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Effects of Student Activism upon Decision-Making of Selected Suburban Elementary School Superintendents

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EFFECTS OF STUDENT ACTIVISM UPON DECISION-MAKING
OF SELECTED SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

by
Walter John Molo, Jr.

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

June
1970
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LIFE

Walter John Molo Jr., was born in Denver, Colorado, September 13, 1924.

Graduating from Wells High School, Chicago, Illinois, in June of 1942, he enrolled in the University of Illinois in September of that same year.

After serving in the United States Army from 1943 to 1945, the author returned to the University of Illinois from which he was awarded a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education in June of 1948 and a Master of Science Degree in Education in 1949.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CURRENT BACKGROUND FORCES AFFECTING STUDENT ACTIVISM

As student unrest began sweeping through the nations' colleges and universities it was apparent that we were approaching a new era in education. Everett Lee Hunt believes, "we are approaching a new era in education and it surely is being forced upon us, there is reason to speculate about which of the old values commended to the students should survive, and which will no longer be accepted."¹

Along with increasing tensions of competition and specialization among students, indignant protests of students against being treated as adolescents, of parents "selling out" the younger generation for personal gain, of blind adherence to causes—particularly the war in Vietnam, the black revolution, and the social and political energies which it produced became part of a whole new set of forces within the student movement.² The "Free Speech

Movement" recently evident in student revolt actions on the Berkeley, Columbia, and other university campuses, although initially supported by both right and left wing political groups, is now viewed by many as an indication of a new liberal surge at our educational institutions.

The task of reform in education and society has no end, but only new beginnings. As Hunt so ably states: "Steps must be taken to control and simplify, whenever possible, the extent and nature of emotional and social problems in order to clear the way for action on the intellectual level." ³

Hunt continues to say that most observers of education would agree that the schools in the United States, tend to reflect our society, and its many different mores. ⁴ Increased liberality in our general culture patterns with heightened anxiety about world and national problems has caused various behavior reactions in the different age groups. It is especially true among the youth of the nation. Protests and marches have become everyday events.

In attempting to evaluate objectively the student activism taking place in our educational institutions today, it may be helpful to consider some of the reasons for this dissent. ⁵ James E. Allen, United States Commissioner of Education, believes that

³Hunt, The Revolt of the College Intellectual, p. 1
⁴Ibid.
decay, segregation of races, quality of education, peace are the kinds of reasons for dissent among the young; however, the central issue in student dissent is adult power and control. The youth of our nation are eager for change and the immediate correction of the social ills and injustices that are a part of our society. The concerned young people have little tolerance for the failure of our educational institutions to adapt to change. Edward Schwartz, president of the United States National Student Association, told the delegates to the Twentieth National Student Congress held at the University of Maryland during the summer of 1967: "The old coalition that supported progressive social change in America had now dissolved into impotence. The forces which moved government in the past--the forces of labor, of farmers, of cities--have not been equal to the task of gaining a response in the present. Any new coalition formed to work for social change will have to include students, and we intend to be in the forefront." The issues and problems which have driven the young to revolt against their schools and society are complex and varied. A unique feature of the Berkeley student revolt according to Hal Draper, "is that from its beginning to its climax it was linked closely to the social and political issues and forces of the bigger society outside the campus. At every step the threads ran plainly.

6Ibid., 357.
to every facet of the social system: there were overt roles played by big business, politicians, government leaders, labor, the press as well as the Academy itself. 8

The seriousness of purpose of today's students is increasingly a factor in shaping change within and without our educational institutions. As more and more students have become more and more impatient with policies and attitudes of educational institutions, they feel they have been denied expression of both their aims and concerns; they have begun to seek ways of expressing themselves and of finding means for direct participation in affairs of their concern.

According to Frank J. Sparzo, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Ball State University, "it is now clear that educators will make a grave error if they expect this current student bid for greater power and influence to wane. The trend is irreversible, and for good reason. Students are more conscious of their influence; they know that their efforts to gain power have paid off in many instances. They have learned reforms are possible." 9 Use of the word "student power" is undoubtedly unsettling to some educators. 10 John F. Ohles, Associate Professor of Secondary Education, Kent State University, believes the struggle for power is not to

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10Ibid.
assert student power as much as it is to demolish the power of the "educational establishment."\textsuperscript{11} John S. Brubacher, Professor at the University of Bridgeport, describes power as being an ominous word: "black power, student power, even faculty power."\textsuperscript{12} If there are to be continued student demands for greater power or influence, educators will have to face issues which are related distinctly to student unrest. Professor Lewis B. Mayhew of Stanford University asserts that authoritarian administrations, the doctrine of "loco parentis," the control over student life held by teachers, lack of communication, arid curriculums, all contribute to friction between students, teachers and administrators.\textsuperscript{13}

Basically, each student complaint comes back to one central issue: students want more control over their lives and over their education.\textsuperscript{14} They resent their lack of influence over their lives. They feel that they are forced to go to school, forced in what to learn, told what to write in their newspaper, told where to eat, and told whom their student government leaders are to be. Students feel that they have a right to make decisions even though some of


\textsuperscript{14}VanLoon, \textit{American Education}, p. 6.
their decisions may be wrong. Today’s students are asking educators to treat them with more trust and not attempt to over-regulate their lives. Brubacher believes,

they have become impatient with the speed of social reform; they have become convinced that the 'establishment' is so complacent or so lethargic that something more than the power of argument is necessary.

The minority seems to feel morally justified in forcing its opinion on the majority, where the existing state of law and order is no longer a just one. While the older generation tends to identify with law and order at the expense of justice, those who are younger think that justice takes priority, and are impatient about asserting it.15

The students want a "piece of the action"; however, many students feel that the conditions of modern life may be beyond their power to influence. As Joseph A. Califano related recently in an article in the Chicago Sun-Times:

Bureaucracy is everywhere, even in the life of the student; in the nationwide college-board entrance examination tests; in the disciplinary and grading systems of high schools upon which the student must also depend to get into college; only to meet another, similar system upon which he must depend to get into graduate school; only to meet still another similar system upon which he must depend for fruitful employment.

And what does he see upon graduation? More bureaucracy: big unions, giant corporations, cumbersome impersonal government at every level and, inevitably, long, forgettable sets of numbers which identify each of us.16

Warren Shore, author of a recent article in the Chicago Today newspaper, indicated that despite the student’s newly found ability

15 Brubacher, The Record, Columbia University, p. 6.

to disrupt, the student has a sense of being caught in the machinery of government and society in general with little control over his own life. 17

Hunt states: "much of the debate among educators has seemed to go on without adequate knowledge of what it feels like to be a student today."

The hope for an awakened educational system lies in a vastly increased interest in the character and personality of the individual student. Sparzo believes that educators must learn more about the student's academic and non-academic life. University instructors must follow the lead of those who teach at the elementary and secondary level and become more sensitive to academic and nonacademic student problems. 19 As Sparzo relates, "we must see students as people first, not as organisms into which we put a 'liberal education'."

David Mallery characterizes the student as having his own cultural design, his own brand of sophistication which often are not understood by his instructors. The student also has his own attitudes, motives, virtues, values, and social ideals. These students feel that they have incontrovertible rights in the educational process. They believe these rights pertain to a good

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19 Sparzo, School and Society, p. 36.

20 Ibid.
education, equality and fairness of treatment, and representation to give voice to their views on matters of policy. William W. Brickman in an editorial on students states that, "appeasement, compromise and near-capitulation will never satisfy them." These student views need to be put to good use by his teachers. "Teachers need to find expression in high levels of behavior among the students," continues Mallery, "and until these two things occur widely we are likely to mistake talk for behavior, structure for purposes, and conformity for maturity." As Bolton and Kammeyer relate: Even among those educators who define their teaching role principally in terms of professional preparation of students there is a strong tendency to believe that a crucial part of that preparation at the student level is emancipation from conventional beliefs and development of an openness to new ways of thinking which are at variance from the conventional wisdom. Students want to change attitudes, throw off inhibiting traditions, and are willing to experiment and explore new innovative education methods and directions. Educational institutions need to concentrate on ways of helping the young adult realize the

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23 Mallery, High School Students Speak Out, p. 156.


25 Allen, School and Society, p. 358.
potential sense of purpose and spirit of activism. Mallery believes that contrary to much popular opinion, these students are not all anti-adult or anti-intellectual. Neither are they cynical nor apathetic. There is no overriding desire from students for full responsibility in running the schools. They want involvement, they want to participate. They regard increased responsibility and increased independence as crucial to their own maturation. Mallery continues by saying, "many of these students had read or heard about reports characterizing the whole generation as self-centered and security minded, searching for faceless conformity. These students with whom I talked were infuriated by such stereotypes. They were willing to stand up and be counted for their convictions." They feel that somewhat more defensible is the argument that the student's life outside the educational institution should be his own and that the school has no right to intervene in it.

Student activists want honesty in the nations politics, diplomacy and foreign policy. They want more consideration given to minority groups. They want a more relevant, meaningful, curriculum in school. Students want a more democratic procedure for decision-making in the schools, especially when it concerns them. They want to have a legitimate voice in determining their future. They criticize curriculums that stress routine learning, memorizing,

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26 Mallery, High School Students Speak Out, p. 156.
27 Ibid.
and busy work. They criticize courses with meaningless term papers and poor teacher lecture preparation. Grant Venn, Associate commissioner of the United States Office of Education believes, because of these dull, unimaginative methods of teaching in our educational institutions, we have seen youngsters by the millions, dropping out of school as early as the seventh and eighth grades—not dropping out physically, but emotionally in their attitudes and aspirations.28

Students today are demanding that school administrators face issues more honestly. According to Brickman, administrators at all educational levels, have been immobilized by indecision and frozen by fear. Too many administrators have no idea of or completely ignore the fact that students are living in overcrowded residence halls or are attending overcrowded classes. Too many ignore or minimize student tensions. Too many have neglected the non-symbolic aspects of the process of knowing. Administrators often seem confused and insecure when they deal with student emotionality or interpersonal relationships.29

The advent of student demonstrations on the Berkeley Campus has a direct relationship to the elementary school student. School administrators must become aware that student dissent is not just a university problem. In a special report on the student, it was


29 Brickman, School and Society, p. 356.
reported that violence in the schools is sharply on the rise and the day is not far off when it will rip into the public schools at all educational levels. Student boycotts and picketing are no longer uncommon. Student protests, underground newspapers and activist groups are now quite prevalent at the high school level. Student activism at the college and high school level has not gone unnoticed by the elementary school student.

The most important thing that administrators must recognize about the phenomenon of student activism, is that it exists at all educational levels and that they would do well to think positively about it, and to turn it toward the improvement of the educational effort. Students are disrupting schools because they are bursting with frustration. Administrators talk in terms of pupil-teacher ratios, budgets, bond issues, taxation, and related school issues. They are seemingly only concerned with this multimillion dollar operation, and they are unwilling to get at the real causes of student unrest.

Students have much to contribute to education, and administrators must listen to them, but the right to be heard does not carry with it the right to expect that all recommendations will be accepted. Each side has something to gain by trying to resolve the conflict. Student power does exist and school administrators must

31Ibid.
face up to the fact that negotiations are the way conflicts are going to be resolved. Communications must be improved. Kenneth Fish, in a recent article on student activism, indicated that there is a tremendous discrepancy between what administrators think they are doing and what students think the administrators are doing. Much student cynicism stems from the discrepancy between lip service administrators give to practicing democracy and the lack of student rights in the schools. It is important that administrators give the students a feeling that something in the schools belong to them.32

Administrators must be aware that students will become more visible in the total decision-making process at all levels of education. Such an eventuality must be anticipated. Charles Frankel of Columbia University believes that, "Teachers and administrators must be intolerant of intolerance."33 According to Frankel: "If we lose the struggle for rational discourse in the schools, how will we maintain it in the larger society? If we lose this struggle, what will the youth of the future say to us? Youth will not thank us for equivocating about the values of

32 Kenneth L. Fish, "Coping with Student Activism in the Secondary Schools," Education Digest, XXXV No. 2 (October 1969), p. 9.

civilized conduct. I think most youth know this. It is for
teachers and administrators to make it plain that we know it, too,
and we mean to make it work.\textsuperscript{34}

The education of students, therefore means nothing less than
the students' personal involvement in the conduct of the affairs
of the educational process.

\textbf{Purpose of the Study}

The purpose of this study is to determine through analysis
the effect of student activism upon decision-making as perceived
by the suburban elementary school superintendent. Decision-making
implies the process of making administrative decisions directly
affecting the actions of teachers, other staff members, members of
the community, and students.

The need for a definitive study to assess the effect of
student activism upon decision-making of the elementary school
superintendent is apparent from the lack of literature on the
subject. An attempt will be made to clarify the position of the
elementary superintendent relating to student activism on the
elementary school level.

The decision-making role of the elementary school superin-
tendent will undergo much modification during the next few years
in the light of current unrest among the nations' students, and a
reexamination of this role needs to be made in the very near future.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}
With the advent of student activism at the elementary level, the elementary school superintendent will need to become sensitive to the attitudes and positions relating to the current issues of student activism.

