AN EVALUATION OF CURRENT PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN CERTAIN URBAN AREAS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to compare procedures used by school districts in the selection of elementary school principals. Twenty-one criteria deemed relevant to school district selection procedures were developed after an extensive review of the pertinent literature. Each criterion was placed in one of four categories. These were: recruitment and screening; recommendations, ratings, and personal-history blanks; paper and pencil tests; and interviews. A comparison was then made between these criteria and the actual practice of selecting principals in four urban school districts of British Columbia.

In order to make the comparison it was necessary to determine as completely as possible the selection procedures used in the districts under investigation. The required data was gathered by interviewing the school superintendents concerned. An interview form was devised for this purpose and contained questions requiring short, precise responses, together with questions requiring an expression of opinion or an explanation of practice. Two interviews, the first quite brief and the second considerably longer, were held with the superintendent of each district. The interviewer assured the superintendents that their desire for anonymity would be fully respected.

It was then necessary to compare the procedures for selecting elementary school principals in each district...
as indicated by the data collected, with the criteria already established. This comparison was facilitated by devising an appropriate rating scale. Using this scale it was possible to increase the reliability of the rating assigned to each district’s procedures in respect of each criterion.

Four general conclusions were advanced on the basis of the data considered and the specific conclusions reached. Firstly, procedures for selecting elementary school principals differed considerably between school districts. Secondly, all selection procedures examined were characterized by a high degree of subjectivity: no evidence was found of the use of objective measures of the competencies of candidates other than in length and type of professional experience and in academic qualifications. Thirdly, there seemed to have been very little attempt to define the competencies required in the principalship. Finally, after an intensive examination of the data it was concluded that considerable differences existed between selection procedures in the four urban school districts and criteria developed from the relevant literature.

On the basis of the study and its conclusions, seven recommendations for improving school district practice in selecting elementary school principals were advanced. These were as follows: school districts should attempt to define the capabilities that they expect in elementary school principals; school districts
should examine and, where possible, improve the selection techniques that they now use; school districts should attempt to reduce subjectivity in evaluating candidates; school districts should experiment with different selection procedures than they presently use; school districts should consider carefully the possibility of including an objective measure in the selection process; school districts should scrutinize the effects of lay choice of professional personnel; school districts should view selection as a continuous process rather than as a problem that arises from time to time.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of the problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Hypothesis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal as leader</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection procedure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on the Adequacy of Present Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of Existing Selection Procedures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts Made at Improving Selection</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CRITERIA APPROPRIATE TO PROGRAMMES OF SELECTION</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Examples of Leadership Selection Programmes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Examples of Specific Techniques Used as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a Leadership Selection Programme</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and screening</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations, ratings, personal-history blanks</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper-and-pencil tests</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. METHOD OF PROCEDURE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE COLLECTING AND PROCESSING OF DATA</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting the Data</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first interview</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second interview</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview follow-up</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of thanks</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing the Data</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Conclusions</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and screening</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations, ratings and personal-history blanks</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper-and-pencil tests</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conclusions and Acceptance of Hypothesis</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Further Study</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Recruitment and Screening of Applicants for the Elementary Principalship—Rating of Practice in Four Urban School Districts Against Empirically Derived Criteria</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Recommendations, Ratings, and Personal-history Blanks of Applicants for the Elementary Principalship—Rating of Practice in Four Urban School Districts Against Empirically Derived Criteria</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Paper and Pencil Tests of Applicants for the Elementary Principalship—Rating of Practice in Four Urban School Districts Against Empirically Derived Criteria</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Interviews of Applicants for the Elementary Principalship—Rating of Practice in Four Urban School Districts Against Empirically Derived Criteria</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Elementary school education is an activity of high priority in our society. It involves in its programme a larger portion of the population than does any other segment of public education. It requires and receives a significant share of the communal purse. Accordingly, society should expect efficient and effective operation of elementary schools.

The elementary school principal occupies a uniquely strategic position in fulfilling such expectations. He is in a position to mobilize the human and material resources of the school. If the leadership he exerts is strong and effective, human and material wastage is held to a minimum. If his leadership is weak and ineffectual, society's investment yields a poor return. Furthermore, if improvements in education are to be made, it is the elementary school principal who must bear much of the responsibility for their accomplishment.¹

Complementary to the principal's role, the role of the classroom teacher is of undoubted importance in the educational

scheme of things for it is largely in the classroom that the function of the school is accomplished. However, it is generally accepted that the leadership, guidance, and inspiration of a good principal can have a beneficial effect on the classroom activities of the teachers who work with him. Conversely, the activities of a poor principal can do much to discourage, distress, and inhibit the efforts of his staff. Accordingly, only those persons of the utmost competence should be appointed as principals.

1. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It is the purpose of this study (1) to determine the procedures utilized by certain school districts in selecting elementary school principals; (2) to compare such current practices with leadership selection procedures as advocated by personnel experts in business, industry, government, the armed forces, and educational administration; and (3) to suggest modifications of techniques for selecting principals in the light of the findings of (1) and (2).

Importance of the problem. The present public and professional concern about education carries with it the obvious need to re-evaluate and reappraise all aspects of the school system. Curricular offerings, methods of instruction, quality of the instructional force and school finance in turn
must be made subjects of careful study.

No less important than these is the quality of the educational personnel whose function it is to provide leadership within the school. Even with a curriculum of the highest order, the latest in proven teaching techniques, a competent teaching force, and sufficient funds, it still remains for someone to initiate and coordinate effective group action. The elementary school principal is such a person.

The recent Chant Royal Commission on Education suggests the importance of the principalship when it says:

The Commission recommends that the greatest care be taken by school boards to ensure that the best persons available are appointed as principals.\(^2\)

It follows, therefore, that those charged with the responsibility for choosing elementary school principals should use the best possible selection procedures. The degrees to which this is being done is the subject of the present study.

II. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

As a basis for study in this thesis the following hypothesis is stated: the school districts to be investigated are not utilizing procedures for selecting elementary school principals that are in close agreement with criteria currently recommended in the professional literature of educational and business administration.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The term **Elementary School** as used in this study will be taken to mean any combination of grades from kindergarten to grade eight. (School units organized as junior high schools, elementary senior high schools, elementary junior high schools, and superior schools will be omitted.)

**Principal** will be defined as follows:

The administrative head and professional leader of a school division or unit, such as ... (an) elementary school; a highly specialized, full-time administrative officer in large public school systems, but usually carrying a teaching load in small ones; in public education usually subordinate to a superintendent of schools.

The principal as a leader, suggested by Good in the earlier quotation, is a relatively new concept and perhaps needs further definition. Hicks and Jameson suggest that historically the elementary school principal's functions were conceived narrowly as being exclusively clerical and administrative in nature. More recently, however, school officials, including principals, have come to the view that

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the provision of leadership is probably the principal's most important function.  

Selection Procedures will be understood to mean the step or steps taken by senior educational administrative officials and school boards in recruiting candidates and choosing a person who is to function as principal. In this study, emphasis will be given to the mechanics of the process, not to the validity of the judgements made within the process of selection. 

IV. PLAN OF THE STUDY

Chapter II of this study will review the literature pertinent to the problem of selecting leaders in education. Such a review will provide background helpful in the establishment of criteria relevant to procedures for selecting elementary school principals. Chapter III will attempt to develop these criteria. Chapter IV will outline the method of procedure, and indicate limitations of the study. Chapter V will deal with the collection and processing of data. Chapter VI will present the conclusions of the study and any recommendations that may be advanced.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The elementary school principalship as it is known today represents a relatively new administrative development. Although the principal is still a teacher, classroom teaching does not now usually occupy a major portion of his work day. For example, although he works with children he probably spends more time conferring with and assisting teachers, custodians, school board officials, parents, and the general public. Therefore, although he is a member of the teaching profession, his duties differentiate him from a classroom teacher. In short, the duties of today's principal differ greatly from those of his counterpart of fifty years ago. \(^8\) (The assumption is made herein, no evidence having been found to the contrary, that the position of the elementary school principal in Canada is essentially similar to the parallel position in the United States.)

Accordingly, as with any recently developed profession, standards of job performances, vocational training, and professional selection are constantly being revised and upgraded. All over North America, increasing attention is being given to the elementary principalship by the principals themselves, by other groups of administrators and by professors of

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\(^8\) Hicks and Jameson, op. cit., p. 302.
educational administration. Illustrations of such activity are to be found in the publications of the following organizations: The British Columbia Teachers Federation, the Department of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association, and the Department of Elementary School Principals of the Michigan Education Association. Hicks and Jameson and the Thirty-Eighth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals give comprehensive listing of activities and organizations whose prime concern is to increase the professionalization of school administration.

The concern of this present study, however, is with one phase of the elementary principalship, namely; selection for the position. In this regard, educational literature has relatively little to say. It would appear that there has been much more attention given to the performance and competence of the individual after he got the job, than to the selection of the right man in the first place.

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12 Hicks and Jameson, op. cit., Chapter 14.

The part of literature relevant to the procedures for selecting elementary school principals, and school administrators generally, seems to fall into three categories. Firstly, miscellaneous comments are offered on the adequacy of present methods of choosing the successful applicant. Secondly, several normative studies attempt to define existing practice. Thirdly, certain authors describe various attempts at improving the selection process.

Comments on the adequacy of present methods of selection.
The opinion that procedures of selection may be less than adequate is voiced by several writers. Campbell, for instance, provides this caricature of how an administrator is chosen.

... he is interviewed by one or more persons, and he is asked to submit certain personal-history data, letters of recommendation from qualified persons, and a transcript of academic credits. If he makes a fairly good impression in his interview, if he has selected his letter writers wisely, and if his academic marks are not hopelessly low, he stands a good chance of being ... employed in the position.14

Weber comments more explicitly on the dangers arising from loose selection procedures in education.

Out of procedures of this kind grow the evils of political favoritism, employment through personal friendship, employment of persons who will "play ball" with school authorities. Out of these practices grows the notion that who a prospective teacher knows is more important than what he knows or whether he knows how to teach children ... most teachers in schools have never heard of carefully preparing specifications

for professional employees. Small wonder that many teachers speculate whether teaching is a profession or just another branch of the open labour market.15

A further question as to the adequacy of selection is raised by Featherstone when he reports that:

... a majority of the candidates for principalships in Ohio cities are selected on the subjective judgment of the superintendent, without the use of objective data other than college credentials and without consideration of the opinions of other professional persons.16

The potential danger of vesting such power in superintendents is indicated by a research study recently completed at Stanford University. This study suggests that there are school superintendents who have "closed minds" and make promotional decisions on the basis of almost instantaneous snap judgements and meager impressions.17

A further indication that promotions may be granted on other than an adequate basis is suggested in a study recently conducted for the Chant Royal Commission on Education in British Columbia. In response to the question "What factors other than training and experience might, in your opinion, influence promotion to a principalship?"18 some principals


indicated that "influence" might play a part. One can only guess at the numbers of candidates in a selection race who would state "influence" as a major condition for being successful.

