Each meeting stands on its own merits without overlapping with subject areas from other meetings.

The Illinois Association of School Boards also has regional and area meetings planned throughout the year. Typically, they are offered at several locations throughout the state so that all boards can take advantage of the inservice activities provided if they so desire. These workshops are not as diverse as the ones offered at the state conference. Rather, the topics tend to be more basic in nature and more practical in their application than some of the other workshops provided at the Chicago conference. Examples of these types of inservice activities include
collective bargaining or creating board policy. An example of a topic that may not be offered during the year, other than at the state conference, would be a program like Robert's Rules. This topic would be a subject that experienced board members could help inexperienced board members with if the inexperienced board members were not up-to-date with Robert's Rules. Because of this opportunity and other avenues for board members to learn this information, it would not need to be presented on a regular basis other than at a once a year state conference.

The Illinois Association of School Boards also publishes many types of materials for its members. Among them are books, pamphlets, a monthly newsletter, a bimonthly magazine, and various associated updates concerning important topics and legal issues.

The monthly newsletter is in an easy-to-read format. It generally has a cover story that would be of interest to its readers and then denotes a page for events of national interest. It then gives an update on all of the workshops and meetings the IASB will be conducting in the near future. The newsletter has some miscellaneous advertising and then concludes with a few pages dedicated to legal issues. For the board member who does not usually attend outside workshops, this means an update for him to review in order to find out what is going on in the field of education in the state.
The Illinois School Board Journal is published every other month. The newsletter is an update on what is going on within the Illinois Association of School Boards; the journal focuses on articles of general interest to its readers. The journal also tries to center on topics of direct interest to a school board such as how to be a better school board or what the school board's role is within the whole school operation.

Also provided by the IASB is a list of publications that are available to its members. Also available are books that the IASB publishes. These books deal with topics like the Illinois School Code and the Effective School Board Member. For the board member who feels that he needs more of a background on a particular subject other than an article, these books are a convenient way to receive inservice education.

Lastly, in order to keep its members updated, the IASB also does studies whenever it determines there is a need and then distributes the findings to its membership. An example of this type of study is an updated listing of its membership. The IASB will also provide inservice training to its member districts on specialized topics such as a superintendent's search or board self-evaluation.

In analyzing all of what the IASB does for its members, the first item that is discovered is that it offers a variety of services. It is difficult to find a mode of
instruction not utilized by the IASB. The organization supplies many publications and offers a variety of inservices. The IASB also is willing to customize or develop an inservice topic if the need arises. It also provides many interaction types of activities thus getting away from the usual lecture format. An example of this would be group activities where board members discuss topics of concern to them rather than merely listening to a lecture. This format is useful because it allows board members to interact with themselves and the speaker so as to maximize the potential for getting more from the program.

The Indiana School Boards Association provides its members with a state conference similar to the one provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards. The conference lasts three days and board members are exposed to seminars and meetings. The ISBA also has a delegates' meeting where the association hears from the membership on what positions it should take on various issues. The state conference is the Indiana State School Board Association's biggest event of the year.

During the year, the Indiana School Boards Association also provides inservices and meetings for its members. These meetings are usually on a regional or area level.

The ISBA also publishes a newsletter. It is mailed four times a year. The content is not so much of an update on future programs as much as it is a report on some of the
events going on in the different school corporations. It is more of a "good news" type of publication rather than anything substantive like issues to be aware of or legal type notices or briefs.

The Journal of the Indiana School Boards Association is published four times a year and sent out to its members. It is a professional journal with articles that are of interest to the membership. Examples of the subjects that the journal covers are financial management and legal issues.

The Indiana School Board Association also publishes its own books as a service to its members. They are written primarily on the topics of boardsmanship, legal issues, finance, and legislative issues. Additionally, the Indiana School Board Association publishes manuals for its members. They dealt with many of the topics listed above. For example, they would be written on a specific point within the law rather than a book on some fundamental and basic principles of the law.

The Indiana School Boards Association will also provide special inservice activities if they are requested. These topics can be on anything from policy development to the superintendent’s contract. The association has these workshops prepared and will make them available to member districts. It also provides inservice education on topics that are requested by the individual school districts.

In analyzing what the ISBA does for its members, it is
evident that there is a variety of services available. The ISBA offers many publications and services. One of the more important publications is its bi-monthly journal dealing with major educational items rather than minor "nuts and bolts" issues found in the ISBA’s other publications. Board members are policy setters and they need to see the organization as a whole rather than looking at individual items. Considering the individual board member’s background, however, and his usual lack of preparedness in school operations, the ISBA offers a well-rounded list of services. The ISBA utilizes several modes of instruction in order to communicate the message to its membership.

