

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF
AnnLouise Borella, for the degree of Doctor of Education
presented on January 19, 1994.

Title: PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED
ACTIVITIES ON VOTER BEHAVIOR

Redacted for Privacy

Abstract approved: _____

Kenneth Ahrendt

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perceptions of school district administrators and members of the community about the influence of school-based activities had on voter behavior. The case study focused on a school district in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Interviews were held with the school district administrators and taxpayers in the community. The surveyed taxpayers were prominent, influential and well informed about the school district and the community.

Three questions were addressed to both the school administrators and taxpayers. (1.) What are the perceptions of the interviewee on the influence of school site activities on voter behavior? (2.) What activities would the interviewee perceive to be most effective in gaining/keeping community support? (3.) Does the interviewee perceive anything unusual about the community in its participation in school site activities and/or non-school activities?

It was found that attracting the people to the school site can be a positive influence, provided that the schoolsite is in good order. The activities most effective in gaining/keeping community support were those activities that pulled the widest range of community members to the school site. The administrators perceived the large attendance at school activities as support for the school system rather than the family members supporting the children. Administrators were also aware of a large segment of the community without school-age children, yet no active budgeted plans to reach them had been made.

Furthermore, community members felt that the district should live within their budget even though there was large community support for school based activities. The change in demographic characteristics, increased enrollment, and increased property evaluations have caused the community's perception of the school district to become more fiscally conservative. Due to the lack of trust by the taxpayers, the school district needs to be sensitive to the community by furnishing timely information about the how and why public monies are being spent.

Perceptions of the Influence of
School-Based Activities on Voter Behavior

by

AnnLouise Borella

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Education

Completed January 19, 1994

Commencement June 1994

APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy

Associate Professor of Education

Redacted for Privacy

Director, School of Education

Redacted for Privacy

Dean, Graduate School

Date thesis is presented January 19, 1994

Typed by AnnLouise Borella for AnnLouise Borella

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my grateful appreciation to Dr. Kenneth Ahrendt for taking on the myriad of duties as my committee chair, and the continued support and advice throughout this research project.

This is dedicated to my dearest companion -

Doc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Overview.....	1
	The Problem.....	5
II	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
	The Public School System.....	7
	The Schools and the Community.....	17
III	METHODOLOGY.....	30
	The Interview.....	31
	Validity.....	34
	Personal Background of Researcher.....	35
	The Setting.....	38
	The Population.....	54
IV	FINDINGS.....	58
	Student Activities.....	59
	Communications.....	66
	Community Involvement.....	70
	Community Issue: Growth.....	75
V	CONCLUSIONS.....	85
	Perceptions of the Administration.....	85
	Perceptions of the Taxpayers.....	90
	Summary.....	94
	Recommendations for Further Study.....	97
	Recommendations for Replication of Study.....	98
	REFERENCES.....	100

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES ON VOTER BEHAVIOR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Overview

Historically, education of the citizenry has been considered in the public's best interest. This concept is central to the functioning of a free society. "Americans believe that education is the duty to a national well-being" (Dougherty & Hammack, 1990, P. 3). Education is one of the societal activities that is of such significance that the cost must be borne by all citizens even if the individual is not currently using the service. The national well-being or public-good concept benefits not only the individual, but benefits society as a whole. Bennett states: "Americans have always placed great trust in the power of education to improve their lives and the lives of their children . . . and to secure and protect the very conditions of liberty." (Bennett, 1988, P. 1) He cites Jefferson for writing, "No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness." (Bennett,

1988, P. 1) While Bennett (1988) postulates that John Adams would argue that education is central to the nation and that education is for every classes and rank of people. (Bennett, 1988, P. 1) Education provides an individual with opportunities and social mobility. Education of the young was elevated to the position of the public's best interest. Whether the individual had children or not, or whether or not the child was in private, parochial or public schools, the citizen is taxed to support a public education system. The belief is that an educated society is good for the country and the cost of that education should be shared by every adult. (Chicago United/Roosevelt Center, 1985, P. 1).