Another writer comments on the interrelationship of adequate selection policies and any shortage of leadership talent.

... the shortage of educational leaders is due more to the lack of sound selection policies and procedures than to a shortage of available leadership material.19

The literature suggests also that principles upon which the selective process is built may be faulty. Two frequently used criteria in particular come in for some criticism. These are: length of teaching experience, and teaching success. The inference is not that these are factors unworthy of consideration in choosing a principal, but rather that if these are the sole or main criteria used, they are less than satisfactory.

The central administrative officers in school systems have been severely criticised for appointing to this important position (principal) non-progressive individuals whose chief qualification was long experience in teaching.20


It is past time that the profession learned that the principalship is a profession in its own right and should not be regarded as a reward for years of successful teaching.\textsuperscript{21}

It would appear, then, that the view of the principalship as a sinecure to be granted to a faithful servant does not represent enlightened practice. That these factors of length and quality of teaching service are among the most readily and frequently considered aspects of a candidate's qualifications, might well indicate that existing selection procedures do not provide opportunities to evaluate other less tangible but more important qualifications.

\textbf{Descriptions of existing selection procedures.} The literature provides accounts of a number of surveys of procedures in the selection of administrative personnel.

Featherstone, in surveying the principalship in Ohio, requested superintendents to respond to a questionnaire. On the basis of the replies received, he concluded that most cities had some appropriate policies regarding selection, some had a definite programme, but only four cities had a well defined programme in selecting principals.\textsuperscript{22} He believed, following his investigations, that most appointments are made on the subjective judgements of superintendents with but little regard to objective data.


\textsuperscript{22}Featherstone, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 153.
Greene\textsuperscript{23} studied the means employed in choosing principals in large cities (250,000 population and over). He reports that the interview is the most widely used single device within the selection process, but that techniques of interviewing need to be narrowed and clarified to increase their reliability. He also reports that one-third of the cities have no clearly defined procedures for evaluating the talents of applicants.\textsuperscript{24} In short, his findings seem largely in agreement with those of Featherstone.

A third survey,\textsuperscript{25} relating to procedures followed in making selection among candidates for promotion, requested 425 urban school districts to respond to the question "What procedure is followed in making selection among candidates for promotion?" Of the 419 districts responding, only 166 indicated that they had a "definite plan." The remaining 253 districts stated that promotions were made with "No standard procedure; informal and individual basis." It seems possible, from examining the tables of responses,\textsuperscript{26} that definite selection

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\textsuperscript{23}Greene, J.E., "How Do Large Cities Select Principals?" \textit{National Elementary Principal}, 34:33-36, May 1955.
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\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 35.
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\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., pp. 37-56.
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procedures are a function of school district size.

In 1958, the Research Division of the National Education Association\textsuperscript{27} followed up the study just referred to. School districts which had indicated definite policies and procedures for selecting administrative personnel were invited to give details of their programmes. Brief summary statements were made of the sixty-eight replies. However, no attempt was made to gather or code data on a uniform basis. Accordingly, although the descriptions provided are interesting, the study yields very little in the way of discrete data.

Some conclusions are obvious after examining the surveys of selection methods. First, a majority of school districts apparently have no definite plan for selecting principals. Second, among those districts that claim to have definite mechanical processes for selecting principals, wide variations exist. Third, it is unreasonable to presume that all procedures, even those described as "well defined", yield the same chances of an appropriate choice of candidate. That is, some must be better than others.

Attempts made at improving selection procedures. The remainder of the pertinent literature deals with descriptions

of practice that suggest miscellaneous ways of improving the chances of successful choice. One article, for example, describes the establishment and functioning of a selection committee consisting of three teachers, four administrators and a social case worker. Another article suggests that an ideal selection consists of two administrative line officers, three administrative staff officers, and three outstanding elementary school principals. Still another writer suggests that a selection committee be elected from among teachers, parents, and board members. The value of the foregoing journal articles is mainly that they illustrate ways of dealing with Briner's objection that too much power is often vested in one person during the process of selection.

In summary, a review of the literature relating to the selection of personnel for posts in educational administration leads the reader to make the following observations:

1. A minority of school districts in the United States has definite procedures for selecting principals.

2. The wide variation in selection techniques suggests the complexity of the selection process.

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31 Briner, op. cit., p. 3.
3. The inability or unwillingness of a majority of school districts to make selection more objective stands in marked contrast to the increasing use of objective measures in other educational areas.

4. The apparent failure of boards to evaluate selection procedures in the light of the results they yield appears anomalous.

5. The apparent failure of boards to adapt research findings in leadership selection in business, industry, the armed forces, and government, to the educational context is not consistent with progressive educational management.

6. There seems to be no widespread concern with the problem of selecting principals. Improvements in selection techniques, where suggested, seem mainly concerned with involving more people in the job of choosing.

7. Few specific techniques within the selection process seem to have been the object of close scrutiny in educational circles.
CHAPTER III
CRITERIA APPROPRIATE TO PROGRAMMES OF SELECTION

The problem of selecting effective leaders is not peculiar to school systems. Business, industry, the civil service and the armed forces all have to face the problem of choosing one man to lead others. Many of these agencies invest large sums in the search for leadership talent. Most of them have a personnel department, one of whose functions it is to identify and nominate to management such individuals as exhibit potentialities for leadership desired in a specific context. Smaller business firms retain the services of personnel consultants to assist in choosing management or supervisory staff.

The search for potential leaders is conducted aggressively in business and industry because it is recognized that poor leadership can and does result in business failure. Corporations besiege college placement offices each spring, vying with one another for the most likely graduates. Outstanding university seniors often find themselves courted by representatives of several companies. The competition for talent persists even after the first job appointment. Inducements, financial and otherwise, are offered to men of proven ability in an attempt to entice them from one employer.

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This awareness of the need for sound leadership and the willingness to expend energy and resource to obtain it, appears to be more characteristic of other agencies than it is of schools and school boards. The explanation of this situation would seem to lie, not in the assumption that leadership is less important in schools than elsewhere, but rather in the fact that other agencies are more concerned about their leadership than are the schools. Accordingly, it might be appropriate to review some of the programmes and techniques employed to choose non-school leaders.

Some examples of leadership selection programmes. Freeman and Taylor describe in considerable detail the procedures used by the German High Command to select officers for the Nazi army. It was felt that a major cause of the German defeat in World War I was the failure to pick officers on more solid grounds than family background, appearance, and poise. Accordingly, the Germans redefined "officer" as a person who could "achieve objectives under stress, inspire others to cooperative effort, and take the initiative for action spontaneously."


34 Ibid., p. 168.
In order to choose such people, army psychologists attempted to bring "personality-in-action before judges for scientific analysis and report ...." In a two-day trial act, a board of six trained examiners appraised the performance of candidates in situations designed to permit qualities of resourcefulness, energy, stability, social adaptiveness, and intelligence to emerge. The circumstances of many of the tests were such as to strip the veneer from the candidate and to expose him divested of his Sunday manners.

Strangely enough, the Germans seem to have failed to appreciate fully the basic concepts of validity and reliability in testing. There seems to be little evidence of evaluation of success of the officers selected by the process. In short, Freeman and Taylor believed that a brilliantly conceived, radically different way of selecting leaders achieved less than its full potential under the combined pressures exerted by inadequate validity checks, over-emphasis on qualitative appraisals, and war-time emergency.

Despite the shortcomings indicated, the German leadership selection procedure seems to have influenced officer selection programmes in England and the United States. Although

36 Ibid., p. 173.
German, British, and American methods in choosing officers varied, certain elements were common to all. First of all, a team approach to selection was utilized, thereby decreasing the chances of one rater's bias affecting the choice. Secondly, a sincere attempt was made to minimize outside influences of a personal or political nature. Thirdly, all three programmes set a broad base for selection with no one test or hurdle making or breaking the candidate. Fourthly, each included appropriate situational tests designed to determine how a man would actually behave under given circumstances and not merely to find out how he thought he would behave. Finally, each team of examiners was specially trained for its job.

A United States Civil Service Commission publication suggests some ingredients of a programme for selecting leaders. This pamphlet, which presumably reflects official views, makes several suggestions in line with the army officer selection programmes referred to earlier. Among the recommendations offered are the following: selection programme should contain a number of hurdles; selection programmes should involve a team of selectors; situational tests should be used; objective measures where appropriate should be used; and subjective measures, where necessary, should be improved in respect of reliability.

Manson and Freeman report on a procedure for selecting ten business leadership trainees from a field of 223 candidates. In this case also, an attempt was made to increase objectivity and reduce subjectivity of judgement. The candidate passed through a series of selection devices which were designed to eliminate the unfit and retain the fit. The final choice of the ten successful candidates was made from a reduced field of twenty-five. The programme as outlined by the authors stressed the following: the use of multiple hurdles, consistent treatment for all candidates, objective judgement, and the team approach to selection.

Although the foregoing references represent only a small portion of the available literature, they seem to indicate some important emphases that differ from parallel educational writings.

1. The programme of selection should consist of several devices.
2. It should be as objective as possible.
3. Subjective evaluations should be applied uniformly to all candidates.
4. The reliability of subjective ratings should be improved.

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Some examples of specific techniques used as part of a leadership selection programme. The purpose of the preceding section was to consider a number of selection programmes in their total form. The purpose now is to consider various elements or techniques within a total programme which might form hurdles appropriate to the task of choosing elementary school principals.

1. Recruitment and Screening. "No matter how carefully the course is planned, a race can do no more than pick the best runner on the track."\(^{41}\) Accordingly, it would seem only common sense to attract as large and as able a starting field of candidates as is possible. What then are some of the principles that can be applied to give reasonable assurance of quantity and quality of applicant?

An obvious source of candidates for the principalship is the personnel of school district concerned. It appears that promotion within the district is becoming increasingly common.\(^{42}\) One study, for example, reported that seventy-five per cent of school systems in cities over 30,000 population give preference to local personnel and only one district out of the 425 reporting, favoured outsiders.\(^{43}\)

\(^{41}\) Freeman and Taylor, op. cit., p. 75.