Method and Procedure

In order to investigate the effect of student activism upon decision-making as perceived by the suburban elementary school superintendent, this study is based on six hypotheses derived from an analysis of current professional literature:

I. Superintendents react to student activism in a paternalistic manner.

II. Superintendents want a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder.

III. Superintendents are cognizant of a shifting of values among elementary school students.

IV. Superintendents find it necessary to control the outside influences of student activism.

V. Superintendents are cognizant of the need for curriculum revision and instructional change so that they are more relevant to today's youth.

VI. Students should be given a greater voice in the decision-making process relating to the total school program.
This study involved twenty-five selected suburban school districts. The sample of superintendents was taken randomly from school districts located in Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties in Northern Illinois. The school districts represent a wide range of ethnic, economic and social backgrounds. The student populations range from 1000 to over 11,000 students. Many of these school districts are experiencing rapid growth and expansion, while others are considered to be more stable, and well-established school districts.

The personal interview technique was employed for the purpose of gathering part of the necessary data. Items for the interview were developed from the main ideas presented in the literature. The first draft of the interview instrument was tested on five elementary school superintendents, one junior college instructor, and one senior high school principal. The high school principal, the junior college instructor, and two of the superintendents had been associated with institutions disrupted by student activism. Suggestions were made and were incorporated into the interview instrument. The process was repeated and a final draft was developed.

This study was designed to test the six hypotheses, and the interview instrument was structured to analyze effect and not just opinion. Each interviewee was asked certain questions, (see appendix A) the responses were weighted to place them in a general category of reactions. The questions fall into six categories, each related to the primary purpose of the study which attempted
to determine the effect of student activism upon decision-making of the suburban elementary school superintendent.

Limitations and Delimitations

When examining perceptions and their values, the use of the personal interview as a method of measurement is most desirable. Two way communication is a recognized advantage to the personal interview approach in collecting data. It is apparent, however, that existence of error and bias on the part of the respondent is something to be guarded against. The interview was designed to meet the requirements of examining, in depth, the role of the elementary school superintendent and his relationship to decision-making and student activism.

In this study, the interviewer is an elementary school superintendent, as are the respondents. The interviewer is familiar with the conditions under which the respondents work. He has developed insights concerning these conditions and is concerned about the problems similar to which the respondents face. The ability to probe those responses that are vague and to cross-check reactions is an advantage of the interview technique.

A further limitation of the interview method is that in no way can it be conceived that the respondents situation is unfamiliar to the interviewer. There is a common vocabulary and certainly a familiarity with the conceptual framework in which the respondents are understood to be operating.

This study is limited to the suburban elementary public school
superintendent. It is further limited by the fact that the study confines itself to selected Cook, DuPage and Lake County school districts located in Northern Illinois.

**Definition of Terms**

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<tr>
<td>Dissident</td>
<td>One who dissents. Differing; not conforming.</td>
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<td>Disorder</td>
<td>Out of order; in a state of confusion; offending public order, morals, or safety.</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>A person who is studying or being taught.</td>
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<td>Protest</td>
<td>Make objections.</td>
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<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>An open show or expression of feeling.</td>
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<td>Unrest</td>
<td>Lack of ease and quiet; agitation or disturbance amounting almost to rebellion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrupt</td>
<td>Break up; split.</td>
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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In reviewing the related literature it was found that many books and articles were written about student activism on the college and high school educational levels, but that very little had been written about student activism on the elementary school level. A search of the dissertation abstracts reveal that no related studies of the effects of student activism upon decision-making of the suburban elementary school superintendents have been conducted. In researching the dissertation abstracts particular attention was paid to sub-titles of Teachers, Elementary Schools, Education, Students, Activism, Demonstrations, Schools and Superintendents.

A study made by J. Lloyd Trump, Associate Secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Jane Hunt, reports on a national survey on student activism in 1969. The association sent questionnaires to a random sample of 1,982 principals. Of these principals 1,026 responded to the questionnaire.

The survey included junior and senior high school principals in both private and public schools—both large and small. In reviewing this survey it was noted that 56 per cent of the junior high school principals responding reported some degree of student protest activities. It can also be noted that the survey did not attempt to define the term "protest." Each principal could then interpret the term "protest" as it fitted his particular situation. This could range from student restlessness to genuine student activism. Student protest could also range from a minor consequence in one school district to a major protest activity in another school district.

It was apparent from the survey that the target of student protest was the "authority" or the "establishment." The majority of respondents related that the individual student was the prime source of dissent and not large organized groups. An expression of protest is generally in the form of talking to the school administration or faculty members. Some schools reported that black power salutes, walkouts and refusal to stand for the national anthem were other forms of protest. Most of the schools reported little overt violence.

In offering suggestions for coping with student protest many principals who answered in this survey felt that the school administrators of today should "move with the times." Some felt that they should be firm and candid, while other school administrators operated either democratically or dictatorially. It must be
concluded from the literature that student activism has, indeed, filtered down through the educational ranks from the college level to the elementary schools, especially 7th and 8th grades.

A survey conducted by the editorial staff of the *Nations Schools* magazine, showed that school administrators are overwhelmingly opposed to the methods used by student protesters. The survey also showed that 51 per cent of the school administrators responding favored a greater voice for students in the decision making machinery of the school.

There was disagreement on the degree of student involvement. Some felt that the students should only serve as voting members of committees. Others felt that the students should not be involved in the selection and evaluations of teachers.

As one Nebraska administrator stated: "It is simply not a reasonable assumption that those who teach and administer should spend years of study to prepare themselves for their roles, then allow decisions to be made by those who are taught." whatever stand the administrators took on student involvement it was apparent from this survey that there was a strong indictment as to the way students handled their protests especially when the demonstrations became violent. As one Ohio educator assessed the situation relating to student activism: "Student requests and recommendations

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3Ibid.
should be given sincere and adequate consideration, but never acceded to for fear of disruptive threats. Violence should never lead to any special consideration of demands.  

In a stenographic report of proceedings of a conference held by the Cook County Superintendent of Schools Robert P. Hanrahan, relating to "Student Unrest," with Cook County Sheriff, Joseph Woods, and several high school principals, mention was made of student activism on the elementary school level.

In the proceedings Dr. Norman S. Green, Superintendent of District 209, Proviso Township, Maywood, Illinois, talked of outside agitation being exerted upon the elementary school students in the community. He refers, in part, to those:

who had been indoctrinating these youngsters for a period of two years in the upper elementary grades filling their minds with a doctrine which, I think now is pretty much articulated in the terms of the Mao Red Chinese philosophy, he worked on these kids and it was clearly evident that the—that most of the problem youngsters were freshmen and sophomores, and as a matter of fact, most of them freshmen. A lot of the leadership, if we could call it that, was upper class, black students, but the ones that got into most of the trouble, the ones that were ready to mix it up at the drop of a hat, were the underclassmen, which, I think tends to confirm his influence on them.

Other references to outside influences on students were referred to as an "exciter" or a "catalyst." Green also stated: "I think another profound lesson we have learned is that the problems of student unrest are rooted in the inter-generation conflict more
than any inter-social or inter-racial problems. I think the underlying causes of student unrest in our schools are going to be found in the--in this gap of perception as to how students feel about things, about student-teacher relationship, about things that are of concern to them versus how staff feels about these things, and I believe we can demonstrate that pretty well. 7

Other topics of concern discussed at the conference were: police protection, school board policy relating to activism, faculty participation in student unrest, and outside influences exerting pressures upon school children.

The literature pertinent to this study indicated that the reasons for student dissent are many and varied. The Montgomery County Student Alliance in Maryland, presented a "white paper" of student grievances to school officials. In brief the "white paper" charges,

1. The school system is based on fear.
2. Schools compel students to be dishonest.
3. Teachers force students to give answers teachers want.
4. The system destroys student eagerness to learn.
5. The school system causes feelings of resentment and alienation on the part of the students.
6. Schools foster blind obedience to authority.
7. Self-expression and honest reaction of students are stifled.
8. The school system narrows the scope of ideas.
9. Schools are isolated from new ideas and cultures, thus promoting prejudice.
10. The system promotes self-hate by labeling some students as failures before they can prove themselves.
11. Abolition of grades.
12. Students are sympathetic to teachers who deviate from standard teaching patterns.

7Ibid., p. 5
13. Schools are reluctant to get involved in controversial issues for fear of offending local groups.¹⁸

A city-wide coalition of 14 to 17 year old activists in New York City, also criticized the school system. Their reasons for dissent were:

1. Discipline in the average institution is rigid and repressive.
2. End intimidations of students through abuse of school recommendations, grades, secret files, and permanent record files by school officials.
3. The black youth sees injustices of the white power structure.
4. "Illegal" searches of possessions for drugs.
5. Students are resentful of dress and hair codes.
6. Smoking rules and the cafeteria are favorite targets of protest.
7. Censorship of school newspapers and periodicals.
8. Student councils are not representative of the student body.⁹

Recent court decisions tend to increase the rights of students. The court case "Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent Community District" was discussed recently in an article in Education U.S.A. Interestingly enough this case involved elementary school students. The article stated:

School officials, said the U.S. Supreme Court in the famed Des Moines 'black armband' case, 'do not possess absolute authority over their students.' Students in school as well as out of school are 'persons' under our constitution. They are possessed of fundamental rights which the state must respect, just as they themselves must respect their obligations to the state. In our system, students may not be regarded as closed-circuit recipients of only that which the state chooses to communicate. They may not be confined to the expression of those

⁹Ibid., 59-60.
sentiments that are officially approved. In the absence of a specific showing of constitutionally valid reasons to regulate their speech, students are entitled to freedom of expression of their views.\textsuperscript{10}

The editors of School Management Magazine also refer to the recent attitude of the United States Courts:

A few years back, public school authorities had a free hand in student discipline. You could interrogate, transfer, suspend, or expel youngsters pretty much as you saw fit. The standards of dress and conduct you set were not subject to judicial supervision. In the eyes of the courts, you acted in loco parentis--and that was that.

The power of the superintendent or building principal is not drastically reduced today. But it is no longer unlimited. Increasingly, in recent years, students have turned to the courts for relief from arbitrary school rules and discipline. And, increasingly, they have won their judicial battles.

The courts are agreeing that the student, just as much as the adult citizen, is entitled to constitutional rights of free expressions, free assembly, and due process. Deprivation of the right to receive an education is important enough to the future of the pupil and his family that protests against unreasonable administrative authority can be expected with increasing frequency.

In short, the actions you take to control student expression or behavior are subject to judicial veto as never before. You might, at some future date, find a traditional policy or recent disciplinary action overruled by a judge more 'liberal' than you are. It looks like you'll have to live with this possibility for some time, barring a rightward swerve from the libertarianism that currently holds sway in our courts.

Unless you're willing to risk the embarrassment of court reversal, you must be sophisticated in the drafting and enforcement of school rules.\textsuperscript{11}


Another famous court case, the "Gault Decision," indicated that Boards of Education and school administrators must afford the protection of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment to all with whom they deal, no matter what their age.\(^\text{12}\)

The court rulings have not gone unnoticed by the elementary students and their parents. The thirteen and fourteen year old students in the elementary schools, as have their counterparts in the colleges and high schools, are now clamoring for their constitutional rights. It must be concluded from the literature and court decisions that student activism has filtered down through the educational ranks from the college level to the elementary schools.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND REVIEW OF STUDENT ACTIVISM

The history of student unrest goes back to the beginnings of educational institutions of higher learning. The roots of conflict are ancient and honorable. Students have protested through the centuries both on or off the campus, for various causes, for and against freedom. The world seems to be full today of embattled students.

Historians tend to characterize a period of time by attaching a label to it. The decade of the 1920's has been called the age of the "flapper and coonskin coat," and was considered the golden era of student escapades and hyjinks. The 1930's with the "great depression" was a decade of political radicalism on the campus. Political conservatism was attacked by James Wechsler in his book "Revolt on the Campus." ¹ The college campus was characterized as a hotbed of radicalism. It seemed to have been a period of maximum flourishing of campus pacifism, campus cooperatives, and similar attitudes. The campus students were mostly female or armed forces in training programs, during the "war years" of the early 1940's.

¹James Wechsler, Revolt on the Campus (New York: Covici and Friede, 1935).
With the conclusion of the war in 1945 came the period of the returning G.I. An enormous influx of new talent came to the American universities. It was brought there by the G.I. Bill which was politically popular because it dealt with veterans and their educational needs. The G.I.'s were generally much older, many were married, and their presence had a great influence on the life of the student body. There was little place for political radicalism and protest in this "don't-make-waves" atmosphere between 1945 and 1950.