The Michigan Association of School Boards offers many of the same services as the Illinois and Indiana school board associations. Like Illinois and Indiana, it also has a state-wide convention. Michigan’s state conference, however, lasts four days. It also has a delegates’ meeting at the convention to solicit input from its membership on what position to take regarding upcoming issues. Each of the inservice activities and meetings lasts for one hour and fifteen minutes. A variety of meetings is held at the same time so a board member has a choice of several events to attend. This MASB’s conference is the best attended event for the year, according to Ron Ciranna of the MASB.104

The MASB also has a large selection of board academies scheduled throughout the state. The MASB tries to limit these meetings to four sites. These meetings typically last four hours and deal with subjects like curriculum, instruction, or community relations. Along with the academies, the MASB offers miscellaneous workshops. These typically last three hours and are located throughout the state. These sessions are not as detailed as academy courses, but they do essentially deal with the same types of topics. Additionally, the MASB will make individual visits to school districts if there is a specific request from the superintendent or board president to conduct a special program. There is always an additional fee for these services and the programs usually last between two to four hours. The MASB stands ready to assist all of its member districts with whatever type of inservice that that district feels it needs.

The Michigan Association of School Boards also offers a mid-winter conference for its members. The conference lasts two days and is in February. The mid-winter conference is a smaller event than the MASB's major conference held in October. The event follows a format similar to the main conference with a variety of topics offered at the same time. Each meeting lasts one hour and a board member has an opportunity to select the events that he wishes to attend.

Lastly, the MASB offers several publications for its
members. It publishes many of its own books and then sells them. The publication list deals with many of the topics covered by the Illinois and Indiana school board associations in their publications lists. Among the topics covered are boardmanship, policy, finance, and collective bargaining. The MASB also publishes a journal for its membership. The journal is published six times a year. It is a professional publication and deals with board of education concerns. Among the topics the journal covers, for example, are issues affecting schools such as the different social problems of drug and alcohol abuse and items to help make board members more effective in their elected positions.

The Michigan Association of School Boards offers a variety of inservice activities to its members. Member districts have a large number of publications available to them as well as a large number of conferences and workshops to attend. There are ample opportunities for board members to be educated in how to be better at their school board jobs from the MASB.

In analyzing what the MASB does for its member districts, one notices that like the board associations in Illinois and Indiana, the list of services is varied. Like its counterparts in those two states, the MASB offers a variety of publications and inservices. Its academy programs are more thorough than the other two state
organizations because they tend to be a longer program and sometimes build on each other. Examples of academy programs are law programs or school finance presentations. In the academy programs, an inservice activity might have a first session on introductory law topics and then advance to more specific and detailed matters in later meetings. The same pattern would be true for school finance presentations. One session may start out with the basics, and then move steadily forward to levies and budgeting. According to Ron Ciranna, the subject areas are decided by the Association's staff based on its knowledge of what it feels board members need to know. This process is like the one used by the associations in Illinois and Indiana. Although the format of the academy programs is sequential, the MASB does not seek help from its membership in making decisions about what programs to offer those members. The MASB is very similar to its other two state counterparts in what programs are offered to the membership.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards conducts a state conference for three days in January. There are multiple presentations to attend during each time session. Participants are free to choose from a variety of subjects. Each time period lasts an hour and fifteen minutes. Like the other state school board associations in this study, the WASB has its delegate meeting at this conference. During

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105 Ibid.
the conference delegates vote on the issues presented to them so that the WASB can plan for the future year.

Board members can also take advantage of inservice education programs at these academy workshops. These programs also offer credit for the attending board member to be used for awards from the WASB. Academies are like mini-conferences and follow the same type of format as the major state conference. The location of these programs varies depending on interest. Various workshops are also offered around the state outside of the academy format. Like the other state associations, the workshops offered are practical in scope and last only a few hours. Overall, there are many meetings that a board member can attend if he desires. The WASB has its state conference, offers academy programs, and has various inservices around the state for its board members, as well as regional meetings. Also, like the other state board associations, it will go to an individual school district to present a program if invited. Should a board president or superintendent request a special program that his board would like to receive, he need only request it and the WASB will provide it. When a board does this, however, there is a fee in addition to the regular association dues for this service.

Lastly, concerning the WASB, it, like the other associations in this survey, offers a variety of publications. It has a publication list of the books it has
had written and offers these for an additional rate. The
topics are useful to any board in the overseeing of its
school district. The WASB also offers a journal to its
members. This journal is published four times a year and
has a variety of articles of interest to a school board
member. Also, there are news updates sent to each member as
the need arises. The WASB, like the other associations
studied has as one of its prime roles keeping the members
informed about events taking place in Wisconsin concerning
education. The WASB also has a newsletter pertaining to
school law. This newsletter is available for a fee.
Included in this newsletter are issues and trends pertaining
to legal matters affecting school districts.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards has a large
list of publications available. It also updates its members
often on items of interest to a school board. The WASB also
has timely conferences and a large number of inservice and
regional meetings throughout the state.