\(^{43}\) "If You're Interested in Selection Policies," National Elementary Principal, April 1959, p. 55.
However, it would seem unwise to state an inflexible rule that promotions be only from within a school system. If the job opportunity attracts sufficient competent local applicants who have had a chance to prepare themselves for the principalship, then such a policy might be invoked. Nevertheless, it would seem unwise to close the door irrevocably on an outside applicant of exceptional merit.\(^4\)

A commonsense view of this problem is stated by Hadley when he says:

> While the principalship should not be considered a reward for members of the local school system, neither should they be denied the right of receiving such promotion.\(^5\)

In order to ensure that selection can be made from among a number of candidates, it would seem reasonable that the local school board inform its staff of the impending appointment. Such notification might take the form of a superintendent's bulletin, provided that all staff members have ready access to such communications. In addition, likely candidates who for some reason might be reticent in applying should be encouraged by principals and other line officers to make application.

If few applications are forthcoming from local sources or if the quality of the applicants is less than hoped for,


\(^{5}\)Hadley, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
the school board should energetically solicit more candidates by means of newspaper or journal advertisements and other ethical procedures. In this regard, school boards should not overlook teachers who are undertaking advanced training at colleges of education.

An integral part of recruitment is the publicly expressed statement of job specifications. A screen to eliminate the obviously unfit serves two purposes. First, it saves administrative time in dealing with ill-equipped applicants. Second, it tends to encourage qualified individuals who might not apply if standards for the position seemed unimportant.

Care should be taken, however, to see that the initial screening does not become artificial simply to hold down the number of applicants. It would be unwise, for instance, to specify that a candidate should be a graduate of a specific university when a university degree is the qualification sought. Similarly, lengthy teaching experience might be considered an artificial screening device because, as Campbell points out, there is some virtue in identifying candidates in their first five or ten years of teaching.46

Examples of realistic screening would be the following: attaining a specified level of academic attainment, holding a current credential for the elementary principalship,

gaining a specified minimum of teaching experience, completing a sequence of job-training experiences.

From the foregoing discussion of the twin problems of recruiting and screening, certain principles emerge which can be used as a background against which to evaluate this aspect of the selection programme in any school district. These are now stated in summary form.

1. Several competent candidates should be considered for each position. Selection ratio should be approximately ten to one.\(^{47}\)

2. Local candidates should be given preference if all factors are equal or nearly so.

3. Local districts should assume initiative in establishing pre-principal training to provide a reservoir of leadership talent.

4. All interested and qualified personnel should have an opportunity to apply.

5. If outside applicants are sought, attempts should be made to advertise widely and vigorously.

6. An initial screening should be provided to eliminate those deemed to be unfit.

7. The screening device should not contain artificial prescriptions whose sole purpose is to keep down the number of applicants.

2. Recommendations, ratings, and personal-history blanks. A selection programme generally gives an opportunity for considering the opinions of other people relative to the candidate's competencies as well as for considering each applicant's submission of personal data. Devices commonly used are letters of recommendation, ratings by superiors, and the candidate's personal-history blank. Several pertinent observations can be made concerning each of these.

a) Letters of recommendation. There seems to be little evidence of the value of these as a means of selection. One study, for instance, points out that in 258 letters of recommendation examined, there was no relationship between statements made and other available, objective evidence.  

There would seem to be some obvious explanations of the situation just mentioned. Firstly, writers of such letters find it easier to write a favourable rather than an unfavourable letter, particularly if the candidate has access to it. Secondly, the point of view of the various persons giving opinions may not be consistently relevant. To illustrate, the perspective of the bank manager is quite different from that of the clergyman. Accordingly, if

\[48\] Campbell and Gregg, op. cit., p. 415. (See also Morrisett, Lloyd N., Letters of Recommendation, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935, 205 pp.)
outside recommendations are to be sought, several cautions should be observed in order to improve their reliability and validity. Firstly, correspondence between the writer and the employer should be direct and confidential. Secondly, an attempt should be made to standardize responses by using a rating scale. An excellent illustration of such a scale is provided by Freeman. 49

Finally, if recommendations are going to be used at all, they should be treated with considerable caution. "There is some logic in assuming that only the negative statement has any significance." 50

Whether gratuitously offered or reluctantly obtained, letters of recommendation usually share the common human frailty to give a guy a break, especially when it does you no harm. 51

b) Ratings by superiors. School boards commonly require the submission of recent superintendent's and principal's reports as a means of obtaining an informed evaluation of a candidate. Such ratings are open to many of the same objections mentioned in the preceding section. They often fail to reflect a consistent point of view among raters. Furthermore, the ratings provided are frequently relevant only to the candidate's classroom performance and not to aspects of his activities that

49 Freeman and Taylor, op. cit., pp. 128-130.
50 Campbell and Gregg, op. cit., p. 415.
51 Freeman and Taylor, op. cit., p. 126.
might have more pertinence to his leadership ability as a principal. Accordingly, it would seem appropriate to suggest that ratings from the candidate's superiors should be as objective and applicable as possible. This might be achieved by using a rating form so designed as to have relevance to the competencies desired in an elementary school principal. Certainly, informal, word-of-mouth evaluations should be given little consideration as should the opinions, either oral or written, of raters whose past opinions have shown little evidence of discrimination.

c) Personal-history blanks. Most job applicants are required to fill out a form which is designed to gather together much of the routine data the employer thinks is necessary. Few of these blanks, however, have been designed with any thought of using them as predictive instruments. Rather, their originators look upon them as containers to hold a great many odds and ends of information that the applicant can provide. Little thought seems to be given to making personal history blanks genuinely useful or manageable.

An example of a well designed, properly balanced personal history blank is the one devised by the Life Insurance Agency Management Association in the United States. This form was developed with the support and cooperation of seventy member agencies, is in its tenth revision and has a validity coefficient
of +0.40. It contains only nine items but these are items which have the highest relationship to success in selling life insurance. The emphasis has been in providing an instrument that possesses some predictive value rather than one that gathers information with no particular plan in mind.

Perhaps school boards should scrutinize their application forms with a view to increasing their usefulness. Irrelevant items should be discarded and others which might have predictive value should be added.53

From the foregoing discussion of recommendations, ratings, and application forms, some useful generalizations that can be used to evaluate appropriate aspects of selection programmes in school systems emerge. These are:

1. Letters of recommendation are of little value except as possible negative selectors.
2. Recommendations, if used, should be sought by the employer directly and held in strict confidence by him.
3. Ratings and/or recommendations should be submitted on standard forms.
4. Information supplied should be considered in terms of the quality of its source.

52 Ibid., pp. 121-2.
5. Several ratings and/or recommendations are probably preferable to one or two.

6. The personal-history blank should be regarded as a selection instrument.

3. **Paper-and-pencil tests.** Various kinds of written tests, standardized and otherwise, are employed in selecting school administrators in the United States. In a thoughtful review of current practice in this regard, Campbell concludes that the validity and reliability of such tests is somewhat less than spectacular. Many of them can be "thrown" in the desired direction. Still others have doubtful relevance for the job situation under consideration. Accordingly, it would seem wise, at this time, to regard paper and pencil tests more as a means of "rejecting those who may not reasonably be expected to succeed than in predicting the degree of success if the applicant passes the minimum requirements...."

Despite the foregoing, a case might be made for including some appropriate standardized tests within the selection process. Graff and Kimbrough report that the Miller

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Analogies and the Watson-Glasser Critical Thinking Appraisal can differentiate between high and low groups of students in terms of behavioural characteristics considered to distinguish between effective and ineffective administrative behaviour.

The use of these or other intelligence tests would seem to be justified on the basis that:

It is difficult to conceive of inspired leadership coming from an administrator who is unable to keep pace with his faculty in problem solving, conceptual skills, and critical thinking. 58

Similarly, the candidate's linguistic skill, both oral and written, might be evaluated in some standardized fashion. 59

The inclusion of a few such devices might help to convince the staff that the board's procedure in selecting elementary school principals was reasonably objective.

The following generalizations could be used to assist in evaluating school district practice in using paper-and-pencil tests for selecting principals.

1. Written tests should be considered as negative selectors and should have a fairly low cut-off score.

2. Tests used should be appropriate to the job function of the principal.

58 Campbell and Gregg, op. cit., p. 411.

3. Test results that might have been thrown in a desired direction should be carefully scrutinized.

4. **Interviews.** "The oral interview is probably the most widely used selection device in the world."\(^6^0\) The individual interview in which the employer or his representatives meet and appraise the candidate is so much a part of employment practice as to be accepted as an integral part of selection.

Despite its widespread use, however, the validity of the individual interview is not uniformly high.\(^6^1\) After finding a negligible relationship between interview ratings and subsequent success, The Harvard School of Business Administration abandoned the interview as a means of selecting applicants.\(^6^2\) Similarly, Bingham and Moore produce startling evidence of the unreliability of the interview in selecting salesmen under a given set of circumstances.\(^6^3\) Then, too, the continued belief of many people that facial characteristics are related to character and personality gives a further indication of why interviews are subject to error.

\(^6^0\) Mandall and Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
\(^6^1\) *Loc. cit.*
\(^6^2\) Campbell and Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. 416.
Interviews are justified only when designed to elicit and appraise personality factors related to leadership success. The interview that wanders aimlessly while a personal preference is being formed has no place in a sound program of leadership selection.64

The oral interview is apparently a widely used procedure for selecting school principals.65 In the light of the preceding paragraphs it would seem useful to attempt to narrow the margin of error which can bedevil the use of this technique. How can the individual interview, as a means of selecting principals, be improved?

In the first place, the interview should have clarity of purpose. Greene's investigations led him to suggest that many interviews conducted by school authorities lack specificity and direction.66 He also reports that fewer than half of the districts he queried made a job analysis the basis of selection.67 Such failings indicate that interviewers do not realize that skilful interviewing can disclose information about the candidate's attitudes, feelings and customary behaviour; and further, that they have not made a careful

64Taylor and Freeman, op. cit., p. 150.
65Policies and Procedures in the Selection of Personnel for Administrative Positions, op. cit., p. 3.
66Green, op. cit., p. 34.
67Ibid., p. 33.
68Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 248.
job study to determine exactly what attitudes, feelings, and behaviours they are looking for. It would seem to follow that interviewers should realize what kinds of data the interview can provide, and more specifically, what kinds of data they must obtain in order to make a wise choice from among the candidates.