The decade of the fifties was often referred to as the "silent generation." The "silent generation" stood in sharp contrast to the "beat generation." Most writers, having acknowledged the existence of this generation, turned their attention to McCarthyism, the threat of nuclear war, the affluent society, and other causal factors. The "re-awakening" of the college students is conceded to have developed in the sixties. The observers are now seeing political and social activism again taking root on the campus. Time magazine saw the political movement as a "sharp turn to the right," while Horowitz was citing the Operation Abolition incident and student support of the civil rights and peace movements as indications of increasing liberal activities.

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It is significant to note that the many different aspects of student activism, has increased within the student, an awareness of the world and his place in the world. Gert Van Maaneu believes there are many reasons for this increased awareness. First, the university was becoming accessible to social groups. It has outgrown the ivory tower concept of the previous century. Without abandoning its academic purpose the university has become an essential part of society to whose needs it must be adapted. Second, communication has an influence on society. Public opinion has a greater influence than ever before on governments and political systems. There are many examples to prove that mobilization of public opinion can bring about change.  

Each day one can read in the newspapers or periodicals how students use these means to express their opinions. In Greece they played a decisive role in the government crisis. In Poland and Hungary students have played a major role in efforts to change the status quo. In Latin America students were the vanguard of all political parties. At the turn of the century Chinese students helped greatly in bringing about the downfall of the Manchu Dynasty. In 1919 student demonstrations began in Peking starting the second Chinese revolution. Student unrest, worker demonstrations, and strikes played a major role in undermining Chiang

6Ibid., p. 8.
Kai-Shek, and following World War II student riots contributed to the downfall of the Nationalist regime. In 1957 Communist China witnessed the "Hundred Flowers" campaign in which the party encouraged open criticism. As Rene Goldman, a French journalist present in China at the time reported, "What really shook the party was a feeling that it faced the loss of its control over the youth. Young people brought up under communist rule had become the loudest in denouncing the party which had vested its hope in them."7

In nineteenth century Russia, students played an important role in insisting on more freedom, demands for reform and intellectual integrity. Student disorders occurred almost annually from the 1880's to the Revolution of 1905. As Kennan comments, "I have heard it freely confessed by members of the revolutionary student generation of Tsarist Russia that, proud as they were of the revolutionary exploits of their youth, they never really learned anything in their university years; they were too busy with politics."8 Historians report that workers in Russia learned the value of street demonstrations from student revolts. In Africa students were the advocates of Pan-African unity. Yugoslavia also faced student activism. After the communist coup in Indonesia, during the 1960's, the students took the lead in changing policy

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in their country. In the United States and Western Europe students organized to discuss world issues especially the war in Vietnam. Resistance to the war, the black revolution, and the social and political energies which it produced became part of the whole new set of forces within the student movement in the United States. These are but a few examples of students taking active roles in voicing their opinions in critical areas.

In many countries reality is usually at variance with principles. Educated young people throughout the world thus tend to support idealistic movements. Youthful idealism, which often leads to sharp rejection of adult practices, is often expected and respected by the older generation. 9 Van Manneu states, "One may feel that student feelings have always been dynamic and inspired by the maxim: we shall do better than the previous generation. Whether this is true or not, it is a fact that since World War II students have been more active than ever before and seem more aware of the possibilities and responsibilities inherent in their place in society." 10

An important factor that tends to force young people to deviate from accepted adult practices is the ability of the younger generation to differentiate themselves from older ones, in effect from their friends. 11 Draper in his book "The New Student Revolt"

9 Lipset and Wolin, Berkeley Student Revolt, p. 3.
10 Van Maaneu, The International Student Movement, p. 7.
11 Lipset and Wolin, Berkeley Student Revolt, p. 3.
states, "A student revolt of these massive proportions is a phenomenon of national importance. It demands to be studied, analyzed, and understood, whether by students who want to go and do likewise, or by educators who want to remedy the conditions which produce it, or by observers who want to grasp what is happening to the great Society of the Sixties." 12

Today's students are the products of our society. They possess a restless dissatisfaction with today's world. The public has a sharply etched image of the student activist. They view the activist as a seedy uncouth creature who is a maladjusted misfit. In a study supported by the United States Office of Education, psychologists, and social scientists studying the student activist for four years, found him to be a bright, stable, successful and highly principled person. He differs markedly from his nonactivist peers in family and socioeconomic background, academic ability and in personality characteristics and values. 13 Joseph Katz, Associate Director of the Institute for the Study of Human Problems at Stanford University, in assessing the activists' academic aptitude and performance, found him to be far from being a frustrated dropout, but generally a "top notch student." 14

According to Katz, the parents of activist students are generally permissive and affectionate toward their children. He

12Hal Draper, Berkeley: The New Student Revolt, p. 15.
14Ibid., 3.
found the parents of activists have higher incomes and are well educated. The activists seem to act more in conformity with the values of their parents, although they express their values with more energy and less compromise than do their parents.\textsuperscript{15} Katz goes on to define the activists as: "those who share four broad psychological characteristics. An orientation toward master of frustrating conditions rather than submission and conformity, a will to change social environment, a tendency to explore the inner life, and a willingness to risk future social or economic opportunities in the pursuit of some abstract but immediate ideal of justice."\textsuperscript{16}

"This definition does not describe specific people, but rather a syndrome in which people may share in varying ways,"\textsuperscript{17} says Katz.

A committee of psychiatrists in discussing adolescence feel that young people want to be something more than just being good citizens, who must conform and have no individuality. They want to be persons in their own right. The need of the younger generation to establish its own independence corresponds to the tactic of the activists who seek recruits among those who are not well integrated into the "system". Some youngsters find that opportunities to display their talents are many, but for others the doors

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 4.


\textsuperscript{17}VanLoon, American Education, p. 2.
are closed, and the search for one's self seems to be hemmed in at every point by many mundane requirements and by incessant requirements to conform. These youngsters then seek the easy way out by joining together to attack the conventions, and flout the values of the larger society.  

Young people today are conscious of their own rights, conscious of the older generation, and above all, conscious of their power to bring about change--change through activism, protest and "power". According to Jack Down, "we have become a society with clearly defined lines between the adult and the teenage culture."  

OVERVIEW

Chapter I develops the frame of reference for the entire study. To treat adequately the position and status of student activism, Chapter I, includes a perspective of current forces affecting student activism, and its direct relationship to current elementary school activism. A discussion of several major affecting forces, as well as a review of current student activism background is presented.

A review of related literature is presented in Chapter II. As indicated, there is an abundance of literature dealing with student activism on the university and high school educational

18 Ibid.
levels, but literature concerned with elementary school student activism, is sparse and fairly recent in publication. There is a dearth of related research dealing with student activism on the elementary school level, but there seems to be little doubt that student activism is going to affect the elementary schools much in the same manner as we are currently witnessing in many of the colleges and high schools throughout the nation.

A background review of student activism is made in Chapter III. This chapter centers on the historical impact of student activism, and the implications, made on present day student activism as it affects the decision-making of the elementary school superintendent.

Since literature is sparse relating to elementary school student activism, it is the purpose of this study to determine through analysis the effect of student activism upon decision-making as perceived by the suburban elementary school superintendent. Attention is focused on the fact that student activism is just recently making its presence felt on the elementary school level. As indicated, student activism has filtered down through the educational ranks, from the university to the elementary school. This will be the consideration of the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Much preparation of preliminary work preceded the actual testing of the hypotheses. As indicated in chapter one, page fifteen of this work, the instrument was developed, field tested and restructured, the interviewing schedules were formulated and categories for analyzing the data were developed. This chapter describes how the preceding steps were implemented in this study.

The purpose of the superintendents' interview was to discuss in depth the answers given on the questionnaire. The respondents' side-comments, facial expressions, and voice tone, often give the interviewer additional information that might not be noted in a written reply.

A majority of the questions was concerned with the perceptions, attitudes, and effects of student activism upon the suburban elementary superintendents' decision-making.

Geographical Distribution

A breakdown of school districts randomly selected was made as to location, enrollment, per pupil assessed valuation, superintendent's age, and experience as an elementary school superintendent (See Appendix B). Elementary school districts were selected in
each of the following geographic locations:

1. North-East Lake County.
2. North Cook County.
3. West-Central Cook County.
4. South Cook County.
5. North-East DuPage County.

Two approaches were used in this study: (1) A research of current, professional literature to ascertain the effect of student activism upon the school administrators; (2) A forty-five minute to one hour personal interview of superintendents located in Lake, Cook, and DuPage Counties located in Northern Illinois, to determine if these superintendents agree with the professional literature regarding their decision-making role relating to student activism.

The responses of the superintendents to the propositions were categorized, using a modified Likert scale. The respondents were asked to express their answers in one of the following degrees: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). To score the scale the responses were weighted +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2, respectively, from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. If all superintendents Strongly Agree to a proposition, that proposition would receive +50 points. If all superintendents Strongly Disagree to a proposition, that proposition would receive -50 points. As the numbers increase to +50, so does the superintendents agreement with the proposition.
As the numbers increase negatively to -50, so does the superintendents' disagreement with the proposition.

Responses to the individual propositions are represented by numbers and lines. An example of how to interpret the data is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>(3) 12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +28)

1. SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, U - Undecided, D - Disagree, and SD - Strongly Disagree.

2. The number in parenthesis is the number of superintendents selecting that particular response.

3. The number next to the parenthesis is the number of superintendents selecting that particular response converted to a percentage.

4. The above graphical representation would read ten superintendents, or forty percent of the responses selected the alternative Strongly Agree. Ten or forty percent selected Agree. Three or twelve percent selected Undecided. Two or eight percent selected Disagree. No one selected Strongly Disagree.

5. The total weight of the proposition was calculated as follows:
This chapter contains three major aspects of this dissertation: (1) the hypotheses of the study; (2) a rationale for each hypothesis; (3) the propositions used to test the hypotheses.

The statements of proposition pertaining to the six hypotheses were purposely scattered throughout the instrument to minimize the possibility of influencing the responses. (See Appendix A)

The responses of those superintendents interviewed, and the reasons for their particular selections will be presented along with a critique and analysis of these data.

**HYPOTHESIS I**

Superintendents react to student activism in a paternalistic manner.

The first hypothesis deals with the question of whether or not the elementary school superintendent reacts to student activism in a paternalistic manner. Proposition one, seven, thirteen, nineteen, twenty-five, and thirty-one pertain to this hypothesis.

In responding to an inquiry by School Management magazine; "Are school officials reacting to student unrest with an intelligent mixture of firmness and flexibility?" John P. Spiegel, M.D., Director of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Superintendents</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>+28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brandeis University, stated:

If I had to make a generalization at this point about the features that are common to all the various incidents in which school administrators have behaved constructively, I would put it like this: As soon as student demands or the possibility of student disorders come to the attention of school administrators, the administration contacts student leaders in order to hear their views and work out through negotiation, some compromise solution to the issues at conflict.

The compromise should satisfy some of the demands or feelings of protest motivating the activists and, on the other hand, maintain the position of those in authority for the control of school processes and procedures in the best interests of the entire school community.

In most instances, this compromise solution, which requires a good deal of innovation and risk-taking, heads off more serious disorder.¹

"Generally, the rougher the incident the tougher the authority's response."² Superintendent Paul A. Miller of Cincinnati feels: "If parents don't take command of their youth, others will, for reasons best known to themselves. Take firm steps to ensure that the majority of students who want an education receive it under circumstances conducive to learning.

If you are confronted with an explosive situation, consider closing your schools. A major principle of control is dispersal, not restriction."³

²Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 56.
Edward Jacobson, Principal, Drum Hill Junior High School, in Peekskill, New York, comments on how administrators should respond to student unrest: "School authorities should impress upon these youngsters that we're all understanding and sympathetic to their frustration, but that this isn't the way we're going to get things done. Suspension is the strongest weapon to use against a dissident student, but it should be followed up by a strong effort to meet with the youngsters and their parents to get them back in school. This meeting should be free of recriminations, threats or attempts to extract promises of future good behavior. The main thing is to get the schools running full-steam again."  

Proposition 1

Superintendents over-respond to student activism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3) 12%</td>
<td>(7) 28%</td>
<td>(2) 8%</td>
<td>(10) 40%</td>
<td>(3) 12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received -3)

Forty per cent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this proposition. Fifty-two per cent disagreed. Even if those who were undecided are included the majority of the superintendents disagreed. The comments made which disagree with this proposition suggest that it depends upon the superintendent. The respondents favoring this proposition agreed that those

4Ibid., p. 58.
superintendents who experience student activism for the first time, over-respond, because of the lack of experience in dealing with student demonstrations and dissent. Three superintendents indicated that after their first initial experience with student dissent they took a more rational approach to subsequent confrontations with the students.

Several respondents also concurred that the seriousness of student dissent often determined the superintendent's reaction to student dissent.

**Proposition 7**

The police should be involved in the event of a serious disturbance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(8) 32%</td>
<td>(14) 56%</td>
<td>(1) 4%</td>
<td>(2) 8%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +28)

The majority (88%) of superintendents interviewed favored police involvement in the event of serious student disturbances. The lone superintendent who disagreed felt that on the elementary school level, "the school personnel should be able to take care of any student disturbance." No superintendent strongly disagreed.