In analyzing what the WASB does for its membership,
there are two items that one immediately notices. First,
this organization offers the majority of the same services
that the other three state associations offer. Examples of
these services include its publications and the state
conference. All of the organizations are very similar in
the scope of what they offer their members in the way of
services. In speaking with Kathy Rosovics of the WASB, she
said that the WASB keeps in touch with the National Association of School Boards which offers assistance and guidance with what services to offer school boards.\textsuperscript{106}

Secondly, Ms. Rosovics also was asked about how the WASB polled its member districts regarding what programs to offer. Here the answer was similar to what the other three state associations are doing. The WASB asks what other programs it should offer in the evaluation forms from other workshops. The responses are then analyzed by its staff. Here, like the other three state associations, the WASB's professional staff takes into account the suggestions, but then makes the decisions on what it feels board members need to know. Under this method, board members can request items, but may be denied based solely at the discretion of the WASB. This arrangement is questionable because the board members do not have the authority to get a perceived needed program offered at a major conference if the WASB does not want to provide it. However, the WASB will also offer specialized programs if requested by a board member or district superintendent. This service is always done for an extra fee. Specialized topics would usually be tailored to a board's individualized needs. For example, a board that is not able to work together may need a program on the team approach. Rather than using generic strategies that might be presented at a larger conference, the WASB is able to

\textsuperscript{106}Rosovics, Telephone Interview, February 15, 1994.
narrow the presentation to fit that school board's exact needs.

There are many similarities among the four state board associations concerning how information is presented to their members. All of the state board associations studied have a state conference where all of the member school districts are invited to attend. There are different meetings planned for the participants. There also is a delegates' meeting for the member districts to vote on the position that their state associations should take on various issues.

Of all of the activities that are offered by the state school board associations, the state conferences are the best attended. The participants then may go back to their districts with a better background on what is new and current in the field of education. The conferences can be valuable supplements to other sources of current information.

Another similarity among the four state school board associations that were studied is the provision for the regional and area meetings for their member districts. There is a large number of workshops that school board members can attend throughout the year if they desire. Typically, they are on subjects that would be of interest to a great many board members such as a new board member workshop. The meetings are usually held throughout the
The state board associations also have area and regional meetings that do not necessarily focus on an inservice topic for the meeting. The state school board associations have their states divided into areas and board members from those areas can get together for their own business meetings as needed. These meetings usually have an agenda and center around the business of the organization rather than providing inservice education to board members. It is not unusual for socializing to be done at these meetings and this informal discussion can help to bring
board members up-to-date with what other school districts are doing. These meetings are useful in that they give school board members the opportunity to hear what other boards are doing and how those boards are solving their problems. These meetings are sponsored by the regional sections of each state board association. Local officers elected from member district’s boards of education work together with state board association staff members to create the program. The associations can exercise some control over what occurs, but they must work cooperatively with the local association board officers. Of course, the association has no control over private conversations among board members when they attend these events.

All of the state school board associations studied also offer a list of publications for sale to their members. The book and pamphlet lists are varied. All of them deal with general interest topics such as school law, finance and superintendent evaluation. These books serve as a reference for anyone desiring a good background on a particular subject. The books are published by the individual state associations and useful only to those state organizations. Because state law changes from state to state, the book’s relevancy to any other state is severely limited. The same applies to those pamphlets written by the state associations. There is a variety of pamphlets available on subjects that might not need a whole book, or are intended
to be only a broad overview of a particular subject. The state associations offer these pamphlets at substantially lower prices than their other books, or, in some cases, at no charge to their member districts.

Each state school board association offers a journal to its membership. The journals are professionally done and made available to all of the members in that association. The content is related to areas of interest to school board members. The journals also use articles published by the National School Board Association. These articles deal with topics that have a much larger scope than just the local area, but which still are of interest to that association's readers. Also, all of the journals had regular columns. All had regular messages from the state superintendent, and the president and executive director of that state's school board association.

In analyzing these publications, it appears that the journals are beneficial to school board members. The journals serve as a good public relations tool for those state board associations. The journals contain only information that the associations want to include since those associations are the publishers. The journals find their way into the school board members' homes and passively promote what that particular school board association wants that journal to promote. The publications promote the dissemination of some important information, but also can be
a tool to further the aims of the individual association. In this regard, the journals can be informative, as well as self-serving.

Lastly, all of the associations studied offer updated information to their members as needed. They perform individual studies and will offer private inservices for a particular school board if requested. Updates are regularly mailed to member districts and announcements are sent as needed. All of the state board associations send information on a regular and timely basis. By offering these services, the associations appear to their members to be very helpful and willing to serve their member districts. In reality, however, they are very much in control of their organizations and do not let themselves get "side-tracked" with member district’s requests from what they think is important.

After studying the modes of instruction of the four state school board associations, there are some differences that need to be noted. To start with, not all four associations had a formal newsletter, in addition to their journal. Only Illinois and Indiana published a newsletter. The newsletter was printed on regular paper and mailed to each association member. The Illinois newsletter is sent out monthly, where The Indiana newsletter is sent out quarterly. Also the Illinois newsletter has a more formal format than the one published by Indiana. It has opening
articles, an upcoming event page, other articles of general interest and a legal update page. It is concisely written and well-organized. In a very short period of time, a reader, at a glance, can be informed of what is occurring within the ISAB.

Indiana’s newsletter is a much smaller newsletter in format and more limited in features offered than the one in Illinois. It essentially has four pages and offers general articles that have to do with education in Indiana. The newsletter is not written to update its membership on any special events in particular, but only to keep them current within the field with general interest articles.