It should be pointed out in passing that job specifications and expectations will differ somewhat from school district to school district. Nevertheless, although there may be some variations in leadership qualities deemed desirable by different school boards, all will be searching for principals with technical, human and conceptual skills. It is to the problem of uncovering personality variables related to these skills that the interviewer must address himself.

Secondly, the interview should have a structure or plan. If the interview purports to assess personality, it should be so designed as to allow pertinent verbal or behavioural characteristics of the candidate to emerge. Whitaker suggests that a list of carefully designed questions can be used to do this. He proceeds to give examples of potentially useful questions. "If you were offered the position of principal, how would you prepare yourself in the next three months? How would you handle a parent's serious criticism of

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A teacher, when you know the criticism is justified?"  

A third suggestion for improving the oral interview as a selection device would be to make it uniform for all candidates. Greene's investigation indicates that only 39% of the school systems he surveyed attempted this. Although research on the question of interview uniformity is limited, it would seem reasonable to say that interview evaluations made on a common basis would be more reliable than ratings made from situations with no elements in common. In this regard, a well-designed evaluation form could conceivably increase the reliability of the interview by providing a common focus for the interviewers. An interview sufficiently structured to give an opportunity for comparative judgement and sufficiently flexible to allow for the uniqueness of each candidate would seem to provide a desirable synthesis.

A fourth aspect of interviewing that should be scrutinized is the competency of the interviewer.

(The Interviewer) has his prejudices, his personal likes and dislikes, his pride of opinion, his fondness, perhaps, for a hypothesis he would like to prove. During the interview he may grow impatient or take offense. Most difficult to overcome is his natural tendency to hear and record whatever harmonizes with his own expectations, while failing to notice counter-indications and exceptions.  

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71Greene, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

72Bingham and Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
Greene reports that only fifty per cent of interviewers in his sample had received specific training in interviewing. As a consequence, it is probable that many of them failed to recognize the selection interview as essentially a test of personality. Still others would fail to distinguish between a man's stated intentions and his ultimate actions. On the basis of the foregoing it seems fair to suggest that interviewers who are not widely skilled in educational personnel matters should receive some assistance in improving their ability to participate in a selection interview.

A final question should be considered. How many people should interview the candidate? Briner (see footnote 17) adduces evidence to substantiate his claim that superintendents frequently appoint subordinates on the basis of meager impressions and faulty stereotypes. Featherstone (see footnote 16) deprecates the tendency for many superintendents to appoint principals on the basis of their own subjective judgements and without considering the opinions of other competent people. The possibility of faulty selection could well be lessened by using the pooled opinions of a committee of interviewers. The "ideal" committee has been enthusiastically described in various places in literature. Fragmentary experience and lack of data are characteristic of the recommendations offered by the writers in the field.

73 Greene, op. cit., p. 34.
Nevertheless, certain tentative proposal can be offered as to the size, composition, and function of such a committee. First, it should not be unwieldy in size: probably five members is the maximum required. Secondly, because of the multidimensional nature of the principalship, committee members should be representative of different viewpoints within the educational scene. Thirdly, the members should know what they are looking for and how to find it. Finally, members should be able to state opinions freely despite the obvious and ultimate responsibility of the superintendent and school board.

The following general statements derived from the foregoing discussion can be used to evaluate selection interviews used in school districts.

1. The main purpose of the interview should be to uncover personality variables associated with success in the principalship.
2. The interview should have a structure, possibly involving prepared question. Planning should be flexible enough to allow pursuit of profitable lines of inquiry.
3. Form and content of interview should be similar for candidates being considered.
4. Interviewers should understand interviewing and education.
5. A panel of interviewers should be used.
In the preceding section of this chapter, four aspects of selection procedures have been considered. These are: recruitment and screening; recommendations, ratings, and personal-history blanks; written tests; and interviews. It is not suggested that these are the only devices that can be used for choosing principals. However, an examination of the literature suggested that they were the most frequently used selection procedures.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{74}Policies and Procedures in the Selection of Personnel for Administrative Positions, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 1-21.
CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF PROCEDURE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Evaluation of human institutions is always a complex process partly because of wide variations in organizational structure. In addition, external pressures affect the internal functioning of a group and pressures from within modify the processes of the organization. Furthermore, complicated interpersonal relationships exert a strong influence on group progress. Accordingly, one could say with some certainty that the functioning of a school board would be difficult to analyse and evaluate.

There are two obvious methods of investigating a school district's procedures for selecting principals. One would be to ask a great many school superintendents how they choose principals. Do they advertise? Do they appoint from within the district? Do they interview all applicants? and so on. Such an investigation would indicate a broad average of practice. School districts could then be categorized by size or type, and procedures within categories could be coded and analyzed.

A second method of investigation would be to consider more thoroughly the procedures used in a smaller number of
districts. A study, relatively greater in depth, might yield insights that the shallower one could not. This second method of investigation in depth was chosen.

It was decided to evaluate procedures for selecting elementary school principals in four urban areas in British Columbia. Such a sample was considered desirable because it was relatively homogeneous. Each school district was urban or essentially so. Each was large enough to have a sizable teaching staff from which to draw applicants for promotion. Each had its own superintendent who held responsibility for only the one district. Each had a majority of schools in excess of four rooms. This factor avoided the problem of the "head-teacher" type of principal mentioned earlier.

As a means of gathering data in this situation, the interview had certain advantages over a questionnaire. 75 In the first place, some required data was confidential in nature. The respondent would not likely advance such information without personal assurances as to the manner in which it would be used. Secondly, the interview provided an opportunity to follow leads and clues provided by the interviewee. This was deemed useful in investigating a problem of some complexity. Thirdly, the interviewer was

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able to provide additional information about a question that did not exactly fit the context being investigated. In short, the interview provided an opportunity to explore the differences as well as to compare the similarities of procedures in school districts.

Accordingly, an interview form was prepared. Care was taken to devise questions that would bear upon the criteria developed in Chapter III. (See Appendices C and D.) The principles enunciated by Good and Scates were thoroughly considered. Questions requiring short, precise responses were used along with questions requiring an expression of opinion or an explanation of practice.

The form of the interview was then examined by three members of the Faculty and College of Education. Following this examination, it was administered to three junior administrators from the districts under consideration. Several weaknesses were identified and corrected.

Finally, the revised interview form (Appendix B) was administered to four superintendents of school districts. Assurances of anonymity were given and for this reason the school districts are not specifically identified herein. Questions were answered with candour and opinions were expressed with frankness. Such a reception added considerably to the insights derived from the interviews.

76 Ibid., Chapter 6 ctd. "Questionnaire Inquiries and Interviews," pp. 604-645.
II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The size and type of sample used in this study cast some doubt on the validity of wider application of the recommendations offered in Chapter VI. This limitation is fully acknowledged and admitted. Nevertheless, the method of the study and the findings provide, at least a useful starting place for evaluating selection procedures in other school districts.

Only in instances of reasonable certainty has the validity of selection been questioned. No listing of factors associated with leadership success appears herein. Rather, the chief concern has been to determine the reliability of the selection process. In other words, after a board had decided what it meant by the "best" candidate, this study sought to determine his chances of being selected.
As was mentioned in the previous chapter, data for this study were collected by interviewing the superintendents of the school districts being considered. Two interviews were held with each superintendent.

The first interview was approximately thirty minutes long. During this time, the interviewer sought to achieve four objectives. Firstly, he explained the nature and significance of the project. Secondly, he stated that anonymity of response, if desired, would be fully respected. Thirdly, he asked if the superintendent would be prepared to discuss frankly, the selection procedures in his district. Finally, he discussed with the superintendent the general nature of the school district's method of selecting principals.

The four objectives of the initial interview were fully achieved in each instance. All superintendents evinced interest in the project. All seemed to appreciate the assurances of anonymity that were given: indeed, some implied that without such assurances they would have to be less than frank in their discussions. All indicated a willingness to cooperate fully with the investigator and accordingly made
arrangements for the subsequent interview. All superintendents provided some general background to the problem of selecting elementary school principals in their own particular districts and thus enabled the interviewer to prepare for the subsequent interview.

The second interview was considerably longer than the first. It varied in length from one and one-quarter hours to two and one-half hours, depending on the superintendent. During this time, the interview-questionnaire form (Appendix B) was completed. In addition, cues provided by the superintendent were fully investigated. These two means together with the preliminary interview provided a reasonably complete picture of selection procedures within each school district.

The writer suggests that the data collected be given considerable credence for several reasons. Firstly, all superintendents recognized the problem of selection as a significant and difficult one. Secondly, they were uniformly frank in discussing their procedures for selecting principals. Thirdly, they allotted a generous amount of their time to answering and discussing questions. Fourthly, the investigator was able to make provision for the uniqueness of each situation because of the preliminary interview. And finally, the interview-questionnaire form, though not without its faults, proved to be a useful instrument for guiding discussion towards a consideration of the criteria being evaluated.
After each interview, the writer immediately reviewed the data he had transcribed, and added to it from the more general impressions and information that the superintendent had provided. In this way it was possible to illuminate certain specific responses that had been given during the interview; it was also possible to identify certain inconsistencies of practice that might not have been obvious from a scrutiny of the completed questionnaire. In short, the follow-up procedure just described added materially to the value of the interview. It also justified the use of the interview as a method of gathering data relating to complex organizational functionings.

A letter of thanks (Appendix G) was sent to each superintendent following the second interview.

II. PROCESSING THE DATA

The data collected in this study was processed and is here presented in a manner designed to achieve three objectives: firstly, the data must be useful to those who may be interested in the present problem; secondly, the presentation of data must provide the means of acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis which was set out early in the study; thirdly, the presentation of data must preserve the anonymity of the individual school district.

Accordingly, a rating of "1", "2", "3" or "4" was assigned to the practice in each school district in respect
of each criterion that had been derived from the literature. A rating of "1" indicated that, in the considered judgement of the rater, the criterion and the school district's procedures related to the criterion were in close agreement. A rating of "2" indicated that the criterion and practice were somewhat in agreement. A rating of "3" indicated that the criterion and practice differed widely. A rating of "4" indicated that the criterion did not apply to procedures in the school district and that, accordingly, no comparison could be made. Finally, after all rating had been completed, ratings were assembled in tabular form and they are presented in Chapter VI.

A considerable element of subjectivity was involved in rating each criterion. This was unavoidable for two reasons. First of all, the procedures for selecting principals proved to be decidedly complex in all districts. Interplay of several personalities was always involved. Secondly, procedures differed considerably from district to district. This factor increased the difficulty of rating a given criterion on a uniform basis for all districts.