Many superintendents who believed the police should be called immediately, also believed that the elementary school personnel should not become involved in quelling a serious disturbance. They reasoned that, because the majority of the faculty membership
is female, the safety of these faculty members should be uppermost in the minds of the superintendents.

Others agreeing with the proposition strongly suggested police involvement in the event of a serious disturbance. They felt school administrators should meet with the local police to prepare plans of action in the event of serious student disorders. Because of police involvement, the superintendents believe there is less chance of a serious injury occurring to any of the students, and less possibility of any student groups taking over the school. While student disorders have not resulted in excessive physical violence or property damage, the superintendents feel the potential chaos that could result from these incidents has motivated them to establish written emergency plans.

Proposition 13

Superintendents should take specific action--calling of staff meetings, writing plans, issuing of orders--should student dissent develop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
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<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +29)

The superintendents (96%) were very much in agreement with this proposition. They suggested guidelines be set-up before any student dissent takes place, and that these guidelines should be well known to all parties concerned.
The one superintendent who disagreed with this proposition believed plans were too often "cut and dried", and were made without any flexibility. He thought it would be impossible to put into writing a plan that could cover all forms of dissent and suggested it would be better to "play it by ear."

Many of the superintendents commented that the elementary school superintendent should be aware that student activism is a proven fact, and that it is making its appearance on the elementary school level. The superintendents felt that they should be prepared for student disorder, whether they believed dissent and disorder could strike their school system or not.

**Proposition 19**

Superintendents will be more effective if they include all members of the staff in formulating plans of action in the event of student disorders.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(11) 44%</td>
<td>(11) 44%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(2) 8%</td>
<td>(1) 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +29)

There was strong agreement among the superintendents with this proposition (88%). One superintendent believed he would be more effective if he took this proposition one step further, and also included his community in formulating plans in the event of student disorders.

A number of superintendents (14) considered that a better
plan of action would be to select a small group of staff members to work with them in formulating plans, and then present these plans to the entire staff. Since student dissent affects the total school program, many of the respondents felt that formulating plans should be a "team effort." The teachers' role is now more prominent in the preparation of these plans.

The three superintendents who disagreed with this proposition believed that the superintendent should be the leader; therefore, he should shoulder the responsibility in the formulation of any plans relating to student disorders. One superintendent explained his feelings by stating: "We superintendents too often 'pass the buck', and ruling by consensus doesn't always work."

**Proposition 25**

The superintendent should react to student protest in a firm manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) 28%</td>
<td>(13) 52%</td>
<td>(1) 4%</td>
<td>(4) 16%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +23)

Although the majority (80%) of the respondents agreed with this proposition, the reaction to the word "firm" was varied. Many qualified use of the word "firm" by following it with "but fair," firm--"but with understanding," firm--"but not in a dictatorial manner." Each seemed to perceive the word "firm" in a different light.
Many of those who agreed with the proposition felt they would react with "firmness," should they be confronted with student protest, but they did not want to use this "firmness" in a tyrannical manner. Some felt that by reacting to student protest in anything less than a firm manner would indicate a sign of "weakness" or "capitulation" to the students' demands.

The superintendents who had experienced student confrontations, found they were more effective when they acted with firmness and without hesitation.

The superintendents indicated that, as leaders of the school district, they should react with firmness and flexibility, but also remain consistent. The superintendents also indicated that administrators must be able to be comfortable with themselves whether they react to various school situations in a firm or paternalistic manner.

The superintendents who disagreed with this proposition, felt it would be best to take time to study the situation and then react accordingly.

Proposition 31

Reacting to student activism in a paternalistic manner serves to undermine the superintendent's authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
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<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7) 28%</td>
<td>(13) 52%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(4) 16%</td>
<td>(1) 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total points received +21)
There is strong agreement (80%) among the superintendents that to react to student activism in a paternalistic manner serves to undermine the superintendent's authority.

The superintendents generally agree that a strong leader would avoid paternalism. Many stated they would like to avoid creating a "father image" in administering their school districts.

One superintendent believed that many administrators are guilty of administering their schools in a paternalistic manner at one time or another during their careers, and once they react in this manner, it undermines their "effectiveness" as administrators, more than it upholds their administrative authority. It is his belief that one must always act with firmness, as firmness denotes authority.

Most superintendents expressed the desire to be looked upon as being a strong leader--not a paternalistic one. One felt that paternalism in relation to student activism, denoted being a permissive administrator. By this he meant: allowing students to do as they please, without necessarily giving permission or approval.
### Summary Table for Hypothesis I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition (Points)</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>UNDECIDED</th>
<th>DISAGREED</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Points -3)</td>
<td>(3)12%</td>
<td>(7)28%</td>
<td>(2)8%</td>
<td>(10)40%</td>
<td>(3)12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (Points +28)</td>
<td>(8)32%</td>
<td>(14)56%</td>
<td>(1)4%</td>
<td>(2)8%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 (Points +29)</td>
<td>(6)24%</td>
<td>(18)72%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(1)4%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (Points +29)</td>
<td>(11)44%</td>
<td>(11)44%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(2)8%</td>
<td>(1)4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 (Points +23)</td>
<td>(7)28%</td>
<td>(13)52%</td>
<td>(1)4%</td>
<td>(4)16%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 (Points +21)</td>
<td>(7)28%</td>
<td>(13)52%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(4)16%</td>
<td>(1)4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESIS I**

There is strong agreement among the superintendents, that they do not react to student activism in a paternalistic manner. Rather than worrying about being paternalistic, superintendents should be more concerned with getting to the root of the problem of student activism, and developing strategy for amicable solutions. Education has a great need for administrators who are comfortable with themselves whether they react to various school situations in a firm or paternalistic manner.
Superintendent responses indicate that those administrators who have not experienced student unrest, that is now appearing in the elementary schools, tend to over-react with their first experience. The superintendents, however, after their initial experience with student dissent are taking a more rational approach to subsequent confrontations. Superintendents see a need to be prepared for student unrest, and believe it is important to formulate a good plan of action to cope with student disorders. The school district with a good plan of action, will find it much easier to handle student disorder, when and if it does occur.

The majority (88%) of superintendents felt very strongly about police involvement in the event of a serious student disturbance. They believed that school administrators must meet with the local police to prepare plans of action for implementation in the event of a serious student protest. The superintendents expressed great concern for the safety of the teachers and students. They were also concerned with damage to school property. Because of this concern, the superintendents indicated they would not hesitate in calling the police immediately, to quell a serious disturbance. Because many elementary schools are staffed with a majority of female teachers, the superintendents felt the teachers must not become involved in the event of a serious student disturbance.

Throughout the personal interviews the superintendents asserted that preparation, or lack of preparation, seemed to be the key to student activism. Responses indicate teachers should
be given a greater role in developing plans relating to student disorders.

In analyzing the superintendents' responses, many felt the superintendent should react to student protest in a firm manner and without hesitation. From what he learned from the interviews the author believes, however, the superintendent should also consider not taking too stern of an action with regard to student protest. This kind of action may tend to feed fuel to the fire, consequently, causing the dissent to spread.

The superintendents believe that reacting to student protest in anything less than a firm manner, indicated "weakness" on the part of the school administrator and this in turn affected their decision-making. They believed the superintendent must take firm steps to assure a good education for the students who actually want a good education.

HYPOTHESIS II

Superintendents want a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder.

This hypothesis states that superintendents want a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder. It is agreed the superintendent assists the school board in formulating policy, but once the policy is adopted by the school board, it is the superintendent's responsibility to implement this policy.

In a report on student unrest made by the National School Public Relations Association, a question on a survey relating to
student protest asked: "Whether the school public relations office had prepared (or was preparing) written policy guidelines for dealing with student 'demonstrations' or other forms of protest?"  

"Nationwide", says the report: "62 per cent of those canvassed did not have written policies; nor did they have intention at the time of the survey for formulating such policies--and this was true in dozens of cases where the system or the school had already experienced some form of student protest."

The report goes on to say: "Administrators who reported no written guidelines gave such reasons as: rural geographic locations, small size, 'conservative populace', paternal 'control' over children, absence of racial minority groups, strong school administration that 'would not countenance any form of revolt', no 'troublemakers' in the community, a belief that protest is 'just a fad.'"

Others seemed to have their fingers crossed, with such comments as: "It hasn't reached us--yet." "We have been able to keep ahead of them, but I don't know how long it will last." "Things always happened later in our area." "We are just beginning to think about guidelines."

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6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.
In the article "Handling student unrest: What's the best approach?" John P. Spiegel makes reference to school board policy as it relates to student dissent. Spiegel suggests, "A broad statement on the limits of dissent--and the consequences of overstepping the limits--is a must if students are to know what they can and can't get away with, and if administrators are to be able to reason dispassionately with dissenters as follows: This is school policy. I am required by law to uphold it. I feel no personal animosity to any of you--but uphold it I will."9

Many school districts are taking a hard second look at the advisability of formulating written policy on student dissent and disorder. Proposition two, eight, fourteen, twenty, and twenty-six pertain to this hypothesis.

Proposition 2

The Board of Education should develop a board policy relating to student activism.

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(Total points received +20)

Over three-quarters (76%) of the superintendents agreed the Board of Education should develop a board policy relating to student activism. Because of student activism a number (9) of

superintendents found it necessary to urge their Board of Education to establish written policy to guide them in responding to acceptable and unacceptable forms of student dissent. None of these superintendents indicated at the time of the interview whether their districts were successful in completing these policies. The consensus among the superintendents (12%) who disagreed with this proposition was, "You can't cover every form of protest," in a written policy. These superintendents agreed that only a very broad policy giving the superintendent much latitude should be adopted by the Board of Education.

The superintendents believed a board policy was needed to define the superintendent's role, especially in the event that he had to resort to calling in outside help, such as the police, in quelling a serious student disturbance. Some of the superintendents were of the opinion that providing guidelines would enable the superintendent to handle each student disorder without having to consult the board or use an "ambiguous" administrative approach rather than reacting to a situation in a more positive, well-thought-out manner.

Proposition 8

Boards of Education tend to react to student activism only in times of crisis.

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(Total points received +12)
Although most of the superintendents (64%) agreed with this proposition, many commented that if the Boards of Education tend to react to student activism only in time of crisis, it is because the superintendent does not keep the board fully informed. Some of the superintendents contended that a number of school board members seem to take their job seriously only when confronted with a crisis.

One superintendent believed the board should only react when informed of serious situations by the superintendent, and not until then. He also believed it was important to have clear-cut policies relating to such a situation.

Four superintendents were undecided as to where they stood regarding this proposition. They did agree that a sensitive school board should be kept fully informed of student desires, by the school administration, and that the Board of Education should then react to these student desires in a prudent manner.

Many superintendents indicated that their concern and apprehension over the potential threat of student activism have caused them to seek closer communication with their school board members as a supportative measure in decision-making.

Proposition 14

Superintendents will be more effective if they include students in the formulating of policy.
The superintendents did agree with this proposition, but it was not a clear-cut agreement. Fifty-six per cent agreed, twenty per cent disagreed, and fifteen per cent of the superintendents were undecided. Those who were in agreement concurred the students should be consulted, but the students should not be a part of the final decision-making. One superintendent indicated the students should be consulted only through an organizational approach, and this would depend on the areas of decision-making being discussed. Such an organizational approach could be through the student-council. He felt the students could take part in decision-making in areas related to student dress, social activities, and to the selection of extra-curricular activities, such as intramural activities.

Several superintendents who were in agreement felt their role as chief administrator of a school district would be more effective if the students were allowed a part in the decision-making machinery of the school district. One superintendent indicated he did allow his students the opportunity to participate in formulating rules and regulations that were related to student activities. Since their involvement, he noticed that he was more warmly accepted by the students. Because of this, he feels he has become a more effective administrator.
The superintendents who disagreed with this proposition believed the elementary school student was much too young and inexperienced to be allowed to take part in formulating policy.

**Proposition 20**

School board policy should carefully delineate the role and responsibility of the superintendent regarding student dissent.

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(Total points received +21)

There was agreement among the superintendents for this proposition (72%). With respect to student dissent and disorder, these superintendents believed they would be more effective if their responsibilities were carefully delineated through school board policy. Some argued that in many areas of school administrative decision-making, the superintendents are operating in a state of "limbo."

One superintendent indicated he would feel more comfortable, in the event of student dissent, if his role were alluded to in school board policy, but he would be much more effective as a school administrator if the policy were to give him room for "exceptions." Others wanted "flexibility" and "room-to-move" in this policy.

The superintendents who disagreed with this proposition, believed the school code defines the superintendents' responsibility. The Illinois School Code, Section 10-24.4 does not make any
reference to the superintendent's responsibility as it relates to student dissent. It does say, however, that the superintendent shall "perform such other duties as the board may delegate to him." 10

**Proposition 26**

Superintendents feel inadequate when carrying out their responsibilities because the definition of their role is not clear relating to student activism.