Another difference that was noted among what the school board associations are doing has to do with the yearly conferences that the school board members attend. Michigan has the most complete in terms of time spent than the other three states. Michigan offers a four-day conference rather than a three-day one. It also offers a two-day conference in February. The February conference is a mini version of the main conference. It offers the same type of format, but not as many speakers or programs.

Michigan and Wisconsin also offer their members the ability to participate in academies. The academy program is not one that is offered by the Illinois or Indiana school board associations. The academies are more formal in nature than regional state meetings and have a preset agenda.
Board members get credits for their participation in these academies which can be used toward future recognition awards. These programs tend to have more information than regular workshops and in many cases follow a schedule where they build on each other. Inservice programs tend to be simpler events that do not assume participation in other workshops.

The academy program focuses on the awards aspect of participating as well as on the information being disseminated. Board members can earn points and ultimately awards for attending these programs regularly. As board members earn more points, they earn attendance awards. These programs are probably successful because they give the board member a feeling of accomplishment. The academy program also offers a different avenue for the board member to become more of an active part of his state board association. This opportunity creates more of a feeling of ownership in the organization than a board member may not otherwise have by simply attending regular meetings and/or conferences. By being more active and attending more events, a board member cannot help but be better informed because of his exposure to more information.

Another difference that was noted among the board associations is that the journals do not cover the same periods of time. None of the journals is published monthly. The **Illinois School Board Journal** is published every other
month, as is the Michigan School Board Journal. The journals from Indiana and Wisconsin are published four times a year. They are sent out quarterly to all association members. All four journals contain the same type of format and deal with articles of general interest to their readership. Board members receive the state journal four to six times a year depending on the particular state association. Since all of these journals are of professional quality, both in content and form, it is possible that receiving them more often may in all likelihood enhance a board member's knowledge on school board related topics. They are easy to read and contain articles from professors, superintendents and board members. The articles are not lengthy, and they are intended to provide beneficial information to the readers.

In analyzing the associations' journals, the topics are timely and contain information relevant for today's school board member. The journals provide a forum for experts and board members to express their views and ideas for school board members to read and think about. All are edited and professionally prepared so the quality of writing is higher than newsletters or other less formal publications sent out by each state association. Other than a few regular columns, the topics are varied and can change with each issue. From conversations with executives from all four board associations studied, the board members receiving
these journals from their respective state associations seem satisfied with the content and quality of the publication.

There were a few patterns that were discovered in reviewing the material. Concerning the state conferences, all had delegate meetings. Also, the length and topics of the meetings were very similar. The meetings were usually an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes in length and several sessions were offered at the same time. All of the conferences included area superintendents, board members and noted speakers in the field as participants.

Another pattern has to do with the format of the journals. All of them are very similar in structure. They look alike in many ways and follow the same type of article format. There also is a pattern with the updates and memos that board members receive from these school board associations. All of these associations send out a variety of materials. For example, they mail journals several times a year, newsletters and updates as many as several times a month, and miscellaneous information such as workshop announcements as needed. Workshop announcements can be sent out weekly depending on the frequency of the inservices being offered. It is not uncommon for members to receive several mailings each month. All the associations are consistent with sending out numerous memos so that their members are as well informed as possible.

A last pattern that was discovered is the willingness
on the part of each state association's staff to help its member districts. From conversations with state board association executives, all are genuinely accommodating and willing to be of service if called upon. All of the associations educate their member districts in a variety of ways. They also will customize a special program or provide a special service in order to help out a member school district if called upon to do so.

Most of the topics that were studied and analyzed could be worthwhile to a board member. This finding is consistent with Neubauer's research. Neubauer found that board members desire inservice training to be worthwhile and relevant, accessible, and to be taught by both lay and professional people.\textsuperscript{107} All four state board associations studied were consistent with this statement. Also, as has been shown, the training provided by the board associations is very accessible.

Hanson's research is consistent with what these four state school board associations are doing for their members. Hanson has written that failure to promote inservice programs for new and experienced board members does not set the proper tone for managerial situations.\textsuperscript{108} He further states that if people are not allowed the opportunity to

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., p. 24.

gain needed practical knowledge, frustration and fear set in which may curtail positive movement for a school district. These associations, through the many modes of instruction that they offer, provide school board members the opportunity to become well versed on the important issues affecting education and their school districts. The state associations promote inservice programs for all board members and these programs in turn set a "proper tone" for managerial situations.

In Selby's research, he found that superintendents and board presidents ranked reading material as the most used delivery method with attending conventions as the second method used for inservice training. From the material that was reviewed for this study, Selby's findings are consistent with what was discovered, that is all of the school board associations have many books, journals and other assorted mailings that they make available to their membership. All of these state associations also do an extensive job with the state conventions that are provided every year. Based on conversations with state association executives, they try to offer as many convention workshops as they feel their membership can effectively use.

109 Ibid.

In analyzing this information, the school board associations are providing the services that the literature is suggesting should be provided. Based on conversations with association executives, it has become clear that the school board associations know that their organization's very existence is in jeopardy if they are not well received by their states' school boards. With this in mind, in studying the modes of instruction, all four of the school board associations studied offer many different types of information to their member districts.