In order to decrease subjectivity and improve reliability of rating, a "Rating Scale for Determining Extent to which Stated Selection Procedures Agree with Criteria" (Appendix E) was developed. This device proved distinctly helpful in decreasing errors of subjective judgement. It
should be added here that the rating scale makes this present study capable of reasonably accurate replication—a possibility that is not always present in a study of this type.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are directed to the school districts studied. No suggestion is made that the conclusions are widely applicable. Nevertheless, the writer believes that they provide a useful means of examining practice in selecting principals in other urban school districts. Furthermore, they provide a helpful framework for future and more extensive investigations of this problem. It should be pointed out that up to the present, no formal attempt has been made in Canada to evaluate school district procedures in selecting elementary school principals.

Recruitment and Screening. Table I compares recruitment and screening practices, as determined, with criteria developed in Chapter III. Each district has been assigned a rating for each criterion, in accordance with the "Key to Ratings Assigned" which appears below Table I. The "Rating Scale for Determining Extent to which Stated Selection Procedures Agree with Criteria" (Appendix E) was utilized in the rating process.

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77 Letter from C.P. Collins, Research Officer, Canadian Education Association, to John F. Ellis, dated March 1, 1961.
Criterion 1—Several competent candidates should be considered for each position. Selection ratio should be approximately ten to one.

The data collected indicate quite conclusively that the school districts investigated experience no shortage of applicants for elementary school principalships. Even in the district reporting the smallest number of applicants, there was a selection ratio of twenty to one. Furthermore, all superintendents believed that at least five of the candidates—in some cases many more—would have made good principals.

Although the superintendents' definitions of "good" or "competent" might require further delineation, it seems fair to conclude that any failure to select able principals does not result from a shortage of applicants for the position.

Criterion 2—Local candidates should be given preference if all factors are equal or nearly so.

All superintendents agreed that promotions to the principalship, generally, should come from within local ranks. Among their reasons for this practice were the following: incentives improve staff morale; applicants from outside the district, though they may be recommended in glowing terms, have not proven themselves under local conditions; it is easier to make an accurate appraisal of an
TABLE I
RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING OF APPLICANTS FOR THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALSHIP—RATING OF PRACTICE IN FOUR URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AGAINST EMPIRICALLY DERIVED CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Several competent candidates should be considered for each position.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection ratio should be approximately ten to one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Local candidates should be given preference if all factors are equal</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nearly so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Local districts should assume initiative in establishing pre-principal</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training to provide a reservoir of leadership talent.</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All interested and qualified personnel should have an opportunity to</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply.</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If outside applicants are sought, attempts should be made to advertise</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widely and vigorously.</td>
<td>xxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An initial screening should be provided to eliminate those deemed to</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be unfit.</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The screen should not contain artificial prescriptions whose sole</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose is to keep down the number of applicants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to Ratings Assigned:
1. Criterion and practice are in close agreement.
2. Criterion and practice are somewhat in agreement.
3. Criterion and practice differ widely.
4. Criterion does not apply to procedures in this district; no comparison can be made.
individual after a reasonably lengthy period of observation; and, as one superintendent put it, "Our policy is to hire good teachers and help them grow professionally."

Despite the foregoing, three of the superintendents stated that if an applicant from outside the district appeared to be superior to local candidates, he would be seriously considered for promotion. The superintendent who dissented from this view indicated that such an applicant, although he would not be appointed principal immediately, would likely receive a promotion within two or three years.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be concluded that promotion within the local district is accepted policy. There is little to indicate, however, that this policy is applied rigidly or blindly.

Criterion 3--Local districts should assume initiative in establishing pre-principalship training to provide a reservoir of leadership talent.

All superintendents indicated some awareness of the need for the local district to assist in developing future principals. Although there seems to be little unanimity as to how this should be done, the procedures that are used fall into three categories. First, likely prospects are provided with a variety of job experiences. This may take the form of working at a number of different jobs within the school system, such as: head teacher, first assistant,
senior assistant, consultant, special counsellor, vice-principal, and so forth. On the other hand, it may take the form of performing the same functions under different circumstances. The regular rotation of vice-principals would illustrate such practice.

A second category of pre-principalship training might be described as informal, in-service training. Attending meetings called by the superintendent, attending principals' or vice-principals' meetings are examples of this type of preparation.

A third procedure used to train prospective principals is the provision of formal courses in administration and supervision. Only one district reported using this procedure.

A number of conclusions seem justified on the basis of the data collected in four districts. Firstly, the extent of pre-principal training that was observed, seems to be related to size of district. That is, smaller districts do not provide the varieties of experience that larger districts provide. Secondly, although some districts provide different job environments for prospective principals, none has devised a reasonably precise sequence of experiences deemed desirable for a future principal. Thirdly, attempts at in-service training seem somewhat perfunctory. Most superintendents recognize the inadequacy of the once or twice-yearly meetings
that they hold with the vice-principals. Finally, none of the districts has utilized fully the resources of the university in training future administrators. In summary, two of the four districts have succeeded in developing sizable reservoirs of potential leadership talent; two have made some attempts in this direction; all could have done a more effective job.

Criterion 4--All interested and qualified personnel should have an opportunity to apply.

If a school district is to make the best choices of administrative personnel, it must have the best possible candidates to choose from. No matter how carefully a selection procedure is devised and executed, it can do no more than to choose the best applicant. Accordingly, in considering this criterion as compared with practice in school districts, the investigator sought to determine if there were factors within the selection process that had the effect of excluding from consideration any individuals who might reasonably be expected to perform effectively as principals.

The writer postulated two groups of potential candidates who might be overlooked. The first would consist of local staff members who, for one reason or another, might be hesitant in applying. The second group would consist of teachers or principals from outside the district who believe that local promotional policies make it pointless for them to apply.
All superintendents indicated that attempts were made continuously to identify potential leaders within the district, and to encourage them to prepare and apply for promotion. School principals appeared to play a key role in this endeavour, although other administrative personnel were also concerned with the problem. The energy with which this talent search was conducted was difficult to determine. The writer gained the impression, however, that districts were by no means uniform in their desire to canvass all sources of potential administrators. This impression receives some support from the ratings assigned Criterion 3, Table I.

Only one of the four districts invites applications from outside the local district. Two of the three other districts indicated that they would permit outsiders to apply. One district will not accept applications for a principalship from persons outside the local district.

Certain conclusions are justified on the basis of the data collected. It is unlikely that significant numbers of local staff members who show administrative promise are overlooked for promotion. It is unlikely that an outstanding applicant from outside the district would fail to receive serious consideration for promotion in three of the four districts investigated. In the fourth district, such an individual would likely receive rapid promotion through the teaching ranks. In summary, there is little indication that
promising candidates will be overlooked in the selection process.

Criterion 5--If outside applicants are sought, attempts should be made to advertise widely and vigorously.

As is indicated in Table I, only one of the four districts advertises outside its own boundaries for principals. In the case of the most recently considered promotion, the district placed an advertisement for one day in each of two large city daily newspapers. Seven applications were received from outside the district.

The district's desire for outside applicants presumably indicated some concern with the quality of local candidates. It may be concluded, on the basis of the results achieved, that the method of advertising was not sufficiently energetic.

Criterion 6--An initial screening should be provided to eliminate those deemed to be unfit.

Attempts were made, during this investigation, to determine what specific requirements for the principalship existed in school districts. It was postulated that unless some standards were present and were widely known by the staff, there would be numbers of applicants who stood only a remote chance for promotion, and that such applicants would decrease the time available for official consideration of better qualified persons.
There appeared to be considerable variation between districts regarding requirements for the elementary principalship. This probably resulted from the superintendents' awareness of the absence of precise predictors of administrative effectiveness. Three districts, nevertheless, had established certain minimum standards. In the other district, the superintendent believed that in order to get the "best" man, specifications for the job had to be extremely flexible.

Two of the four districts had published statements of the local requirements for the principalship and had made the statement available to staff. One of these was couched in rather broad terms and contained few specifics. The other was more definite and was less of a policy statement that the former. In the third district, requirements for promotion were apparently known to most staff but were not published. In the fourth district, it appeared doubtful that any applicant would have a clear idea of the district's requirements for the principalship.

Accordingly, it may be concluded that three of the four school districts are forced to consider some applicants who have only a remote chance for promotion. One of these districts is likely to have a considerable number of poorly qualified candidates. It may also be concluded that the presence of even a few, precise criteria would materially improve the efficiency of the selection process.
Criterion 7--The screen should not contain artificial prescriptions whose sole purpose is to keep down the number of applicants.

As has been indicated, superintendents experience considerable difficulty in establishing requirements for the elementary principalship. There appears to be a commendable attempt to avoid setting standards that are not reasonably defensible, at least for the local situation. In this regard, the largest of the districts investigated has resisted what might be a normal inclination to reduce an almost unmanageable number of applicants by the imposition of some arbitrary standard.

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that although some specific promotional requirements may be questioned, there is no evidence of any school district reducing the number of applicants for principalships by imposing arbitrary or artificial standards.

Recommendations, Ratings, and Personal-History Blanks. Table II compares school district use of recommendations, ratings, and personal-history blanks with criterial developed in Chapter III. Each district has been rated on each criterion.

Criterion 1--Letters of recommendation are of little value except as possible negative selectors.

None of the four districts requires applicants for the elementary principalship to submit letters of reference.
It appears that superintendents have little faith in this means of evaluating candidates. As one superintendent asked the investigator, "Have you ever seen a poor letter of reference?"

The conclusion is obvious: superintendents doubt both the validity and reliability of letters of recommendation.

Criterion 2—Recommendations, if used, should be sought by the employer and held in strict confidence by him.

None of the school districts investigated requires candidates to furnish names of persons who might provide character or other information. Superintendents seem to prefer gathering information through professional channels and on their own initiative.

It may be concluded that superintendents have little faith in the validity of the opinions of non-educators when it comes to a consideration of competencies required in a school principal.

Criterion 3—Ratings and/or recommendations should be submitted on standard forms.