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(Total points received -5)

The majority (56%) of the superintendents disagreed with this proposition. They felt it would be better if their role as superintendent of schools was delineated in school board policy; however, they did not feel inadequate because it was not spelled-out in policy form. These superintendents reasoned that while the student activists' movement has had some effect upon the administrative procedures of the elementary school superintendents, they feel the effects are of a lesser degree than those experienced by college and secondary administrators.

The feeling among those superintendents who agreed with this proposition indicated a need for a clear-cut definition of their role regarding disruptions in the schools, whether it is student activism, or any other form of dissent.

Superintendents who expressed agreement were thoroughly convinced that the feeling of inadequacy would depend on the superintendent, and not on the policy—or lack of it. One superintendent felt that some superintendents were unwilling to accept the necessary role, no matter how clearly defined, when it came to student disorders. Another commented: "The role of superintendent of schools is becoming so complex in this day-and-age, that a clear-cut definition of that role would be near to impossible. Student disorders are causing confusion among some administrators."

Summary Table for Hypothesis II

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Superintendents were in agreement with this hypothesis. They want a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder. Although they did disagree with proposition twenty-six, there was agreement, but not overwhelming agreement, on the other propositions relating to this hypothesis. There seems to be some ambivalence in the reactions of the superintendents.

Superintendents need direction, commensurate with their leadership role, so they can be comfortable with their decisions relating to student activism. Superintendents must be knowledgeable about what direction they should take before this prerogative is lost along with many others they are presently relinquishing.

A written policy on student activism must define the kinds of student expression that can be accepted. The superintendents concede that when it comes to student activism, dissent, and disorder, every incident is different. This makes a detailed policy impossible. A good school board policy must allow for latitude; be free from narrow rules, and free from detail.

The superintendents feel there is a need for broad guidelines that will enable them to handle each student disorder without having to consult the board of education with each incident. The superintendents indicate that, without a board policy relating to student activism, they find it difficult to react to student activism in a positive manner.

The board of education must be kept fully informed, especially
as it relates to student activism. A sensitive school board must be aware of the many desires of the students, and this awareness must often come through detailed reports from the school administration. These reports should be periodic and not only in times of crisis.

The elementary school superintendents are not united in their agreement that they will be more effective if they include students in formulating school rules and regulations. The feeling among many of the superintendents is the elementary school student is much too young and inexperienced to be allowed to take part in any matters pertaining to policy.

The superintendents are urging their Boards of Education to adopt written policies which may provide guidance if trouble occurs. The concern and apprehension over the threat of student activism have caused the superintendents to seek closer communication with their school board members as a supportative measure in decision-making.

While the student activist movement has had some effect upon the administrative procedures of elementary superintendents, the effects appear to be of a lesser degree than those experienced by college and secondary administrators.
HYPOTHESIS III

Superintendents are cognizant of a shifting of values among elementary school students.

In order that we may better understand student activism, it will be helpful to discuss the views of some experts, as they attempt to determine the reasons for the shifting of values among the nation's youth. Students insist that the values of the older generation are out of date. Lipset and Sheldon, in discussing the feelings of student values as they relate to the older generation indicate: "The relations of youth with the parental generation is complicated by the fact that the institutions within which they have been socialized before entering the university, the family, church, and school are more likely to be concerned with transmitting the values of older generations, with shielding youth from the effects of changes that erode older beliefs, than with preparing youth to cope with change."

According to Jeanne L. Noble, Guidance Counselor at the City College of New York, New York, students are afraid of the adult inability to face the future in the midst of the present human condition. She also indicates the youths feel the adults talk about spiritual, ethical, and human values, but they put their faith in money, machinery, and technology, and not in the youth of the nation. Adults must realize the students have an intense

11 Lipset and Sheldon, The Berkeley Student Revolt, p. 4.
feeling and concern for meaning in their lives. 12

Noble views other aspects of value change as being concerned with issues of self-revelation and power, not individual power, but adult power. She is further concerned with adults who attempt to dominate the youth, deciding where the youth should go—when and how fast. 13

Halleck believes, "Those entrusted with the teaching of values—educators, theologians, law enforcement officers, parents—seem totally unprepared to move from dogmatic to rational presentation of value systems. As their authority is threatened, some resort to preaching, rather than reflection. Our youth respond by despair and violence." 14

The youth of today have a great awareness of themselves. This awareness has produced a deep disillusionment toward their elders, and a restless impatience to implement a change. This is one of the most compelling reasons for student activism.

The third hypothesis deals with whether the superintendents are cognizant of this shifting of values among elementary school students. Proposition three, nine, fifteen, twenty-two, twenty-seven, and thirty-two pertain to this hypothesis.

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12 Jeanne L. Noble, "What are Adolescents Scared Of?" Education Digest, XXXIV No. 4 (December 1968), p. 33.
13 Ibid., p. 32
14 Halleck, Education Digest, p. 33.
Proposition 3

Students are no longer accepting, on faith, what their elders tell them.

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(Total points received +30)

There was a strong response among the superintendents (96%) agreeing with this proposition. The lone dissenter still believed the majority of students accepted their parents' value system.

Many superintendents have a definite opinion that students are no longer even pretending to accept guidance from their elders. The superintendents indicate that the elders talk about peace in the world, and yet it does not seem likely that today's students will inherit a peaceful earth when they become adults. The elders talk about prosperity, and the students read about starvation in many parts of the world. Other superintendents express the opinion that students easily accept this guidance; however, more and more of the students are questioning the leadership of their elders. Several superintendents indicated that many students believe the standards to which they should conform--must be their personal selection of standards, and not the selection made by the schools or their parents. They indicated this student attitude did affect their decision-making. The superintendents see the students rebelling in the schools, because they want a closer
relationship with the faculty and administration. The students want a greater degree of freedom in learning. The superintendents believe the students are prodding for self-expression and self-development. In essence, the students want a "piece of the action." One mentioned, "students no longer are learning by rote, but as in modern math, they are now asking why?"

Proposition 9

Affluency or the lack of it in general has contributed to the shifting of values.

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(Total points received +21)

A large percentage (76%) of the superintendents indicated affluency, or the lack of it, has contributed to the shifting of values among today's youth. "Affluency of a family does not require a student to spend time in the pursuit of monetary gains," was a comment made by a number of respondents. A few superintendents suggested that the lack of affluency, likewise, contributed to the value package of the student. One superintendent believed that students who came from financially poor families in his district often felt the need to steal in order to compete with their wealthier peers.

Another superintendent felt too much affluency contributed greatly to the shifting of values. These youngsters do not learn
to respect money because they do not have to earn it. Only one superintendent disagreed with proposition nine.

Proposition 15

The impact of the communications media has contributed to a shift in the value system of the youth of today.

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(Total points received +37)

There is one hundred per cent agreement with this proposition. The superintendents believe the old lines of communications and influence are breaking down. A number of superintendents feel that parental influence is being supplemented by the mass communications media; namely, television.

The superintendents believe that the mass communication media covers the educational scene selectively. The media seem to focus only on sit-ins against the school administrators, student protests, and student unrest. Educators feel little attention is given to the important institutional changes, curricula, and instructional innovations which are affecting educational institutions and their students.

Three superintendents were concerned with the massive degree of violence in television programs. They believed that the
elementary student, whether he is in the first or second grade or in the seventh or eighth grade, is very impressionable. Another superintendent was concerned with the values derived by children from television commercials. He believed that too many commercials were done in very bad taste. A number of the superintendents were critical of the manner in which television attempted to influence the young. They believed that many news events did not adequately cover both sides of a story. All of the superintendents agreed that television can also have a positive influence on elementary education. It does help students to identify and develop a pride in race and cultural heritage. It aids in equalizing the quality of education.

Two superintendents were critical of many parents for not being selective in choosing television programs that were considered appropriate for children of a particular age group.

Because of the communication media, the superintendents believe there is a fundamental shift of values among the students, as evidenced by their extreme behavior.

**Proposition 22**

The shifting of student values will have little effect on influencing your decisions relative to student activism.

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(Total points received -3)
There are mixed emotions about proposition twenty-two. The superintendents who disagreed (44%) said the impact of today's student value system has a great effect on influencing their decision-making. These superintendents felt the student values often reflect the values of their parents who are, in effect, a part of the school district's power structure. One superintendent indicated he disagreed with the proposition, because he believed that society has a need for a value system, based on the relevancy of these values; therefore, these values have a great influence upon his decisions relative to student activism. The superintendents feel the students indicate a need to know where they are going and a need to develop a set of values of their own which has not been dictated to them by the schools or their parents.

The superintendents who agreed (40%) believed the values of today's youth are of an unknown quality, and until these values have been proven valid, they will have little effect on their "decision-making."

The superintendents who were undecided (16%) about this proposition felt values changed from day-to-day among this age group.

Proposition 27

Students are learning that they can diminish oppressions in their lives by attacking authority.
The majority (72%) of superintendents agreed with the proposition. They also agreed that authority, as it was viewed twenty, ten, even five years ago, which in the main was autocratic, simply does not work in our schools today. Autocratic administrators are "asking for it, if they do not change with the times," commented one superintendent. The superintendents indicated they are aware that today's students and parents will not tolerate autocratic administrators. Several superintendents related the students have learned that, through demonstrations and disorders, they can diminish oppressive administrations. Another commented, "If the administrator builds loyalty among the students, he is less likely to be confronted with student activism." Student alienation toward school authority stems from the activist's belief that conflict generates tensions.

A number of superintendents maintain that the students believe direct action is the most effective and often the only means of diminishing oppressions in their lives.

The superintendents who disagreed had the attitude that the students attack authority only when the authority is indefensible or arbitrary.

Proposition 32

Student questioning of any arbitrary structure has had an effect on your decision-making.
The superintendents agreed (72%) that student questioning of any arbitrary structure did affect their decision-making. One prominent administrator pointed out that this condition forced him to evaluate whether or not any of his rules were arbitrary. Another superintendent believed that, not only did student questioning affect his decisions, but also so did the parent's and teacher's questioning.

Several prominent superintendents were in favor of allowing students to raise questions relating to any facet of the school program, because they believed it improved student morale. They believed that children whether in the third or eighth grade must be allowed the privilege of asking questions. They also felt the student has the right to question the fairness of school rules and adult authority. The student must, however, learn the difference between being in authority, and being an authoritarian.

Two superintendents indicated it is the educators function to create an atmosphere conducive to good learning and to discuss the alternatives to values and their consequences with every student entrusted to them.

Several superintendents felt that administrators should explain to the students any decision that relates to the students' school life. Although they agreed several admitted they did not
put this into practice.

The five superintendents who disagreed felt that to allow students to question them on matters relating to any facet of the school program would eventually force them to abdicate their leadership role in the school district.

Summary Table for Hypothesis III

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SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS FOR HYPOTHESIS III

Superintendents agree there is a shifting of values among elementary school students. The superintendents believe that with these shifting of values among the students, no one can present a
value package relevant to all students. It is enough to know that one can describe certain basic guidelines so the student can identify himself as a functioning, contributing member of society, and not just as a bystander.

There is strong agreement among the superintendents (96%) that students no longer willingly accept guidance from their elders. Though some students do accept some form of this guidance, more and more of the students are questioning this leadership.

Many of the superintendents (19) believe that affluency, or the lack of it, has contributed greatly to the shifting of values among today's youth. The superintendents indicate the students' apparent lack of concern over economic matters has caused some changes in student attitudes.

Several superintendents indicated the students feel that society often blocks their personal growth. Many students believe the standards to which they should conform—must be their personal selection of standards, and not the selection made by the schools or their parents. The students are prodding for self-expression and self-development. The superintendents believe the elementary school student will soon follow the older students in expressing dissatisfaction with not being allowed a greater voice in decision-making.

The superintendents believe it is the educator's function to create an atmosphere conducive to good learning, and to discuss the alternative to values and their consequences with every
student entrusted to them. They also believe that if school administrators are to help children in the building of a self-concept, they must place a great deal of emphasis on values. The superintendents feel children must be allowed the privilege of asking questions. The superintendents agree this will have a great effect on the school administrators decision-making, but the student should have the right to question fairness of rules and adult authority. Although the superintendents agreed many admitted they did not put this into practice.

The superintendents in this study expressed deep concern regarding the influence the mass communication media has had on today's youth and his values. Because of the communication media, they believe there is a fundamental shift in values among the students, resulting in extreme student behavior. They are especially concerned about television, and its often negative influence on the elementary child. The superintendents believe today's programs, more often than not, depict crime and mayhem; revel in demonstrations and street violence; and contribute to disorder.

The superintendents interviewed indicated that television can also have a positive influence on elementary education. They feel that television can do much toward helping students identify and develop a pride in race and cultural heritage. Educational television has great potential for helping to equalize the quality of instruction.

Television has brought instant exposure of major events to
the child, and has helped to mold the expectations of this generation of students. The superintendents feel these expectations are often at odds with the values of today's older generation.

HYPOTHESIS IV

Superintendents find it necessary to control the outside influences of student activism.