In 1849, the Territorial Legislature created Oregon's public school system, which continued when Oregon was admitted into the Union as a state in 1859. The State of Oregon is responsible for providing students the opportunity to develop their academic abilities to the fullest through elementary, secondary, and higher education programs. (Oregon Blue Book, 1991, P. 190)

Oregon school districts have been given the responsibility to carry out the directives of the state legislature and to handle the day to day affairs of the school(s) within the district. During the course of

the school year, the school district provides classes in academic areas as well as activities based on special interests that have a basis in the curriculum. Some of these activities may be sports, clubs (e.g., business, forestry), or band. The school sites are also used for sports events, musical programs, parent conferences, and school district meetings. The school district also allows other groups, such as Scouts, recreational organizations, senior citizens, and church groups, to use the facilities. Therefore, the community comes into contact with the school district when they participate in school-based activities and/or uses the school facilities. The community awareness heightens whenever school district finances are offered for discussion and/or action. Citizens develop perceptions about the school district when they come into contact with children in the area. Television, radio and the press are also vehicles through which the community develop perceptions which affect the school children and/or school district.

"Social precepts involve the ability to judge the behavior of others by what their thoughts and feelings are." (Russell, 1956, P. 84) Perceptions about a school district can be developed by either direct or indirect knowledge. A direct way members of the community may

gain knowledge about the school district is thorough contact with the school site. For example, when the school site is used as a polling place, voters have the opportunity to see the facilities and displays of student work, to observe the students, and to meet members of the educational community. An indirect way that voters may gain information about the school district is through reading related items in the newspaper; or talking with someone who has been at the school site; or being associated with someone connected with the school district such as an employee, an administrator, a teacher or a student.

"Perception is a kind of representation of the world that builds up in the mind." (Sandrock, 1983, P. 142) Knowledge comes through the senses (hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching). A higher level of cognition comes about through the interpretation of sensory information which is termed perception. "Each of these sensory events is processed within the context of our knowledge of the world; our previous experiences give meaning to simple sensory experiences." (Solso, 1988, P. 29) The interpretation of reality by an individual is determined by the stimulation of the senses and the knowledge prior to that experience. Perceptions

are then an individual's knowledge of their world based on the stimulation of the senses and past experiences. (Solso, 1988) The simple fact is that our perceptions are determined almost exclusively by our own experiences. (Dechant and Smith, 1977)

The Problem

The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of school district administrators as well as community members of the influence of school-based activities on voter behavior from a qualitative perspective. This study will look at one set of administrators in one school district and selected "elite" community members to see how they view the relevance of school-based activities. The study was conducted in a unified school district in the Willamette Valley in Oregon. (A unified school district includes kindergarten through twelfth grade.) Data were collected through personal interviews with district administrators and selected "elite" community members. Based on Marshall and Rossman (1989) definition for "elite" interviewees as being influential, prominent, and well-informed members

of the community. The following questions served as general guidelines for the interviews:

1. What are the perceptions of the interviewee of the influence of school site activities on voter behavior?

2. What activities would the interviewee perceive as most effective in gaining/keeping community support?

3. Does the interviewee perceive anything unusual about the community in its participation in school-site activities?

Individual members of the community were questioned about their perceptions of the school district. Both community members and school district administrators were given personal assurances by the interviewer that no names or identifying references to them, the school district or the specific location would be used.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Public School System

In 1849, the Territorial Legislature of Oregon created the state public school system. The Constitution of Oregon assigned the legislature primary responsibility for the state public education system and also provide for the election of a superintendent of public instruction. The Oregon State Legislature established the State Board of Education in 1951. The State Board of Education has the responsibility for policy-making, planning and evaluating public elementary, secondary, and community college education. (Oregon Blue Book, 1991, P. 190) The actual management of a school district is left to a local school board, whose general powers, duties, and status are outlined in Oregon Laws. (ORS 332.072 - .111) The local school board establishes and maintains the schools, chooses textbooks and courses of study, sets the days of the year and the number of hours in session, and authorizes contracts (e.g., for purchases, transportation, or insurance). The district school board also employs the personnel needed to run

the school(s) and fixes the terms and conditions of employment and compensations. (ORS 332.505) Personnel include the superintendent, principals, teachers, secretaries, custodians, and any other support people deemed necessary for the educational program. The superintendent, in order to perform the administrative assignment of the district school board, is required by Oregon Laws to be certified by the Oregon Teacher's Standards and Practices Commission, and to possess a "superintendent" certificate. (ORS 342.140) Teachers are also required to be certified through Oregon Teacher's Standards and Practices Commission with an appropriate credential and endorsements for the teaching assignment. (ORS 342.125, .135, .143)