All districts attempt by one means or another to gather information regarding the abilities of prospective principals. In three districts, the principals report regularly on the work of any administrative personnel assigned to them. These reports, which are in effect ratings, are made in the form of remarks appended to evaluations of teaching ability. In a fourth district, the superintendent frequently
TABLE II

RECOMMENDATIONS, RATINGS, AND PERSONAL-HISTORY BLANKS OF APPLICANTS FOR THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALSHIP--RATING OF PRACTICE IN FOUR URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AGAINST EMPIRICALLY DERIVED CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Letters of recommendation are of little value except as possible negative selectors.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recommendations, if used, should be sought by the employer directly and held in strict confidence by him.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ratings and/or recommendations should be submitted on standard forms.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information supplied should be considered in terms of the quality of its source.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Several ratings and/or recommendations are usually preferable to one or two.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The personal-history blank should be regarded as a selection instrument.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to Ratings Assigned:

1. Criterion and practice are in close agreement.
2. Criterion and practice are somewhat in agreement.
3. Criterion and practice differ widely.
4. Criterion does not apply to procedures in this district; no comparison can be made.
discusses with the principal the manner in which junior administrative personnel are discharging their duties. No written reports on such matters are required in this district.

In at least two districts, the superintendent holds lengthy, informal discussions with the principals of candidates who are being considered seriously for promotion.

On the basis of the foregoing certain conclusions can be advanced. Firstly, written records or ratings on prospective principals appear to lack specificity and direction and their reliability and validity should be questioned. Secondly, verbal reports or ratings appear to be informal. Their validity and reliability will likely be related to the competency of the individual superintendent.

Criterion 4--Information supplied should be considered in terms of the quality of its source.

The ratings of candidates that are considered by the superintendents, generally are submitted by school principals in the local district. It must be assumed that a superintendent will recognize levels of rating ability among his principals.

Accordingly, it might be concluded that, in considering the ratings of candidates, superintendents will likely make allowances for the quality of the rater's judgement.

Criterion 5--Several ratings and/or recommendations are usually preferable to one or two.
In three of the four districts considered in this study, local candidates for promotion may conceivably have been observed by and reported on by only one principal. In the remaining district, junior administrative personnel are rotated regularly, and hence are observed by and reported on by a number of principals.

As has been indicated in discussing Criterion 3, ratings offered by administrators may not have a common reference point. Accordingly, several ratings of a subordinate by several principals will probably provide a more complete picture of the man's capabilities than will several ratings of the same person made by one principal.

It may be concluded, therefore, that on the basis of ratings provided, the superintendent in one of the districts will gain a better-rounded impression of candidates than will the superintendents in the other three districts.

Criterion 6—The personal-history blank should be regarded as a selection instrument.

All four districts require applicants for an elementary principalship to file an application form. Three districts use mimeographed sheets for this purpose, although one of the districts contemplates the use of Keysort cards. The fourth district is already using Keysort application cards.
All districts require basic data concerning teaching experience, certification, academic qualifications, and experience in other kinds of work. Some seek knowledge of community activities and experience in other kinds of work. Some contain open-ended items which ask, in effect, "Why should you be appointed principal?" Some seek information that, apparently, is not considered in the selection process. All districts appear to use the same form for any supervisory or administrative position, whether it be primary consultant or elementary principal.

Accordingly, it may be concluded that "Application for Promotion" forms reflect, once more, the apparent absence of predictors of effectiveness in the principalship. All forms gather some information that is considered in the selection process. None of them seems to be regarded as a reasonably precise selection instrument.

Paper and Pencil Tests. Table III compares the use that school districts make of written tests, with criteria developed in Chapter III.

Criterion 1--Written tests should be considered as negative selectors and should have a fairly low cut-off score.

As Table III indicates, no comparison of school district practice with Criterion 1 can be made. Written tests are not used in any of the districts for at least
TABLE III

PAPER AND PENCIL TESTS OF APPLICANTS FOR THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALSHIP--RATING OF PRACTICE IN FOUR URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AGAINST EMPIRICALLY DERIVED CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Written tests should be considered as negative selectors and should have a fairly low cut-off score.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tests should be appropriate to the job function of the principal.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Test results that might have been thrown in a desired direction should be carefully scrutinized.</td>
<td>xxxx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to Ratings Assigned:

1. Criterion and practice are in close agreement.
2. Criterion and practice are somewhat in agreement.
3. Criterion and practice differ widely.
4. Criterion does not apply to procedures in this district; no comparison can be made.
two reasons. First of all, a superintendents doubt the relevance of such instruments. Secondly, superintendents seem to believe that observation and rating provide nearly all the information about candidates that a test or test battery could provide.

It may be concluded that superintendents have not been convinced that written tests are either useful or necessary in selecting principals.

Criterion 2—Tests should be appropriate to the job function of the principal.

This criterion, as well as the former, cannot be compared with school district practice because no tests are used. Superintendents appear to believe that there is no need for tests. Further, they seem to believe that even if tests were available, they would probably measure only a small part of the candidate's abilities.

It may be concluded that superintendents do not believe that tests capable of predicting success in the principalship are available.

Criterion 3—Test results that might have been thrown in a desired direction should be carefully scrutinized.

This criterion cannot be compared with practice, because written tests are not used. Tests are not used now, and there appears to be no indication that they will be used in the near future.
Interviews. Table IV compares the use of interviews in selecting principals with criteria developed in Chapter III.

Criterion 1—The main purpose of the interview should be to uncover personality variables associated with success in the principalship.

Three of the four districts that were investigated, use interviews as an important part of their procedure for selecting principals. In the other district, the selection interview is not considered necessary.

The purposes for which interviews are used seem to vary widely. In one district, for example, the interview is intended to examine the following aspects of each candidate: his philosophy of education, his personality, his knowledge of curriculum matters, his verbal facility, his reaction to stress, and his appearance and manners. Another district examines all the preceding, except reaction to stress, plus the following: his knowledge of school law, his hobbies and interests, and his motivations in becoming a principal. The third district uses interviews, apparently to convince the candidate that the qualifications and experience noted on his application form have been interpreted correctly.

In the first two districts cited above, it seems unlikely that the number of objectives sought can be achieved. In the case of the third district, the expressed
purpose of the interview seems somewhat trivial.

It is fair to conclude that the function of the selection interview is not clearly understood.

Criterion 2—The interview should have a structure, possibly involving prepared questions. Planning should be flexible enough to allow pursuit of profitable lines of inquiry.

It was postulated that the effective selection interview would be neither inflexible, nor free-flowing in its execution. Accordingly, a rating of "1" on this criterion was intended to indicate a position approximately midway between the extremes of rigid structure and no structure.

In one of the districts investigated, questions from a prepared list are put to each candidate. Questions do not appear to deviate from this list. Interviewers record their impressions of the candidate on a rating scale. In another district, the content of each interview is comparable for each candidate. No rating scale is used, however, and the expressed purposes of the interview are rather broad. In the third district that uses interviews, the structure of most interviews is identical, but in certain instances, there is deviation from typical procedure.

It may be concluded that school districts experience some difficulty in effecting a balance between rigid and flexible structuring of interviews. This conclusion is
TABLE IV

INTERVIEWS OF APPLICANTS FOR THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALSHIP—RATING OF PRACTICE IN FOUR URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AGAINST EMPIRICALLY DERIVED CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The main purpose of the interview should be to uncover personality variables associated with success in the principalship.</td>
<td>x xx x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The interview should have a structure, possibly involving prepared questions. Planning should be flexible enough to allow pursuit of profitable lines of inquiry.</td>
<td>xxx x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Form and content of the interview should be similar for candidates being considered.</td>
<td>xx x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interviewers should understand interviewing and education.</td>
<td>xx x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A panel of interviewers should be used.</td>
<td>xxx x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to Ratings Assigned:

1. Criterion and practice are in close agreement.
2. Criterion and practice are somewhat in agreement.
3. Criterion and practice differ widely.
4. Criterion does not apply to procedures in this district; no comparisons can be made.
supported, and in part explained by the conclusions of Criterion 1 in this section.

Criterion 3—Form and content of the interview should be similar for candidates being considered.

The candidates in each of the three districts receive equivalent consideration during interviews. In one district, for instance, all interviews are approximately thirty minutes long, and comparable questions are asked of each candidate. Another district restricts the length of the interview to fifteen minutes, and questions from a prepared list are asked of each candidate. In the third district, the form and content of most interviews are identical, but in a few cases, a longer interview may result from the desire of the interviewing panel to better understand a candidate's qualifications.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be concluded that interview ratings of candidates in each district are assigned on the basis of comparable interview situations.

Criterion 4—Interviewers should understand interviewing and education.

The validity and reliability of the interview as a selection device is related to the ability of the interviewer to make sound judgements. This ability, in turn, is probably related to several factors including the following: experience in interviewing, the purpose of the interview,
the extent of preparation for the interview, the knowledge of what to look for in interviewing, and the interviewer's understanding of his own prejudices.

In two of the districts, school trustees act as the interviewing panel. In one of these districts, the superintendent provides guidance to interviewers. He provides a verbal description of the educational and personal competencies being sought in the candidates. He prepares a rating scale for interviewers to use and he also prepares questions which relate to the rating scale. In another district, the trustees apparently receive no direct guidance from their superintendent. In the third district, the interviewing panel consists of experienced school administrators. They apparently use no rating scale, and seem to attempt to achieve a large number of objectives in the course of the interview.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be concluded that none of the panels of interviewers is fully conversant with both the problems of interviewing and the competencies required in the principalship.

Criterion 5--A panel of interviewers should be used.

A panel of interviewers conducts the selection interview in each of the three districts using this device. In one case, the interviewing board consists of administrative officials of the school district. In the other two it consists of the board of school trustees. The superintendent
is present at interviews in all districts, although his function varies. In two districts he is chairman of the hearing; in the other, he is a consultant.

It appears unlikely, therefore, that interview ratings reflect the bias of any one individual.

II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF HYPOTHESIS

Certain conclusions of a more general nature seem warranted on the basis of the data that has been considered. First of all, it is apparent that selection procedures differ considerably between districts. At first glance, several districts seem to have a number of procedures in common. However, on closer examination, considerable variations in practice emerge. It is improbable that four widely differing ways of selecting elementary school principals can be equally successful.

Secondly, all selection procedures examined are characterized by a high degree of subjectivity. No evidence was found of the use of objective measures of the competencies of candidates except, of course, in length and type of professional experience and in academic qualifications. Furthermore, there seems to have been very little attempt to reduce the element of subjectivity where subjective measures are required.

Finally, there seems to have been very little attempt to define the competencies required in the principalship.
It is undoubtedly difficult, if not impossible, to formulate such a definition at this time. Even predictors of effectiveness in teaching seem conspicuously lacking. Nevertheless, professional educators should be searching diligently for the answer, and even for partial answers, to the problem.

All superintendents agree that it is important to choose the "best" candidates available to be elementary principals. It is upon the definition of this word "best" that the problem of selection hinges. The lack of precision in selection procedures in the districts investigated, indicates that the "best" person for the job is presently undefined. Until he is, selection of elementary school principals will continue to be based, in considerable measure, on intuition and stereotypes.