This hypothesis states superintendents find it necessary to control the outside influences of student activism. Weldy and Wilson believe, "One of the persistent problems facing school administrators is that of regulating student activities, especially those involving non-school community groups." To restrict outside groups from appearing before student assemblies, group meetings, and school programs, is a genuine concern among school administrators. Abraham Kaplan, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, tends to dispel this concern. He says, "I do not understand the attitudes of so many people about the dangerous speakers that students might have come to their campuses. It is somehow supposed that in an hour's exposure to a 'dangerous speaker,' something terrible will happen."


Donald H. Weiss, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Arlington State College, University of Texas, believes, "Critical evaluation also involves critical responsibility." He further states: "When inquiry is rich and stimulating both inside and outside the classroom, the student learns to scrutinize not only the beliefs and actions of others but his own as well; such self scrutiny engenders constructive action, which presuppose self-restraint." Proposition four, ten, sixteen, twenty-one, and twenty-eight pertain to this hypothesis.

**Proposition 4**

Student protest is often a product of societal turmoil from the outside.

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(Total points received +22)

Most of the superintendents (80%) indicated student protest is more often a product of societal turmoil from the outside. The superintendents who did not agree, believed the students in the elementary schools are thinking for themselves more than ever before. Others who agreed believed, outside groups should be controlled, because they provide the impetus for action.


18 Ibid.
One superintendent remarked, "The S.D.S. (Students for Democratic Society), is causing many of the problems in his school district." Several superintendents believe the schools are being used as a base for political indoctrination, rather than for educational reform. They believe, however, that only a small percentage of the students at the elementary school level become involved in activism which possess political overtones. These superintendents felt the elementary student would be susceptible if subjected to these outside influences.

The majority of superintendents (20) are concerned that the elementary school student is very much aware of the successes that the high school and college students have achieved through dissent. A number of superintendents admitted that this awareness among their elementary school students has made them apprehensive regarding the controlling of outside influences. This, indeed, has had a great effect upon the superintendent's decision-making.

Proposition 10

Outside dissident group representatives should not be allowed to speak before student assemblies.

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(Total points received +17)

The superintendents who expressed agreement (68%) felt, in the main, that in college group representatives should be allowed
to speak at college assemblies; expressed reservation about high school assemblies, and were definitely against allowing dissident groups to appear before assemblies in the elementary schools.

Superintendents who did not agree with the proposition (24%) indicated students in the upper elementary grades are much more sophisticated today, therefore they are able to make judgements for themselves. One superintendent, who was undecided, believed outside dissident groups were not concerned with the elementary student at this time. There seems to be concern among the majority of superintendents (17) that influences and pressures from outside groups do affect their decision-making. Several superintendents indicated that their insecurity to make a decision, as a result of group pressures, lessens as one learns to be more effective in his decision-making relative to student activism.

Proposition 16

Literature prepared by organized dissident groups should not be distributed in the school.

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(Total points received +26)

Strong agreement (76%) was expressed by the superintendents with the stated proposition. The majority of superintendents indicated that all literature distributed in the school should be approved by the superintendent. One superintendent, who agreed, said literature of any kind should not be distributed in the
elementary school. Another believed there should be a school board policy relating to any literature distributed in the elementary school. Although they believed this none indicated they had such policy, or whether they had urged their Boards to formulate such policy.

The superintendents who disagreed with this proposition believed the dissident groups would get their literature into the hands of the elementary students whether allowed to distribute it in the school—or on the street corner. Another, who disagreed, believed the superintendent should allow the distribution of literature, but with a cautioning comment relative to the content of the literature.

**Proposition 21**

Outside influences generally have an effect on the superintendent in decision-making.

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(Total points received +24)

Similar to proposition sixteen, there is strong agreement (80%) for proposition twenty-one. The capsule comment among the superintendents was, "Outside influences 'had better' be taken into consideration when decisions are rendered." Five superintendents indicated that in general, all outside influences, whether community groups or dissident groups, had an effect on the superintendent's decision-making.
One superintendent commented, that he did not "give in" to pressure groups, but outside influences did affect his major decision-making.

Proposition 28

Pressures from outside groups affect the total school program.

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(Total points received +27)

Almost all (88%) of the superintendents agreed with proposition twenty-eight. Many felt student activist groups created pressures for the school superintendent, but so did other groups, such as the Parent Teacher Association, homeowners associations, and service organizations.

Many superintendents believe that more and more superintendents are retiring at an earlier age, and are going into less frenzied endeavors, because of the mounting pressures from outside groups. Others also agreed that, on occasions, pressures from outside groups affected their decision-making to the detriment of the total school program. Superintendents have been forced to make decisions they would not otherwise have made, had it not been for outside group pressures.
According to this study superintendents should make a concerted effort to control the influences of outside groups related to student activism. The responses indicate student protest in the elementary school is strongly influenced by outside sources.

The superintendents do agree with hypothesis IV. The comments made by the superintendents would indicate a need for a firm school board policy in order to control outside dissident groups from speaking before elementary school students, and distributing literature in the school. Again, as in proposition two, the superintendents expressed a desire for school board policy relating
to student activism. It is apparent that the superintendents only pay lip-service to their desires in wanting school board policy. There was no indication among the superintendents that any of them have been successful in initiating school board policy relating to student activism.

There is much concern among the superintendents that influences and pressures from outside groups do affect decision-making of the elementary school superintendent. These pressures are an obvious source of distress among the superintendents. It is apparent that their insecurity, as a result of group pressures, lessens as one learns to be more effective in his decision-making, relative to student activism.

The superintendents are concerned with outside dissident group representatives wanting to speak before student assemblies. The majority of the superintendents (17) were definitely against allowing these dissident groups to appear before assemblies in the elementary schools. Many of the superintendents felt the elementary student would also be susceptible and duly influenced if subjected to literature distributed by outside dissident groups. This study indicates that several superintendents believe the elementary schools are being used as a base for political indoctrination of their students, rather than for educational reform. It is their belief that only a small percentage of the students become involved in activism which possess political overtones.

The superintendents are concerned that the elementary school
student is cognizant of the successes that the high school and college students have achieved through dissent, and are fully aware of the need to control outside influences of student activism.

**HYPOTHESIS V**

Superintendents are cognizant of the need for curriculum revision and instruction change, so that they are more relevant to today's youth.

It must be suggested that a responsive curriculum would answer the needs of the students that should be served. Challenges in curriculum development exist in the elementary schools, and it is apparent, that far reaching questions of curriculum evaluation confront today's school administrators.

Louis M. Berman, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, in commenting on the relevancy of today's curriculum believes, "Educators interested in developing a curriculum which has relevance, excitement, and vitality should ask, persistently, the difficult questions that will help determine whether the new schemes have made, or can make, a constructive difference."19 Berman goes on to say, "Are new curriculums emerging which give attention to the learnings children can gain from working and interacting with others who are bigger or smaller, like or unlike themselves? Does the curriculum provide for the teaching of

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concepts which prepare children for the world in which they soon must assume responsibility." 20

Sensitive curriculum makers must respond to this tremendous responsibility of developing curricula that is more relevant to today's youth. John I. Goodlad, Professor of Education and Director of the University Elementary School, University of California, Los Angeles, believes, that curriculum reform should be designed to cope with bringing men into possession of their culture. 21 Goodlad further states:

It is not at all surprising that the attempt to improve the curriculum is through the updating and reorganization of the several academic disciplines. Nor is it surprising that the current movement appears not to take the child into account to the degree of previous eras. Knowledge is the beginning point for educational goals; knowledge is the beginning point for educational means in current curriculum reform. Nonetheless, there is in the current curriculum reform movement a recognition of the need to transform or humanize knowledge so as to bring it within the child's present world and present ways of viewing things. 22

An administrator's rigid insistence that all teachers use the same materials, use a specified reading method, use the same curriculum approaches; prevents teacher innovation, teacher self-improvement and freedom for creative instruction.

The fifth hypothesis considers whether the superintendents

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20 Ibid.


22 Ibid., p. 12.
are cognizant of the need for curriculum revision and instruction change, so that they are more relevant to today's youth. Proposition five, eleven, seventeen, twenty-three and twenty-nine pertain to this hypothesis.

Proposition 5

The elementary school student should have a part in curriculum revision or instructional change.

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(Total points received -16)

In general the superintendents (64%) believe the elementary student is much too young and inexperienced to take part in developing curriculum and institute instructional change. Sixteen superintendents disagreed with proposition five. Many indicated the superintendent should be sensitive to the needs of the elementary student. Several commented they would be willing to allow students to sit on committees discussing curriculum and instructional change, but these students should be from the 7th and 8th grades only. These students, however, would not have a vote in decision-making matters.

The superintendents who agreed with the proposition indicated the advisability of permitting students to express opinions, and to offer suggestions relative to curriculum improvement and instructional change.
The superintendents were very much in disagreement with this proposition. Not one strongly agreed.

**Proposition 11**

Students are more appreciative of teachers who deviate from standard courses of study.

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(Total points received +15)

Superintendents, for the most part, (64%) expressed agreement with the proposition, but further indicated in the interviews that teachers should only deviate from the standard courses of study to the extent that the deviation meets the interests and desires of the students. Several superintendents believed that deviation made the subject matter more interesting and meaningful. The superintendents believe that experimentation and innovation must be encouraged in teachers as well as students.

The superintendents who disagreed with this proposition argues that many students, especially on the elementary school level, wanted to stay on the track, but courses of study should be subject to a feasible change.
Proposition 17

Negative reaction among students on the high school and college level as to "what" is being taught and "how" it is being taught has had its effect on the elementary superintendent's approach to decision-making relevant to curriculum revision and instructional change.

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(Total points received +21)

The superintendents (76%) who expressed agreement with this proposition indicated the need to be prepared, should student activism appear at the elementary school level. "The elementary school superintendents have been forewarned by student activism at the college and high school levels," was the consensus among the superintendents interviewed. One superintendent who strongly agreed with the proposition, felt the effect of negative reaction among older students, would be greater on the more perceptive administrator.

Superintendents who disagreed, did not believe there was any negative reaction among their students, because of student activism at the college and high school educational levels; therefore, this negative reaction among the students on the high school and college level has had little effect on their decision-making relative to curriculum and instructional change.
Proposition 23

Student desires to change existing attitudes and traditions have affected the superintendents' approach to decision-making relevant to curriculum revision and instructional change.

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(Total points received +17)

The majority of the sample (76%) agreed and were very emphatic about the need to change traditions and present-day approaches to curriculum development. A general feeling was superintendents' need to "move with the times." Others indicated a greater willingness to consider new approaches and content was needed. These superintendents feel the development of content should be based on knowledge of most recent and relevant research. It must be adaptable to the individual needs of the students. It must also be relevant to the able as well as the less able student. The superintendents indicate a need to exercise their leadership role to develop a rich and varied curriculum so that their students can function effectively in today's world.

The superintendents who did not agree stated the schools reflect the mores of the community, and to disturb tradition and community attitudes is "inviting" trouble.

Others indicated the reason for their uncertainty was due to the fact that they are unaware how important tradition is to the people in their communities.
Proposition 29

Superintendents are aware that curriculums are isolated from new ideas and cultures, thus promoting prejudice.

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(Total points received Even)

There are mixed emotions about proposition twenty-nine. The superintendents who agree, say there is an urgent need for curriculum reform. One prominent superintendent believes many superintendents are aware of the inadequacy of present-day curriculums, and feels that the superintendents who are not completely aware of this fact will be facing trouble with their students and community in the very near future. The superintendents feel they have been effective in providing educational opportunities for the able student. There was concern, however, that not enough is being done to provide an adequate education for the less able student.

A number of superintendents who disagreed with this proposition believed present day curriculums do an adequate job. In the areas that are weak, they try to "cover the waterfront" by using many supplementary materials.
The response to this hypothesis was fairly evenly divided between the superintendents who agreed, and the superintendents who disagreed. The superintendents do believe that it is necessary to face the problem of preparing students for the world of change, and that sensitive educators must respond to this great surge in fashioning meaningful programs that are relevant to today's youth.

The superintendents believe the curriculum must be developed based on knowledge of the most recent and relevant research. It must be flexible and adaptable to the individual needs of the student.
Many superintendents believe they have been effective in providing appropriate educational opportunities for the able student, but have not been successful in providing an adequate education for the less able student. The superintendents feel there is a need to provide for a full range of rich and varied curriculum for the full range of conditions of learners so that they can function effectively in today's world. This must be done through an improved curriculum, and educators have a remarkable opportunity to help the students adjust to the world around them.

Experimentation and innovation must be encouraged in teachers as well as students. Teachers need to be freed of pressures and routine details for the exercise of self-direction and creativity.

Although many superintendents believe the elementary student is much too young to participate in curriculum revision and instructional change as it exists today, they do feel that the students should be permitted to express opinions, and offer suggestions relative to curriculum improvement. An answer to this dilemma could be a student council: a select group of student-chosen representatives. Within the group, opinions and suggestions relevant to curriculum, school codes, and behavior of peers could be openly discussed, and a set of rules and regulations relating to student-teacher relationship could be established. If students are to learn to live productively, educators must develop an atmosphere of free inquiry within the schools.