There are two levels of certification for superintendent - a Basic Administrative Certificate and then a Standard Administrative Certificate. The current requirements for a Basic Administrative Certificate with a Superintendent endorsement include a master's degree and a minimum of 12 quarter hours of graduate study in certain courses which are applicable toward certification of a Standard Administrative Certificate. (OAR 584-46-019) The Standard Administrative Certificate with Superintendent endorsement requires an additional

33 hours of graduate study in prescribed courses in school administration; 24 quarter hours of the certificate with the Superintendent endorsement must be achieved after the master's degree. Additional requirements by Teachers Standards and Practices are verification of knowledge of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and state and federal statutes prohibiting discrimination, as well as a satisfactory score on the California Basic Education Skills Test. The Teachers Standards and Practices Commission ensures the standards for public professional educators (teachers and administrators) in the State of Oregon.

School board members are elected to office as representatives of the community. (ORS 332.118 - .150) The only requirements to become a school board member are that an individual must be a resident within the district for one year immediately preceding the election (ORS 330.730) and that no one can serve on the school board if employed by the same school district (ORS 332.016). The school board is aware that educational programs, facilities, personnel, and services to students cost money. It becomes necessary for the school board and school administrators to look upon the budget as

a device for accomplishing the district's educational goals and objectives.

The school board's district budget becomes the central element to a successful operation. The superintendent needs to know how to use the budget and the budgeting process to carry out the district's educational programs. The superintendent can and does exert significant influence over the school's program, but final decisions on the overall educational program rest with the district school board. Superintendents usually have the responsibility for preparing the school budget for the school board and/or budget committee to review and approval. The budgeting process, and the final budget itself, may be seen as a major political process in the school district and community.

The budgetary process begins with the school board. The board establishes the district's priorities and objectives for the following school year. Program costs are determined to see if the proposed educational program can be funded. The priorities and objectives of the district help to determine how much of the proposed educational program can be funded. Public budget hearings are held for the school board to review the proposed budget submitted by the superintendent, and in larger

school districts, with the help from the district finance department. The public attends budget meetings to hear the presentation, the discussion, and the recommendations by the superintendent and the school board members.

The school board questions, reviews and clarifies their understanding of the proposed school budget as it relates to the proposed goals and estimated revenues. At the budget hearing meetings, the public has an opportunity to question any part of the proposed school budget and/or the proposed goals. The public may then make suggestions to the school board concerning priorities for the coming school year and question the rationale behind any item in the budget.

Breakdown of types of school district expenditures in the state of Oregon per dollar are 53.3 cents for instruction, including personnel; 8.5 cents for administration; 7.8 cents for pupil and staff support; 3.1 cents for food service; 4 cents for transportation, 11.3 cents for operations of plant, and 12 cents for all other expenditures, which include business services, facility acquisitions and construction, debt service, and community service. (Oregon Department of Education, 1989, P. 29) Sources of funding per dollar for a school district in Oregon are usually: about 44.6 cents from

local property taxes, 20.2 cents from basic school support, and 35.2 cents from all other revenues. (Oregon Department of Education, 1989, P. 28) The outcome of the budgeting process then translates into what the priorities and objectives will be, and what goods and services will be purchased.

Another way to look at the budget process itself is to see that consists of three parts: the educational program, the budget or costs for the programs, and the revenues generated to the school district. The school board seeks to have the cost of the educational program to be equal to the current revenues and the budgeted costs of the proposed educational programs. Should the revenues not meet the proposed cost of the educational program, the education program must in some way be changed and/or reduced. This may require a reduction in the quantity and/or quality of a resource purchased (materials, supplies, and/or personnel), or a reduction in some area to maintain a balanced budget. (Garms, 1978). The budget, once passed by the school board and the public, becomes the document by which the school district is run in the following school year. It becomes the major financial tool used to control and monitor activities in the school district for the budget year.

Although money doesn't assure quality education, administrators want the best possible programs and learning environments for their students. However, state revenues to the school districts are limited. These revenue limitations make the administrators, the school board, and the public deal with the reality of the situation and causes them to make choices and decisions. (Griffiths, 1966)

In the State of Oregon, the public votes on the budget, which, on the ballot, is translated as the local property tax levy. The process may be repeated until the levy is approved (passed) by the voters. In this way, the public has a means of controlling local property taxes and making judgements on the local educational programs. A vote on the budget is needed only if the proposed budget exceeds the 6 percent tax base increase. The State of Oregon allows a school district to raise the tax base 6 percent a year without a vote by the community. Should this 6 percent increase not be taken or only part of the increase be taken, the difference can not be used in any other school year. The budget once passed, acts as a contract with the public, setting forth how the district will spend public revenues. School districts by law are not permitted to operate at a profit

or loss for the school year. The superintendent's performance is judged by the school board on the financial management of the budget, the quality of the programs funded, and the control of expenditures for the year, as well as the ability to enact the directives of the school board.