There are many newsletters, a journal, different types of presentations, and even specialized presentations for an individual board if so requested.

There is no doubt that the associations take the lead in inservice activities. In this way, they guide their respective organizations in the direction that they themselves would like them to go. The fundamental problem with this approach, however, is that member districts may like their state associations to move in a different direction than they currently are. Information is disseminated in many ways. In this regard, the associations are well organized. Where they are lacking, though, is in what information is distributed. All four state associations studied do the majority of their topic selection for conferences, newsletters, and journals, for example, by themselves. At times they do provide some
sketchy avenues for board members to give ideas, but the methods used to gather this information does not depend heavily on member input. Board members can still get personalized programs presented to them by all four associations, but this opportunity does not negate the direction taken by the associations.

*3. Resources Used

All four state board associations designate large amounts of personnel time for board inservice and information dissemination since that is one of their primary missions for their member districts. In comparing the amount of staff assigned to these duties, it was found that approximately thirty to forty percent of three of the association's staff had some duties regarding school board inservice. The exception is the Illinois Association of School Boards which has field directors dedicated solely for this purpose. The exact amount of staff time depended on how each state association divided these duties. For example, Illinois has field directors and clerical support people who are directly assigned to provide inservice education. The other three state associations have inservice duties provided by people assigned to specific departments. For example, the legal staff provides inservices on the law in addition to policy writing and other duties.

The Illinois Association of School Boards also offers
workshops for school board members for a fee. Workshops are not included within the cost of the member district's annual dues. Admission to the state conference that the IASB has every year is also fee based. Also, most of the publications, such as books that the IASB publishes are available for an additional charge. The Illinois Association of School Boards does offer its newsletter, journal, and regular updates to its members for no additional cost beyond the regular membership dues.

The Indiana School Board Association offers the majority of its workshops for an additional charge beyond the regular membership dues. This extra charge, like Illinois, is also true of board members' attendance at state conventions. Also, like Illinois, the journal is provided free for member school districts. Other publications, with the exception of a few pamphlets, are provided for an additional cost.

The Michigan Association of School Boards offers all of its inservice activities and workshops for an amount beyond the usual membership dues. The two state conferences that it offers its member districts are also fee based. Also, the MASB offers a list of publications for an additional cost. The regular membership dues do, however, cover the cost of the journal sent to every board member.

Lastly, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards also charges separate fees for its members who participate in its
workshops, seminars and state-wide conference. The journal is provided to its member districts at no additional charge as are news updates and other correspondences.

There is a great deal of similarity among all four state board associations in how they allocate their resources toward all of the inservice activity that they provide. Most of what is provided is paid for out of extra charges assessed for each event. These extra fees raise a substantial amount of money to pay for the majority of the activities. Each organization continues to have overhead in providing for these services. Although the majority of the services provided are "pay as you go," the organizations need to have the staff in place to keep the programs and publications offered on a regular basis. Here, there is risk for if the programs are not filled, the state board associations will lose revenue. They are cognizant of this possibility so programs that do not meet the enrollment expectations are typically not offered and, as cited previously, most of the programs require a fee to support the human resources expended.

The only differences that were noted of any consequence regarding the resources used by the associations have to do with the journals. Two of the associations, Michigan and Illinois, offer their journal every other month. Wisconsin and Indiana offer theirs quarterly. One reason could be the cost of publishing the journal as well as the available
staff.

In reviewing the literature on this subject in Chapter Two, it was found to be consistent with what the four school board associations are presently doing. Neubauer has stated that local school districts often delegate provisions of inservice to the state and national associations.111 This fact is also reinforced by Kara and Richard Funk's research.112 They have also stated that state school board associations provide more school board inservice education to school board members than the local school districts. Of the four state board associations studied, all had extensive resources available for their member districts. In fact, most school districts do not have the resources to adequately provide for the education of their school board members. This lack of resources places the responsibility on the state board associations to provide this type of service. All of the board associations studied were willing and able to provide this service. They have designated people and resources allocated so that a school board member can receive help or assistance if it is requested. This service is funded through either membership dues or additional fees depending on what type of service is requested.


In his research, Goins found that superintendents and board presidents thought that the state school board associations should have the primary responsibility for providing inservice education to school board members.\textsuperscript{113} As it appears that the state board associations are in the best position to provide this service rather than any other person or organization, it is likely that the state board associations will be providing the majority of the training that will be done in the future.

In analyzing how resources are allocated for inservice activities and publications, all of the board associations studied were consistent. It is only fair that if a district wants to send its school board members to a workshop that it should pay a fee so that a district that is not utilizing the services does not pay for something that it is not receiving. Also, by charging a fee, the overall cost of being a member of the state school board association is kept at a minimum. With school budgets dwindling, the state board associations do not want to price themselves out of the market. An extra fee will be charged for additional services requested by board members.

Newsletters, updates and journals, however, are included in the regular yearly dues. This dissemination of written communications may serve to encourage all members

receiving these publications to maintain the "party line" of continuity within the state organizations. All members receive the same materials so that all are mentally and politically positioned essentially the same way as the members' state school board association. The state school board associations have to have everyone pulling in the same direction and publications can help accomplish this goal.