The superintendents in general are urging changes in the
curriculum and methods of instruction so that they are more relevant to today's youth.

HYPOTHESIS VI

Students should be given a greater voice in the decision-making process relating to the total school program.

This hypothesis indicates that students want involvement in the decision-making process relating to the total school program. In the past, they were allowed to contribute to the decision-making process involving only social activities outside the school program. Trout, Simmon and Tregea feel, "As students continue their education, increasing numbers of them feel unreasonably excluded from meaningful participation in issues which affect their lives directly."23 Students are demanding a closer relationship with the total school program. They are making a plea for more responsibility in conducting the affairs of programs that are directly related to them. Because of the overt action on the part of the students, they can no longer be taken for granted.

Fred T. Wilhelms, former Associate Secretary, National Association of Secondary School Principals, believes "We have got to involve youngsters directly in the decisions as to what they are going to learn. We've got to go far more toward independent study. We've got to come closer to a situation in which the

individual student can study what seems relevant to him. When things get tough, our instinct is to clamp down; but if we are having trouble with youngsters handling the freedom they have, sometimes the answer is more freedom and responsibility.²⁴

The experts believe that responsibility to govern their own affairs should be given to students. No matter how controversial the issue may be, they must have more opportunity to participate in activities that have meaning and relevance to them. Proposition six, twelve, eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty pertain to this hypothesis.

Proposition 6

Successes of college and high school student activism has caused the elementary superintendent to re-examine his position in permitting the students a greater voice in decision-making.

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Strong agreement was expressed by the superintendents with this proposition. The majority of superintendents (80%) indicated they are aware of these successes. A number of superintendents indicated it is now necessary for elementary school administrators to recognize the necessity of opening the decision-making apparatus.

This means, allowing student participation in the total school program. While some superintendents were ready to take this step, others indicated they were not willing to go this far at this time. These superintendents believe the elementary student in the seventh and eighth grade is much too young to contribute anything worthwhile to constructive decision-making. Although twenty superintendents indicated a need to re-examine their position relative to permitting the students a greater voice in decision-making no superintendent admitted to actually allowing their students a part in decision-making. They also believe the elementary school student will follow the lead of college and high school student, in expressing dissatisfaction with not being allowed a greater voice in decision-making.

Because of student successes at the college and high school levels the elementary school superintendents find it necessary to consider student feelings with respect to dress codes, behavior standards, and other school activities.

The respondents disagreeing with this proposition felt the elementary school student is too young to understand the seriousness of student disorder.

**Proposition 12**

Students should be given a greater voice in the decision-making within the school, outside social, and extra-curricular activities.
The superintendents were evenly divided with this proposition. The general feelings of the superintendents who disagreed are: College - yes; high school - maybe; elementary school - no.

The superintendents who agreed said that through student organizations, the students can make their voice heard. They believe the more activities the school student organizations participate in, the more the students should become involved in decision-making. One superintendent who did allow the students a voice in decision-making suggested that by allowing the student to participate in the decision-making process gave the student an opportunity to gain in experience by seeing both good and bad suggestions enacted. He felt they must be allowed to practice decision-making even though limited, without fear of censure and embarrassment.

One superintendent believed the student council is a strong and relevant organization and should play an important part in the total program.

**Proposition 18**

Academic freedom entails a great degree of permissiveness in all aspects of student life.
Similar to proposition twelve, the superintendents were evenly divided with proposition eighteen. The superintendents who disagreed, believed freedom of inquiry is all right, but within prescribed limits of knowledge and conduct. Another superintendent felt permissiveness is different from freedom within bounds.

Superintendents agreeing seemed convinced that permissiveness allowed at home is carried-over into the school. "Possibly the problems we are having today with students, is the general permissive attitude of people in all walks of life," commented one prominent superintendent.

**Proposition 24**

Recognition of student organizations should be established through well-defined procedures.

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There is strong agreement for this proposition. The majority (92%) who agreed believed these procedures should be developed in concert with the student body. Once the student groups have been organized, it should be established that they must truly represent the majority of the students.
The fact that students are not able to participate as much as they would like in decision-making, may be a reason for their strong feelings for involvement. Many of the superintendents interviewed recognized the need for student involvement, and felt this can best be served through student organizations on the elementary school level. Several superintendents admitted, however, that they are not using them as fully as possible.

Proposition 30

Good school morale results when students are permitted to express dissatisfaction with the decision-making machinery.

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The response to this proposition was fairly evenly distributed between superintendents who agreed, and those who disagreed. The comments made to support this proposition suggest that it is healthy to hear what the students have to say. One superintendent commented, "You would be surprised if you only took the time to listen. Much can be learned about the total school program if the students were allowed to express their dissatisfactions." Another superintendent believed rules must make sense, and the students should be allowed to participate. If they are not allowed to take part in decision-making, poor school morale will result, if no outlet is provided to express dissatisfaction.
The superintendent who was undecided felt an outlet for constructive criticism should be provided, but it should not be permitted to be "gripe centered."

The superintendents who disagreed (44%) would rather have the students use the positive approach in expressing dissatisfaction. Expressing dissatisfaction alone is not enough. There must be an explanation of reasons for these dissatisfactions. It is doubtful that this, alone, will lead to good school morale. They believed that good school morale is the result of many facets of the total school program.

Summary Table for Hypothesis VI

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SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS FOR HYPOTHESIS VI

The superintendents were somewhat evenly divided with respect to their feelings toward hypothesis VI.

The success achieved by students at the college and high school level, indicates that the superintendent at the elementary school level, needs to re-examine his position, relating to permitting the elementary student a greater voice in decision-making.

This study indicates that the elementary school superintendent must overhaul his decision-making apparatus. The superintendents propose that by allowing the student to participate in the decision-making process will give the student an opportunity to gain in experience by seeing both good and bad suggestions enacted. They must be allowed to practice decision-making even though limited, without fear of censure or embarrassment and can try alternative methods of handling a problem situation. When the decision-making needs have been identified, the superintendent can decide on the techniques for assisting the student or group in reaching a decision. The superintendent can provide an array of techniques, services and personnel to increase the students' freedom and ability to make wise and independent choices.

It is evident superintendents are admitting the elementary school student will soon follow the older students in expressing dissatisfaction with not being allowed a greater voice in decision-making. The responses, however, suggest the elementary student is
much too young to participate in the decision-making processes of the elementary school.

From the responses given by the superintendents many agree student organizations can be utilized as a means for voicing student dissatisfactions. The student council should be expanded only as far as the students are interested and will cooperate with the administration. The students today are in a better position than ever before to assist in the operation of the school, because they are better informed and worthy of responsibility.

The superintendents feel they must take more time to listen to the students. Outlets must be provided so that students can express dissatisfaction, should the occasion arise. Administrators must provide a school atmosphere that allows for student discussion, sharing in decisions, helping in developing rules that relate to all facets of the school program. However, the superintendents believe the students must be encouraged to use the positive approach when voicing dissatisfaction.

Because of student successes at the college and high school levels the elementary school superintendents find it necessary to consider student feelings with respect to dress codes, behavior standards, and other school activities. Superintendents are attempting to prevent student unrest by providing opportunities for students to become involved in the total school program.

While the superintendents were divided, it was quite obvious, that very few had taken any action toward allowing elementary school students to participate in decision-making.
The preceding section proved or disproved the validity of the hypotheses. What effect has student activism had on the decision-making of the suburban elementary school superintendent? The results of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. The concern and apprehension of elementary school superintendents over the potential threat of student activism have caused them to seek closer communication with their school board members as a supportive measure in decision-making.

2. While the incidents of student disorders in the elementary schools have not resulted in excessive physical violence or property damage, the potential chaos that could result from those incidents has motivated elementary school administrators to establish written emergency plans.

3. After their initial experience with student dissent, superintendents react to subsequent confrontations in a more rational manner.

4. Administrators are meeting with local police to prepare plans of action in the event of serious student disorders. The police are then called immediately when such disruptions arise.

5. Superintendents are now utilizing the staff in formulating plans with respect to procedure in the event of student disorders. The teachers' role is now prominent in the preparation of these plans.
6. Because of student activism superintendents find it is essential to urge Boards of Education to formulate written policy to guide the superintendents in responding to acceptable and unacceptable forms of student dissent.

7. The superintendents who have experienced student confrontations find it necessary to act with firmness and without hesitation.

8. Influences and pressures from outside groups cause significant distress among the superintendents and result in insecurity in their decision-making processes.

9. Superintendents believe the elementary school student will soon follow the older students in expressing dissatisfaction with not being allowed a greater voice in decision-making.

10. While the student activist movement has had some effect upon the administrative procedures of elementary school superintendents, the effects appear to be of a lesser degree than those experienced by college and secondary school administrators.

11. Because of student successes at the college and high school levels the elementary school superintendents find it necessary to consider student feelings with respect to dress codes, behavior standards, and other school activities in general.

12. The superintendents, while admitting that student organizations can be utilized as a means for voicing student
dissatisfactions, are not using these organizations as fully as possible.

13. Superintendents are attempting to prevent student unrest by providing opportunities for students to become involved in the total school program.

14. To alleviate student unrest superintendents have found it necessary to exercise their leadership role to up-date curriculums and methods of instruction so that they become more relevant to today’s youth.

15. The superintendents are opposed to allowing dissident groups to appear before assemblies in the elementary schools.

16. Because of the communication media, the superintendents believe there is a fundamental shift of values among the students, a shift resulting in extreme student behavior.

In light of the information received from the superintendents interviewed during this study, it is the writer's opinion that allowing elementary students in the seventh and eighth grades a greater voice in decision-making can have a pervasive effect on the total school program and on the superintendent's decision-making. Many superintendents say they are democratic administrators when in reality they do not practice democracy in administering their school districts. If we truly want to encourage students to seek relevant information, make their own choices, take responsibility
for the consequences, we must provide the students with practice. We should encourage the students to approach such decisions as dress codes, behavior standards, grading policies, extra-curricular activities, and social activities by letting students become involved in a real way. If students are to learn to make decisions that are relevant to their world--their lives, the superintendents need to provide the students with adequate experience in making these decisions.
Conclusions

Preparation of the elementary school superintendent must assume new directions. The job has grown in need of greater educational statesmanship, which is witnessed by current student unrest. In the light of an ever-changing culture, there are indications that a need for newer concepts and more effective administrative techniques will need to emerge, that will make the suburban elementary school superintendent more effective in his decision-making role as it relates to student activism.

It is imperative that the superintendent be aware of all emerging practices which effect his position of leadership—and guidance. It is essential that a greater understanding of the elementary student, in this age of student uncertainty and unrest, emerges. The key to success may well lie in the ability of the elementary superintendent to guide the teachers toward a better understanding of the student. He must direct the teacher to realize that the student is no longer a sponge placed in the classroom to absorb bits of wisdom, but an honest thinking individual who is crying to have his ideas heard. The superintendent must
recognize, and make his teachers recognize, that the student is no longer willing to sit placidly by and say, "I will," but is earnestly asking, "Why must I?" The superintendent must guide the teacher to understand there has to be an honest effort made to answer the student's "why?" Here lies a basic problem of student activism, and the elementary school superintendent must provide leadership toward a better understanding between himself, the teacher, and the student.

Hypothesis I

Superintendents react to student activism in a paternalistic manner.

The data tend to disprove this hypothesis. The responses from the superintendents indicate they should react to student protest in a firm manner. It is evident the superintendents agree with the authorities concerning police involvement when it becomes apparent that a serious student disturbance is likely to occur. The superintendents who have experienced student disorders, indicated, that the police should be called immediately. Acting with dispatch lessens the chance of a serious confrontation with the students. Superintendents feel that protecting lives and property is one of the most important facets of their job. Strong feelings for the safety of teachers and students were expressed by the superintendents.

Superintendents insist guidelines be initiated before any student dissent takes place, and that these guidelines be well
publicized. It is not surprising to find the superintendents wanting to involve all members of the staff in establishing these guidelines. It is evident that those administrators who have not previously experienced student unrest do tend to over-react when confronted with student disorders. Superintendents also tend to over-react because they are not totally prepared for student activism. A plan of action must be formulated and as the majority of the superintendents believe--implemented with firmness. The superintendent who has developed a good plan of action, will find it much easier to handle student activism, when and if it does appear in his school district.

As a conclusion, the evidence does not support the hypothesis; however, there is a considerable negative concern among the superintendents with regard to creating a "father image", and the effect this image will have on the superintendent's authority.

Hypothesis II

Superintendents want a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder.

Superintendents expressed a desire for a written school board policy on student dissent and disorder. The results support this hypothesis.