Accordingly, on the basis of the data collected and considered, the null hypothesis, as stated in Chapter I, is accepted.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for improving school district practice in selecting elementary school principals. They are advanced after a thorough evaluation of the data collected, and after a consideration of the relevant literature.

1. School districts should attempt to define the capabilities that they expect in elementary school principals.
Campbell (see footnote 69) suggests that administrators require technical, human, and conceptual skills. Even a relatively simple definition such as this would provide greater focus to the selection process.

2. School districts should examine and, where possible, improve the selection techniques that they use. The interview, for example, is sometimes expected to provide information that can better be obtained in other ways. The personal-history blank, for example, might be improved in its usefulness by applying the criteria developed as a result of recommendation 1.

3. School districts should attempt to decrease subjectivity in evaluating candidates. Ratings of administrative behaviour provided by principals, for example, might be improved by the use of a rating form. (See Appendix F.)

4. School districts should experiment with different selection procedures than they presently utilize. Peer ratings and group interviews are examples of inexpensive procedures that might profitably be examined.

5. School districts should consider carefully the possibility of including an objective measure in the selection process. A test of verbal facility or of critical thinking ability would seem to possess face validity. Effects on staff morale should be carefully considered.
6. School districts should scrutinize the effects of lay choice of professional personnel. Although the legal prerogatives of school trustees must be recognized, the choice of elementary school principals should be on a sound professional basis.

7. School districts should view selection as a continuous process rather than as a problem that arises when a vacancy must be filled. Accordingly, superintendents should devise a sequence of experiences for prospective principals. A reasonable basis for establishing such a plan would be found in a consideration of the administrative skills enunciated by Campbell in recommendation 1.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The present study has barely scratched the surface of an extremely complex problem. As a result, a multitude of questions remain unanswered and could well be the object of further investigations.

Are the findings of this study consistent with school district practice in other urban areas of British Columbia? or of Canada? Do procedures for selecting principals of high schools differ from those for selecting elementary school principals? Do procedures for selecting principals in rural or semi-rural areas differ materially from those used in urban areas? What is the role of the
district superintendent in the selection of principals? What are some of the staff morale problems associated with the choosing of principals? Could university, or other professional personnel, profitably assist in the selection process?

The foregoing illustrate a number of questions that are directly related to this investigation. Other problems such as the following still require illumination: personal characteristics associated with leadership, the dynamics of school board function, predictors of administrative effectiveness, the training of administrators.

These suggestions for further study serve to indicate the tremendous gaps that exist in professional knowledge regarding school administration. It is hoped that this study will act as a stimulus to other researchers to fill in some of these gaps.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, LEARNED SOCIETIES,
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C. PERIODICALS


D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

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E. STANDARD REFERENCES


CRITERIA SUITABLE IN APPRAISING PROCEDURES
FOR SELECTING SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

I. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

1. Several competent candidates should be considered for each position. Selection ratio should be approximately ten to one.

2. Local candidates should be given preference if all factors are equal or nearly so.

3. Local districts should assume initiative in establishing pre-principal training to provide a reservoir of leadership talent.

4. All interested and qualified personnel should have an opportunity to apply.

5. If outside applicants are sought, attempts should be made to advertise widely and vigorously.

6. An initial screening should be provided to eliminate those deemed to be unfit.

7. The screen should not contain artificial prescriptions whose sole purpose is to keep down the number of applicants.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS, RATINGS, AND PERSONAL-HISTORY BLANKS

1. Letters of recommendation are of little value except as possible negative selectors.

2. Recommendations, if used, should be sought by the employer directly and held in strict confidence by him.

3. Ratings and/or recommendations should be submitted on standard forms.

4. Information supplied should be considered in terms of the quality of its source.

5. Several ratings and/or recommendations are preferable to one or two.

6. The personal history blank should be regarded as a selection instrument.
APPENDIX A (continued)

III. PAPER AND PENCIL TESTS

1. Written tests should be considered as negative selectors and should have a fairly low cut-off score.

2. Tests used should be appropriate to the job function of the principal.

3. Test results that might have been thrown in a desired direction should be carefully scrutinized.

IV. INTERVIEWS

1. The main purpose of the interview should be to uncover personality variables associated with success in the principalship.

2. The interview should have a structure, possibly involving prepared questions. Planning should be flexible enough to allow pursuit of profitable lines of inquiry.

3. Form and content of interview should be similar for candidates being considered.

4. Interviewers should understand interviewing and education.

5. A panel of interviewers should be used.
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING SELECTION PROCEDURES

Section I. -- Recruitment and Screening

1. When was the most recent appointment made to an elementary school principalship in your district?  
   (Future responses in this questionnaire should be focussed on the appointment(s) mentioned in question 1.)

2. How many applicants were there for the position?  

3. Would 4 or 5 of the applicants have made satisfactory principals?  

4. Did the local staff know a position was open?  

5. If "no", why?  

6. What means are used to inform staff of promotional opportunities?  

7. How many applicants were there from outside your district?  

8. If "none", why?  

9. Were outsiders invited to apply?  

10. If "no", why?  

11. If "Yes", what means were used to invite them?  

12. Is it your policy to actively encourage present staff to apply?  

13. If "yes", how is this done?  

14. Is the vice-principalship a major source of candidates?  

15. What other positions are important sources of candidates?  

16. Are any of the vice-principal's functions specifically designated by the central office?  

17. If "yes", what are these?  

Comments on any of the above questions.
18. Do principals in your district generally provide a variety of job experiences for the vice-principal?  

19. How often does a principal submit written reports on his vice-principal? (Reports specific to function of v.p.)  

20. In your district, is special training provided for prospective principals?  

21. If "yes", to whom does it apply and what form does it take?  

22. Is it your policy to "rotate" vice-principals?  

23. What are the minimum qualifications for the principalship in terms of the following?  

   a) Degree  
   b) Institution granting degree  
   c) General field of study  
   d) Special courses required  
   e) Length of service  
   f) Type(s) of school taught in  
   g) Administrative experience  
   h) Other experience  
   i) Age  
   j) Sex  
      Ratio female to male principals  
   k) Other requirements  
   l) Are the above 11 requirements known by staff?  

Comments on any of the above questions.
24. (To be answered by those with affirmative answers to 7 and/or 9)

Assuming all factors equal or nearly so, would the local applicant receive preference over the outside one?

25. (To be answered by those with negative answers to 7 and/or 9)

Assuming that an experienced principal from outside your district applied for a principalship; and assuming that his academic, professional, and personal qualifications were significantly better than those of local applicants, how would you deal with his application?

Comments on either of the above questions.

Section II--Recommendations, Ratings, and Personal-History Blank

1. How many letters of recommendation must a candidate submit?

2. Who reads these?

3. How many names of people must be offered as references?

4. Must these names be representative of any specific vocation?

5. Which vocation(s)?

6. How do you obtain the opinions of the people mentioned in #4? telephone visit letter requested form to be filled in

7. What kinds of information do you try to gather from them?

8. Do applicants fill in a promotion application form?

9. May this investigator have a copy of the form used?

10. Are reports on the candidate's teaching competence sought?

11. Why?

Comments on any of the questions in Section II.
Section III—Written Tests

1. Are candidates required to write special tests? ______
2. If "yes", what tests are used? ______________________
3. If "no", why are written tests not used? ______________________

4. To which of the following uses do you put test results?
   a) To provide a rank order of candidates. ______
   b) To select high-scoring candidates ______
   c) To identify low-scoring candidates. ______

Comments on any of the questions in Section III.

Section IV—Interviews

1. Are all applicants interviewed individually. ______
2. If "yes", by whom? ______________________
3. Are some applicants interviewed individually? ______
4. If "yes", by whom? ______________________
5. If 1 is "no" and 3 is "yes", how and by whom were the remaining applicants excepted from the interview? ______________________

6. If no interviews, why? ______________________
7. Are the questions asked in the interview, exactly the same for all applicants? ______
8. Are the questions asked in the interview, similar for all applicants? ______

Comments on any of the above questions in Section IV.
9. Interviews are conducted for several purposes. Indicate which are important purposes to interviewers in your district. Please choose as many or as few as you wish.

   a) To determine candidate's philosophy of education.
   b) To determine candidate's knowledge of school law and district administrative procedures.
   c) To assess candidate's personality.
   d) To determine candidate's knowledge of school matters. (curriculum, methods, etc.)
   e) To assess candidate's verbal facility.
   f) To determine candidate's reaction to stress.
   g) To assess candidate's appearance, manners, etc.
   h) To ascertain candidate's hobbies, interests, and other personal data.
   i) To determine candidate's motivations in becoming a principal.
   j) Other.

10. How long is the usual interview?
   5 min. 10 min. 15 min. 20 min. 30 min. longer varies widely

11. Have all interviewers had experience in interviewing?  

12. Which of the following is/are done before the interview?
   a) Questions are prepared.
   b) Questions assigned to specific interviews.
   c) Candidate's personal data is considered.
   d) Structure or flow of interview is decided.
   e) Type of candidate being sought is defined.
   f) Kinds of information being sought are determined.
   g) Problems of interviewing are considered.

Comments on any of the above questions.
## APPENDIX C

**COVERAGE OF CRITERIA BY QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Questions which bear most directly on this criteria</th>
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<td>7</td>
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| **Section II** | |
| 1 | sec.II-1,2 |
| 2 | sec.II-1,2,3,6 |
| 3 | sec.II-6,7,10, I-19 |
| 4 | sec.II-4,5,10 |
| 5 | sec.II-1,3 |
| 6 | sec.II-8,9 |

| **Section III** | |
| 1 | sec.III-4 |
| 2 | sec.III-2 |
| 3 | sec.III-2,3,4 |

| **Section IV** | |
| 1 | sec.IV-6-9,11 |
| 2 | sec.IV-7,8,9,10,12 |
| 3 | sec.IV-7,8,10 |
| 4 | sec.IV-2,4,9,11,12 |
| 5 | sec.IV-2,4,5,II-1,3,7 |
### APPENDIX D

**RELEVANCY OF QUESTIONS TO SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Question</th>
<th>Criteria directly relevant to this question</th>
<th>Criteria which may be relevant to this question</th>
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<td><strong>Section I</strong></td>
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APPENDIX E

Rating Scale for Determining Extent to which Stated Selection Procedures Agree with Criteria

Ratings--1--Criterion and practice in close agreement.
--2--Criterion and practice somewhat in agreement.
--3--Criterion and practice differ widely.
--4--Criterion does not apply to procedures in this district; no comparison can be made.