Personnel for inservice activities are provided in different ways by the state board associations. Based on telephone conversations with executives from all four of the state associations studied, it was found that there are several ways in which each state association allocates personnel.

The Illinois Association of School Boards has seven field directors that provide programs throughout the state. Each of these directors also has a secretary who provides support services. Additionally, the executive director and associate executive director will provide input if necessary. The legal department consisting of two attorneys will also provide programs within the field of law.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards follows a different structure. It has a communications director, policy consultant, membership director, three service coordinators and one attorney. All of these people provide the instruction in their respective areas throughout the entire state. There are also six support staff which
provide clerical help and support for these projects as needed.

The Michigan Association of School Boards follows a structure close to that utilized by Wisconsin. The MASB has two attorneys, nine labor negotiators, two legislative consultants, two public relations consultants, two finance consultants, and one curriculum consultant. Additionally, the MASB has eight clerical support people for these positions.

Lastly, the Indiana School Boards Association has its organization set up under the headings of field services, legal, board development and meetings and conferences. There are seven people involved in these departments with a support staff of another five individuals. All of these positions have responsibilities for the entire state and not just one geographic area.

In analyzing the way that each association provides inservice education to its school board members, one immediately notices that Illinois has field directors doing the majority of its board inservice work. The ISBA, MASB and WASB have specific departments set up for other tasks that provide board inservice workshops in addition to their usual duties. For example, each of the three associations have their lawyers conduct inservices on the law. The Illinois Association of School Boards seems to be less productive in its organizational structure because the field
directors are not specialists in all facets of board activities, nor do they usually use specialized departments within the association to conduct inservice programs such as legal issues. These field representatives, when unable to provide the specialized requests from board members, will either have to ignore the requests or ask help from specialists within the IASB and/or outside consultants. After obtaining their assistance, typically these field representatives, actually in a middle-man role, will provide the inservice. This type of system could create a lack of continuity in providing assistance to member districts. Having to constantly "get back" to a board member after investigating something could detract from efficiency.

Additionally, by providing services by departments, as the ISBA, MASB and WASB do, it is easier for those associations to maintain control over what type of information is disseminated. Having specific control over information is another benefit to doing inservice education by department rather than by field directors. People who are expert in their subject area are much more likely to be providing accurate information than those who are responsible for many different areas. Certainly, the argument can be made that nothing in the IASB organizational structure precludes a field director from becoming an expert in any particular subject nor in employing consultants. However, the emphasis of the field representative is on
establishing relationships with board members in their region and so the middle-man role is appropriate.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two stated that the superintendent is looked to by boards of education to formulate their policies. Some of the literature cited in Chapter Two stated that superintendents are the preferred person for boards of education to provide inservice education for them. From the research conducted in this study, this literature on this point is inconsistent with what was found. It is the state board association on whom boards of education rely on for inservice education.

*4. Follow-Up Activities

The Illinois Association of School Boards does not, as a rule, have follow-up activities for its inservices. All of the workshops studied, including the ones offered at the state convention, are meant to be taken by a board member with no prerequisites needed. It must be remembered that the types of workshops and inservices the ISAB offers its members are not intended to make those participating experts in the field. Rather, these workshops are intended to give the participating board member a solid background so he has an adequate knowledge on any given subject in order to make an intelligent decision.

The other meetings of the IASB do not have any follow-up activities for its inservices either. The area and regional meetings and workshops are given on subjects deemed
appropriate by the association's professional staff. After a board member takes his initial training on the roles and responsibilities of being on a board, he is free to continue to enroll in any sessions that he would like. The only exception to having prerequisite training that was found had to do with the association's list of publications. It was noted that some books built on the subject matter presented in other books. The law books are good examples of one concept building on another. The other publications such as the newsletter, journal and updates also do not have any follow-up activities.

The Indiana School Boards Association inservice activities are similar to those provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards in that there are typically no follow-up activities planned for its inservices. People who would be attending its sessions could be new board members or people who have been board members for a considerable number of years. The topics that are chosen are current so they are presumed to be of interest to board members. The topics, though, do not generally lend themselves to a need for follow-up activities. Also, like Illinois, the Indiana School Boards Association has its publication list building on other books offered by the association. In order to get the most out of one book, for example, it might be helpful to have read another one of the ISBA's books first.

The Michigan Association of School Boards, like
Illinois and Indiana, does not have follow-up activities for the inservices that it offers at its state conferences or area and regional meetings. The workshops and seminars are intended to stand on their own without a backup from other meetings. Also, like Illinois and Indiana, the publications that it provides do sometimes build on past information. An exception to this, though, would be its journal and other dated publications. Additionally, the MASB has an academy program for its members and these programs do build on themselves, so there are follow-up activities. Within the academy system courses are taken with follow-up activities planned for later sessions. Some examples of these types of courses include workshops on community relations, curriculum and school law.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards has the same type of follow-up activities as Michigan. Like Michigan, it has an academy system of inservice education for its board members. The academies by their very nature have follow-up activities built into them because the courses are designed in a sequence in order to build upon each other. The follow-up activities can continue for one session or for months depending upon the length of the academy workshop. Also, like the other three state board associations, the WASB’s publication lists sometimes build on each other depending on the topic and book. The other publications do not build on each other. Also, there are not typically any
follow-up activities for the other inservice activities offered. This lack of follow-up includes the inservices offered at the state conferences.