In the area of policies pertaining to the superintendents, many of them indicated the status of the elementary school superintendent is not clear, and this is one of the major factors that prevent him from dealing with the problem of student dissent with
effectiveness. Superintendents need direction, and this direction must come from a cooperative effort of all concerned. If the board and community is indecisive, the superintendent will not know which way to go. He is particularly vulnerable to attack from pressure groups, especially if these groups support radical practices in the operation of the schools.

Superintendents insist their strength in their position relative to student activism should be from strong direction from the board of education. This direction should come in the form of school board policy relating to the elementary school superintendent and student activism.

In the area of rules pertaining to the pupils, residents of the community, as well as the students should participate in the process of formulating policies and rules that regulate the student body. The superintendents believed that by doing so, the students and parents would be more enthusiastic about implementing these rules.

A positive approach must be taken toward student activism. Token cooperation and matter-of-fact interest in student activism will not suffice. We need an all out effort in developing policy that will allow the superintendent to be more effective in his decision-making as it relates to student activism.

Hypothesis III

Superintendents are cognizant of a shifting of values among elementary school students.
The data collected tends to support this hypothesis. If education is to find its sense of direction, it must, of course, reach some agreement upon the values that will best serve the youth of today. It is also important that educators be willing to perform the difficult task of arriving at an understanding of the conflicting social forces which are prevalent among the nation's youth. Superintendents need to provide the students opportunities to identify areas of personal conflict as they work with others different from them in age, religion, and race. The students need access to adult guidance in analyzing their sources of irritation and conflict. They need to learn to view conflict as a growth-inducing aspect of life, and that everything is not always right in the world. Educators must recognize that the students want to be involved, and effective two-way communication must be implemented, if progress toward mutual understanding is to be made. Superintendents must listen to what the students have to say.

No other age has laid at the door of education a greater challenge. If educational statesmanship accepts this challenge, it will be necessary to redefine its educational values. The students no longer are accepting the value packages presented to them by their elders. They are questioning the right of their elders to inflict the values of the older generation upon the younger generation.

There was considerable concern on the part of the superintendents with regard to affluency contributing to the shift in
values among their students. Superintendents believed the students need to work manually to bring meaning to their lives.

Although superintendents respect the role of the communications medium, and the many contributions it has made to education, there is strong feeling among the superintendents, that television greatly influences the values of today's youth, though not always to the benefit of society.

Superintendents indicate the students need to know where they are going and why, and they need a set of values which will give them a sense of direction.

**Hypothesis IV**

Superintendents find it necessary to control the outside influences of student activism.

In the light of the accumulated data, this hypothesis can be accepted. Superintendents were in agreement that it is necessary to control the outside influences of student activism.

As was stated in Hypothesis II, there is a need for strong school board policy relating to student activism. This hypothesis is related to Hypothesis II, and the conclusion is similar. Superintendents indicate influences and pressures from outside groups do affect their decision-making.

Superintendents are aware that there will be a greater demand from the elementary school student for outside organizations to participate in school activities, and for the distribution in the school of literature prepared by these outside groups.
For the most part, controlling these outside influences will alleviate many of the problems related to student activism. Written policies must be developed so that the superintendent can be objective in controlling these outside influences, consequently, preventing misunderstandings and tensions among the students.

Statements made by the superintendents, revealed a need for urgent reforms in public school education.

There is a need to find ways for more student involvement at the elementary school level in structuring the total school program. In doing so, the superintendents must recognize the potential worth of student opinion. They must also recognize student desires to participate in activities which directly affect his life. The superintendents believe, however, that outside organizations will not influence the students, when ways are found to involve the elementary student in the total school program.

The superintendents find it most distressing to be under constant pressure from groups, both from within and without the school setting. They indicate that one important way of minimizing some of the pressures confronting their position, is to control the outside influences which have a bearing on student activism.

Hypothesis V

Superintendents are cognizant of the need for curriculum revision and instructional change so that they are more relevant to today's youth.
The majority of superintendents were in agreement with the fifth hypothesis.

Three premises are evident in hypothesis V. (1) There is a need for curriculum development that is relevant to the needs of today's elementary students; (2) Courses of studies should not be too rigid, but should allow the teacher an opportunity to deviate from them when the need is felt; (3) The elementary student is much too young to be allowed to participate in curriculum revision and instructional change.

Student activism at the college and high school levels has affected their decision-making relative to curriculum revision and instructional change, and to be forewarned gives the superintendents an opportunity to take a hard, second look at their total instructional program, and to study its relevancy as it relates to present-day students. Instead of spending the amounts of time we now spend on the communication skills of reading, writing and speaking, we must spend more time on teaching communication as the sharing of personal meaning and for a better understanding of one another. Experiences should be planned to help the students learn to perceive more fully.

Experimentation and innovation must be practiced in our schools, in teachers as well as students. We need to be engaged in trying something new. Educators must abandon the concept that students must be either work-bound or college-bound. Let the student have the freedom to make choices on where they are going.
We must develop a curriculum that must be seen, not as providing right answers, but confronting problems in which the students' decision counts. Much student activism that is now making its appearance on the elementary school level, would be alleviated were today's curriculums and methods of instruction up-dated to take the children more into account. The author believes the superintendents must become more aware of the need to redesign the present-day curriculum; to bring it more into focus with the elementary students' present world.

**Hypothesis VI**

Students should be given a greater voice in the decision-making process relating to the total school program.

Again, the response to this hypothesis was fairly evenly divided between the superintendents who agreed and the superintendents who disagreed. The reason for the dichotomy appears to be the age of the elementary school student. A number of the superintendents believe the elementary school student is too young to participate in decision-making as it relates to the total school program.

Other superintendents believe that responsibility and self-direction are learned. These superintendents feel that if young students are going to learn self-direction, then it must be through being given the opportunity to exercise such self-direction, through making decisions that relate to their well being. If students are to learn, we must provide these young people the
opportunity for self-direction, knowing full well that they will
make mistakes. School administrators must establish rules of
conduct with the help of the students. They must also provide
guidance to the children in teaching them how to control them­
selves. Without giving the students the opportunity to make
decisions that are relevant to their lives self-direction, crea-
tivity, and independence cannot be discovered.

The students must be provided with the opportunity for self-
development and self-expression. This can be attained through
developing an independent study program where students must make
their own decision, and progress independently of one another.

There is a need among school superintendents to take time to
listen to their students, and to allow the students the opportun-
ity to express their feelings as it relates to the total school
program. By allowing the students a greater voice in decision-
making the elementary school superintendent can provide a setting
in which honest and valid communication can take place. This will
provide new insights for the superintendent and heighten the
development of the student's personal powers.

The author believes that we must accept the student into full
partnership in the educative endeavor. It requires participation
of the student in the total school program and his wholehearted
cooperation in the process. We will not accomplish this unless
the students have the feeling that they matter and their decisions
count. It is time that we superintendents put aside our archaic
and out-moded decision-making practices and commit ourselves to
the education of today's youth as though we really meant it.
Recommendations

There is a need for a thoughtful re-examination of the role of the superintendent, as it relates to student activism on the elementary school level. Current trends indicate that the future teacher should have a number of personal experiences in being open, imaginative and flexible, so that he may be better able to simulate and value such behavior in his students. It is important that activities which stimulate imagination be provided somewhere in the teacher training program. The superintendent must encourage his teachers to evaluate and consider deeply the needs and feelings of the students; that he must encourage the teachers to place their traditional teaching devices behind them, and reach for a new and more effective way of understanding the student. This goal can be attained only by close communication between the superintendent and his teachers, and a deep understanding of the purpose for which they are working. The author is confident that the promising practices described in this study will greatly enhance the means of achieving a better understanding of student activism, as it exists at the elementary school level. As the result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Superintendents should encourage student participation in decision-making that directly affect the student and his world.

2. Superintendents should recognize the limitations of present day curricula and build a curriculum that is based on the needs of today's student.
3. Boards of Education should adopt written school board policy giving the elementary school superintendent clear-cut direction in dealing with the problems of student unrest.

4. Educators must recognize that students want involvement, and an effective two way communication must be implemented if progress toward mutual understanding is to be made.

5. Superintendents must be fully alert to the influence, both good and bad, of the extensive communication media. They must understand this impact on the elementary student's value structure.

6. Superintendent's decisions regarding elementary school student activities must be made on sound educational and psychological basis and not from pressure.

Suggestions for Further Study

The role of the suburban elementary school superintendent is a challenging one. The superintendent who understands the issues of the day will not change for the sake of change, but he will introduce new ideas as they are generated, if they meet the needs of the school system. Based on the conclusions reached in this study, the following questions suggest possibilities for further research:

1. Should children be taught to view conflict as a growth inducing aspect of life?

2. Are the teacher-training programs in tune with the times?
3. How do school board members, superintendents, and instructional staff members perceive the role of the student, as it relates to student unrest?

4. Has teacher militancy contributed to student activism?

5. Does the age and/or years of experience of the superintendent affect his decision-making as it relates to student activism?

6. What is the relationship of the superintendent's personality to current student unrest?

7. As a school administrator, how best can one direct student activism in a positive direction?

8. Is the school's value system largely determined by administrative policies?

In closing, the following quotation is relevant:

The calamity of modern existence is that the world changes so fast that there is little likelihood that the old will remain very much wiser than the young. As the old become relatively less wise, their influence is maintained primarily by the acquisition of political and economic power. The values are then more likely to be shaped by institution and custom than by their understanding of actual human needs. Even as youth, recognizing the arbitrary nature of power and values imposed by their elders, attack the adult world, they become trapped in destroying themselves. For if they make their parents irrelevant, they will surely make themselves irrelevant.

We are often told that our youth are our future. Yet unless we can create a world which offers the possibility of aging with grace, honor, and meaningfulness, no one can look forward to the future.¹

¹Halleck, Education Digest, p. 35.
APPENDIX A

PROPOSITIONS TO TEST HYPOTHESES

Please select one of the five alternatives and briefly state the reason for your particular choice:

1. Superintendents over-respond to student activism.
   Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree
   Choose one of the following:

2. The Board of Education should develop a board policy relating to student activism.
   SA A U D SD

3. Students are no longer accepting on faith what their elders tell them.
   SA A U D SD

4. Student protest is often a product of societal turmoil from the outside.
   SA A U D SD

5. The elementary school student should have a part in curriculum revision or instructional change.
   SA A U D SD
6. Successes of college and high school student activism has caused the elementary superintendent to re-examine his position in permitting the students a greater voice in decision-making.

7. The police should be involved in the event of a serious disturbance.

8. Boards of Education tend to react to student activism only in times of crisis.

9. Affluency or the lack of it in general has contributed to the shifting of values.

10. Outside dissident group representatives should not be allowed to speak before student assemblies.

11. Students are more appreciative to teachers who deviate from standard courses of study.
12. Students should be given a greater voice in the decision-making within the school outside social and extra-curricular activities.

SA AU D SD

13. Superintendents should take specific action—calling of staff meetings, writing plans, issuing of orders—should student dissent develop.

SA AU D SD

14. Superintendents will be more effective if they include students in the formulating of policy.

SA AU D SD

15. The impact of the communications media has contributed to a shift in the value system of the youth of today.

SA AU D SD

16. Literature prepared by organized dissident groups should not be distributed in the school.

SA AU D SD

17. Negative reaction among students on the high school and college level as to "what" is being taught and "how" it is being taught has had its effect on the elementary superintendents approach to decision-making relevant to curriculum revision and instructional change.

SA AU D SD
18. Academic freedom entails a great degree of permissiveness in all aspects of student life.

SA A U D SD

19. Superintendents will be more effective if they include all members of the staff in formulating plans of action in the event of student disorders.

SA A U D SD

20. School board policy should carefully delineate the role and responsibility of the superintendent regarding student dissent.

SA A U D SD

21. Outside influences generally has an effect on the superintendent in decision-making.

SA A U D SD

22. The shifting of student values will have little effect on influencing your decisions relative to student activism.

SA A U D SD

23. Student desires to change existing attitudes and traditions have effected the superintendents approach to decision-making relevant to curriculum revision and instructional change.

SA A U D SD
24. Recognition of student organizations should be established through well-defined procedures.

SA A U D SD

25. The superintendent should react to student protest in a firm manner.

SA A U D SD

26. Superintendents feel inadequate when carrying out their responsibilities because the definition of their role is not clear relating to student activism.

SA A U D SD

27. Students are learning that they can diminish oppressions in their lives by attacking authority.

SA A U D SD

28. Pressures from outside groups effect the total school program.

SA A U D SD

29. Superintendents are aware that curriculums are isolated from new ideas and cultures, thus promoting prejudice.

SA A U D SD

30. Good school morale results when students are permitted to express dissatisfaction with the decision-making machinery.

SA A U D SD
31. Reacting to student activism in a paternalistic manner serves to undermine the superintendent’s authority.

32. Student questioning of any arbitrary structure has had an effect on your decision-making.
## APPENDIX B

### Student Population

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### Per Pupil Assessed Valuation

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### Superintendents' Age

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III. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS


Illinois School Code.
APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Walter John Molo, Jr. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Education.

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 with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

June 3, 1970
Signature of Advisor