Section I--Recruitment and Screening

Criterion 1--Several competent candidates should be considered for each position.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- approximately 10 applicants or more.
- four or five of the applicants were of high quality.
- at least two of the following were true.
  - local staff knew of pending appointment.
  - outsiders permitted to apply.
  - outsiders invited to apply.
  - local staff encouraged to apply.
  - local district encourages pre-principal training.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- less than 10 applicants.
- very few of good quality.
- less than 10 applicants combined with two or more of--
  - local staff not adequately informed of opening.
  - outsiders not permitted to apply.
  - outsiders not invited to apply.
  - local staff not encouraged to apply.
  - no encouragement of pre-principal training.

Comments--

Rating ___
Criterion 2—Local applicants should be given preference if all factors are equal or nearly so.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- superintendent says this situation applies.
- practice agrees with criterion 1.
- all interested and qualified local staff had opportunity to apply.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- superintendent prefers outsiders.
- no notification of vacancy given to local staff.
- "personal" invitations to apply extended to outsiders.
- little encouragement given local staff to prepare themselves for promotion.

Comments:

Rating—Criterion 2—___

Criterion 3—Local districts should assume initiative in establishing pre-principal training to provide a reservoir of leadership talent.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- local staff informed of promotional opportunities.
- preference for local applicants is indicated.
- local staff encouraged to apply for promotions.
- some sequence of promotions is indicated.
- local staff given opportunity for varied experience.
- in-service training provided for potential principals, special courses, meetings with superintendent, etc.)
- qualifications for the principalship are stated publicly

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- staff not informed of promotional opportunities nor encouraged to apply.
- preference expressed for outsiders. "Personal" invitations to apply are given to outsiders.
no sequence of promotions.
- local staff has no opportunity for varied experience.
- no in-service training provided for potential principals.
- qualifications for the principalship are not stated.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 3--

Criterion 4--All interested and qualified personnel should have an opportunity to apply.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- significant numbers of applicants. (Will vary with size of district.)
- outsiders permitted to apply even though sizeable number of well-qualified local applicants.
- outsiders invited to apply if there are relatively few local applicants.
- local staff actively encouraged to apply for promotion.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- small number of applicants.
- outsiders not permitted to apply.
- Outsiders not invited to apply (unless there are many, well-qualified local applicants)
- local staff not actively encouraged to apply.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 4--

Criterion 5--If outside applicants are sought, attempts should be made to advertise widely and vigorously.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- mass media, with wide circulation, are used.
- professional channels are used to circulate the advertisement.
Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- advertisements regarding promotions receive small circulation.
- some outsiders specifically invited to apply.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 5--

Criterion 6--An initial screening should be provided to eliminate those deemed to be unfit.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- clear statement of requirements for the principalship is provided in sufficiently precise terms to act as a screening device.
- not all applicants proceed to final stage of selection process.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- requirements for the principalship are not known by all applicants.
- no progressive elimination of candidates—all applicants proceed through all stages of the selection process.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 6--

Criterion 7--The screen should not contain artificial prescriptions whose sole purpose is to keep down the number of applicants.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- both male and female applicants are considered.
- no requirement for long teaching experience (say, 20 or more years)
- no arbitrary age barriers.
- no additional, purely arbitrary requirements of doubtful validity.
Indications that criterion and practice do not agree:
- restrictions as to sex of applicant.
- long teaching experience is required.
- arbitrary age barriers are present.
- arbitrary requirements of doubtful validity are present.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 7--

Section II--Recommendations, Ratings, and Personal-History Blanks

Criterion 1--Letters of recommendation are of little value except as possible negative selectors.

Indications that criterion and practice agree:
- letters are used only as negative selectors.
- letters are read by individuals who are aware of the attendant problems of validity and reliability.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree:
- letters of recommendation are considered important.
- letters are read by individuals who may not be aware of the attendant problems of validity and reliability.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 1--

Criterion 2--Recommendations, if used, should be sought by the employer directly and held in strict confidence by him.

Indications that criterion and practice agree:
- employer makes direct contact with the referee.
- letters or other communications dealt with in confidence.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree:
- informal, hearsay evidence receives serious consideration.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 2--
Criterion 3—Ratings and recommendations should be submitted on standard forms.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- regular reports on the vice-principal are submitted by the principal.
- reports are made on standard form, specific to future job function of a principal.
- standard form used for recommendations from persons outside the school district.
- superintendent's reports are used.
- verbal ratings are sought on a standard basis.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- recommendations and ratings are solely on informal, word of mouth basis.
- no written reports specifically directed to administrative and supervisory competencies are used.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 3--

Criterion 4—Information supplied should be considered in terms of the quality of its source.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- opinions are sought from people capable of making judgements on the competencies under consideration.
- opinions of those who best know the candidate are given more weight than opinions of those who may be relatively casual acquaintances of candidate.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- little or no attempt to differentiate quality of opinion.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 4--
Criterion 5--Several ratings and recommendations are generally preferable to one or two.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- opinions of several people are sought--principals, directors, superintendents.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- superintendent relies on his own, possibly fragmentary knowledge of candidate.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 5---

Criterion 6--The personal-history blank should be regarded as a selection instrument.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- undue length of form is avoided.
- only information likely to be used is collected.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- lengthy form is used.
- information of doubtful value is collected.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 6---

Section III--Paper and Pencil Tests

Criterion 1--Written tests should be considered as negative selectors and should have a fairly low cut-off score.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- tests are used to identify low scoring applicants.
- validity of tests is fully considered by authorities.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- tests are used to identify high-scoring candidates.
- rank order is considered important.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 1---
Criterion 2—Tests used should be appropriate to the job function of the principal.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- tests used are deemed valid for the specific purpose intended.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- tests are of questionable validity.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 2--

Criterion 3—Test results that can be thrown in a desired direction should be carefully scrutinized.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- tests are used to identify low-scoring candidates.
- reliability of tests is fully considered.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- rank order of candidates is used in selection.
- problems of test reliability are not fully considered.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 3--

Section IV—Interviews

Criterion 1—The main purpose of the interview should be to uncover personality variables associated with success in the principalship.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- interviews are used mainly to assess the candidates' personalities.
- interviews are planned but permit investigation of profitable lines of inquiry.
- interviewers understand the requirements for the principalship.
- interviewers have had experience in interviewing.
Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- purpose of the interview is broad.
- interview has no clear plan—appears to wander.
- interviewers have no clear idea of the requirements for the principalship.
- interviewers have had little or no experience in interviewing.

Comments—

Rating—Criterion 1—

Criterion 2—The interview should have a structure, possibly involving prepared questions. Planning should be flexible enough to allow pursuit of profitable lines of inquiry.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- interview is similar in content and duration for all candidates.
- some questions are prepared before the interview.
- personal data of candidates is considered before the interview.
- rating scale is used by interviewers.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- interview is rigidly structured.
- interview has no structure.
- little or no planning is done before the interview.
- rating scale is not used by interviewers.

Comments—

Rating—Criterion 2—

Criterion 3—Form and content of interview should be similar for candidates being considered. Rating form may be used.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- questions asked are comparable for all candidates.
- length of interviews is reasonably uniform.
- rating form is used by interviewers.
Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- content of the interviews varies widely.
- length of interviews varies widely.
- no rating form is used by interviewers.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 3--

Criterion 4--Interviewers should understand interviewing and education.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- interviewers are experienced school administrators.
- purposes of the interview are clear and not too broad.
- interviewers know what they are looking for.

Indications that criterion and practice do not agree.
- interviewers have had little experience in interviewing.
- interviewers have little knowledge of what qualities are required in the principalship.
- purposes of and problems in interviewing are not fully appreciated.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 4--

Criterion 5--A panel of interviewers should be used.

Indications that criterion and practice agree.
- several interviewers are present.
  or, failing this--
- wide gathering of opinions as to candidates' abilities.
Indicating that criterion and practice do not agree.

- only one interviewer is present.

- little or no attempt is made to gather the opinions of other competent individuals.

Comments--

Rating--Criterion 5--
APPENDIX F

Request for Confidential Report on _______________________

The above mentioned person has applied for the position of Elementary School Principal in this school district. We are anxious to have your frank opinion of his suitability for this position. Your statements will be held in the strictest confidence.

As you will readily realize, it is important that we choose the best possible candidate for this position. A poor choice could result in harm to children, in the lowered efficiency of fellow workers, and in distress for the person chosen. Accordingly, we solicit your best judgment of this man.

The scale below is designed to enable you to record your evaluation in as objective a form as possible. It would prove helpful if you could record on the back, instances of the candidate's behavior that support your estimate.

1. Some men have distinct talents for leadership. They are looked up to by their fellows and are expected to take the lead in any enterprise that may be started. At the other extreme are people who are content to be followers and are never asked to head up any sort of enterprise. In between these extremes fall persons of varying degrees of leadership ability. Based on your observation, how would
you estimate this individual? (Check one)

___ Outstanding as a leader.
___ Is very often a leader.
___ Average.
___ Is inclined to follow rather than to lead.
___ Is definitely a follower.

2. Some people arouse the greatest confidence in others. They are regarded as trustworthy in any situation. People have great respect for their integrity. The opposite extreme is the wholly untrustworthy individual who is known not to be reliable, and is never depended upon. Consider this man as you know him and as he is known by repute. Give an estimate of his reliability in comparison with his fellows. (Check one)

___ Is most highly respected and trusted.
___ Has a good reputation for dependability.
___ Is as reliable as most people.
___ Is frequently found to be not dependable.
___ Reputation for reliability is not good.

3. Some people are capable of gaining the respect of children. They understand childhood problems and are always able to handle children wisely, consistently, and effectively. At the other extreme are people who seem incapable of winning the respect of children. They do not
seem to understand children's problems, they are often intolerant, and they often seem unable to handle children wisely, consistently, and effectively. Consider this man as you know him and give an estimate of his ability to deal effectively with children. (Check one)

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<td>Deals very effectively with children.</td>
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<td>Average; as good as most people.</td>
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<td>Frequently has difficulties in dealing with children.</td>
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<td>Unsuccessful in his handling of children; often unwise, inconsistent, or intolerant.</td>
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March 14th, 1961

Mr. ... ........................................,
Superintendent of Schools,
........................................, B.C.

Dear Mr. .......... :

Thank you very much for the interview that you granted me recently.

The information that you provided concerning the selection of elementary school principals has proved very helpful in my investigations.

Again, many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

John F. Ellis