There are several similarities among all four state board associations regarding the follow-up activities that they provide their members. They offer a varied list of publications which deal with a variety of topics. Many of the books build on knowledge provided by other books, so they tend to be follow-up activities in themselves. The state associations of Wisconsin and Michigan both have academy programs. These programs have a natural follow-up among them because they meet more than once on different topics.

The other programs, though, offered by the four state school board associations, usually do not offer any follow-up activities. The programs usually meet only once and, as a result, board members do not have an opportunity to follow-up on what they have done in the past. This lack of follow-up is also true of their journals and other non-book publications. These, too, center on a single presentation and seldom expand on what was written previously.

In analyzing why there are so few follow-up activities, all of the state association executives interviewed recognized that time is a problem, but gave no indication that they could do anything to come up with a solution in the foreseeable future. They did indicate that evaluations
were considered follow-up activities, but at the present, evaluations were the limit of what they could perform. It should also be noted that although the concerns and insights of new and experienced board members are unlikely to be the same in terms of their roles and responsibilities, this point was not addressed by any of the association executives.

In the review of literature presented in Chapter Two, the practices found for follow-up activities by the state board associations are very consistent with what was found in the literature. Typically, most inservice education that is provided by school board members have few planned follow-up activities. This lack of follow-up activities is for a variety of reasons. First of all, board members do not get paid and this lack of compensation by itself can limit the amount of extra time that a board member will devote toward his commitment to the board. Because his time is limited, that allows less time for follow-up activity. Additionally, most board members have full schedules regardless of whether they are getting compensated or not. Their board commitments, work commitments and family commitments all take up their time from having very many follow-up activities from the state board association.

The literature also supports the notion that the state board associations usually offered meetings, workshops, and the state convention every year, as well as some
publications and newsletters. The literature discussed in Chapter Two suggests that activities and publications are meant to be able to stand by themselves in terms of being useful to school board members, thus minimizing the need for follow-up activities.

The four state board associations of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin do not offer many follow-up activities to the inservices that they provide. They do, though, try to be thorough with what they offer their members in regard to workshops, inservices, and publications. As has been stated earlier, however, all four of the state board associations do try to offer programs that they believe school board members need to know. All of the associations do try to poll their membership and use the results to provide a program if they are able. Other than polling and some evaluations, follow-up activity on the part of the school board associations studied is severely limited.

Other types of follow-up activities would include the selection of what programs to offer, how to use evaluations of programs and how best to use association personnel. All four of the associations studied, both formally and informally, use evaluations to determine what programs to offer its membership. Programs that turn out to be well received and that are beneficial to the membership are offered again. All of the associations want to be of service to their membership and if the programs are not well
received, they are not presented again. As has been stated earlier in this chapter, the board associations usually take the lead in deciding what programs to offer. After the programs are presented, however, board members may give their comments or criticisms on what they experienced. Programs, then, are usually determined by the association personnel and then repeated only if they are well received by the school board membership.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

Some of the most important services provided by a state board association have to do with how that organization provides inservice education to its member districts. Studying how state board associations provide this type of education to their members is important because of the role school board members play in providing a quality education for the children they serve. To discover how school boards are receiving inservice education by their state board associations, the state school board associations of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin were studied. This sample is significant because these states represent about one-seventh (1/7) of all of the school districts in the United States. Because of the large number of school districts involved, the research derived from this sample was important in analyzing the inservice programs for school board members.

The information was gathered through a structured letter that was sent to executives of the Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin school board associations. All four
state associations agreed to participate and supplied the information which was requested. Follow-up telephone interviews were then made. The information requested is as follows:

1. **Topics:** The content areas school board associations consider important to cover for their members so that the members are well-educated and up-to-date on school related topics.
   * Are needs assessments conducted? If so, what is the procedure for conducting them and who does the analysis?
   * What is the selection process for topics and materials?

2. **Modes of Instruction:** The instructional techniques used to present relevant material.
   * How are materials used? What are the association’s follow-up activities?
   * How is material distributed to board members?

3. **Resources Used:** The resources, such as personnel, money or other accommodations that are used by school board associations in the education of their members.
   * How personnel resources are allocated to different programs?

4. **Follow-up Activities:** The follow-up activities that are conducted for board members after they
Conclusions

The data analysis studied similarities, differences and patterns emerging from the documents received. Possible relationships were sought in regard to the topics presented by the state associations, their modes of instruction used, the resources they committed for this instruction, and any follow-up activities that they do for their members in relation to their initial programs. Where possible, the data were compared to the recommendations and processes found in the professional literature relative to school board inservice education. The associations were also compared among themselves.

There are five conclusions generated by this study.

1. None of the state board associations studied has a comprehensive assessment system to poll school board members so that those school board members have input on what inservice topics will be offered to them.

This conclusion was arrived at by comparing all of the topics offered by the school board associations at their regular conferences and meetings with each other and with personal telephone calls with state board
associations executives. All of the associations believed that they knew what was best for their members. There was little, if any, input solicited from school board members. This conclusion is consistent with the literature.

2. **All of the state board associations studied offer several different modes of instruction to disseminate information to their member districts.**

   They offer both lecture and participatory inservices. They also provide an almost endless supply of written material from newsletters to pamphlets to books. All of the associations also offer special customized inservice presentations if requested by a school board for a special need. What these associations are doing is consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

3. **All of the state board associations studied have very little differentiation between the programs they offer experienced and inexperienced board members.**

   The state associations offer a variety of programs, and all of these programs are open to all of their members regardless of experience level.

4. **All of the state board associations designate substantial amounts of their personnel resources to providing school board inservice.**

   Michigan, Wisconsin and Indiana devote between
thirty and forty percent of their staff's time toward providing inservice education to member districts. Illinois, in its organizational structure, has field directors working full-time with boards of education. These field directors provide the majority of the inservice education provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards to its member districts.

5. All of the state board associations have little, if any, follow-up activities for the inservices they provide their members.

Follow-up activities are not usually provided.

Recommendations

1. The state board associations studied should seek more input in preparing their programs from their member districts.

Taking the lead in determining topics may be an appropriate role for the associations, but more input from member districts is a potential advantage and is collegial.

2. Superintendents, district administrators and school board members should be included in the planning of inservice activities by the state school board associations.

Because of their closeness to the situation, and their general knowledge of schools, more superintendents should be actively solicited for their advice and input into the types of programs offered. Also, school board members should take a more active role in determining topics for inservice
instruction.

3. There should be more follow-up activity after an inservice by the state school board associations.

In order to reinforce what was learned, however, some type of follow-up activities should be implemented. A suggestion may be something as simple as a flyer being sent out to outline the major points of what was discussed.

4. The state board associations should continue to schedule the meetings in convenient places.

Continuing to have these meetings in convenient locations should be a priority and should be improved upon whenever possible.

5. The evaluation (assessment) of programs and inservice activities should be improved.

At present there is little evaluation done by the actual participants of a program. The state board associations should try to ensure that all of the participants of a workshop or inservice evaluate them at the end of the program. Formal evaluations would enable the state associations to modify and improve the programs continually to better fit their member districts' needs.

6. There should be a clearer differentiation between inservice program topics offered to new board members and those programs offered to experienced ones.

Programs offered by the state board associations should be geared for board members with different experience
levels. Past experiences of board members could be built upon, and new board members could be taught in a meaningful way without it being presumed that they possess a knowledge that they in fact do not have.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

1. A suggested study related to the topic of inservice education provided by the state board associations would be the same study in different geographical areas. An example might be southwest, western or eastern states. It would be interesting to determine what school board associations are doing in other states to make their member school boards more informed on their roles and responsibilities.

2. Another suggested study would be to determine how much inservice is actually provided by the individual school district's superintendent and administrative staff compared to that of the state school board associations. The state school board associations studied are all organized for this type of service where member districts might not be. A useful study would be to determine exactly how many school districts only use their state board associations for their board inservice needs. This study would be beneficial to know in planning future inservices.

3. Follow-up activities and how they can be successfully implemented at the state board association level would be a third area of study that would be worthy of doing. As has been previously noted, follow-up activities
are not done often by these four board associations. A study could be done to see what other state board associations or other similar type organizations are doing to follow-up on the instruction given their participants.

4. A study could be done focusing on superintendents' and board members' perceptions of the value of the inservice programs they receive from their state board associations. This could be done both regionally and nationally.
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APPENDIX A
LETTER REQUESTING INFORMATION

Dear [Name],

Currently I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University of Chicago and am writing my dissertation on inservice activities that the state school board associations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan provide their member school districts. I am contacting you to request that you send me the information that you have on the following for the last five years:

- The topics (on content, if available) of the inservices that you provide to both your new and experienced board members.

- The use of consultants, staff, and materials used for these inservices and how each is selected.

- Which activities are "one shot" in nature and what ones have follow-up activities.

- Any handbooks that board members receive.

- Inclusion of new board members in panels or other committees.

- Legal services and/or legal updates provided to board members.

- Strategies used to match the individual school boards' needs with what you provide.

- Use of needs assessments conducted.

- Joint cooperation with the state's administrators association in providing information.

If you have any other literature or comments along these lines, please include them. Also, if you wish to receive a copy of my analysis, please let me know, and I will be happy to send it to you when it is completed. Should you have any questions, I can be reached at the above address. To insure that it reaches me, please mark the outside of the material "Personal & Confidential".

Thank you for all of your help. It is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jon N. Nebor
The dissertation submitted by Jon N. Nebor has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Mel P. Heller, Director
Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola University Chicago

Dr. L. Arthur Safer
Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola University Chicago

Dr. Edward T. Rancic
Adjunct Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, National-Louis University

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 Doctor of Education.

November 23, 1994  
Director's Signature