Specifically looking at the budget development process, the school district personnel put together a proposed budget, guided by school board directives, considerations for pre-existing labor contracts, and state and federal laws. Suggestions, advice, and special interest advocacy come from individuals and groups within the school district personnel and from within the community at large. For example, the business community may want more emphasis on computer and business skills; parents of elementary school-age children may want certain playground equipment and/or more courses in the arts; booster clubs may want special athletic equipment and/or sports programs; school district employee associations may seek supplies, equipment, creation or enlargement of special areas, as well as negotiations for salary, benefits, and/or conditions in the work-place. After the input and negotiations, the budget then goes to the school board, whose members represent the community.

At this point, special interest groups have another opportunity to plead their case, just as individuals and groups may present their concerns over the cost of the educational program(s). When the school board is satisfied with the budget, it determines whether or not the school district has sufficient revenues from federal, state, current property taxes, and other sources. Should the revenues not be sufficient, it may be necessary to review the school district budget again to make adjustments to the proposed funding. Another option would be to hold an election to obtain voter approval to levy additional property taxes to have a balanced budget. An increase in property taxes may also come in the form of a bond which would be for a specific purpose. For example, the bond may go to pay for the renovation of the school building(s), the building of a new school, and/or an addition to an already existing school building.

Before seeking a fiscal election, it is often helpful for the school board to look into the past history of voter support for educational programs, the current economic situation of the community, and the attitudes of the various groups within the community. It becomes the responsibility of the superintendent and/or the school

board to manage the campaign for the approval of the budget. The campaign requires time, organization, and various activities to impart information and convince the school district community to accept the proposed budget. The outcome of the election reflects the community's attitude toward local education and/or current economic situations.

The school board and the superintendent seek to keep the community informed as well as be aware of community attitudes and levels of satisfaction. Public schools have some direct contact with adults who have school-age children. The school board and the superintendent have the opportunity to make an additional effort to contact those adults with grown children not in school and those adults without children. They may need to use their resources to have this adult group become aware of the school district's accomplishments and needs, as well as finding out what are their current attitudes and their levels of satisfaction with the school district.

The state of Oregon had a population of 2,842,321 citizens in 1990. Of that number, 495,922 students were enrolled in the elementary and secondary public schools (kindergarten through grade twelve) during the 1989-1990

school year. Less than 18 percent of the total state population was enrolled/using the public school system. (Oregon Blue Book, 1991, P. 8 and P. 190)

The Schools and the Community

Research to date has not directly addressed perceptions of the influence of school-based activities on voter behavior. The literature review, therefore, is research relating to the topic.

Dost (1968) discussed the reassessment of school location problems and the school facility as multifunctional. Although the study focused on factors for placing a school in an urban environment, the same considerations can be used in this study. Multifunctional is defined as a school site that would be used for educational purposes during the designated school hours and after school hours, the school facilities would be available for use by the community (adults and children). During non-school hours the facilities could be used for "drama workshops and programs, or for group indoor athletic and social activities." Adult vocational educational programs along with a job placement center could be geared to serve the needs of the community.

Expansion of manpower training, vocational counseling and placement programs at the school site would multiply the available sources of labor market information and bring into closer association the relationship of training and job requirements. (Dost, 1969, P. 138)

What services are provided and what use the facility is put will depend on the needs and interests of the community. The multifunctional school can provide opportunities for families and community members in cultural, social, economic and educational activities.

Increasing the community's

participation in non-educational activities could result in a high ratio of the population engaging in educational and/or a greater retention rate of the school age population. (Dost, 1969, P. 139)

The Chicago United and The Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies (1985) examined policy options for reconnecting parents to their child's school and encouraging citizens without children in public schools to become involved with their local public schools. Suggestions included school fact booklets, personal pick-up by parents of their child's report cards, and school-run seminars to explain teaching methods and suggestions of what parents can do to help their child. School fact books give parents and other citizens

information about the goals of the district and school, how the district and school(s) are governed and the day-to-day operations of the school(s). The local district hand book included the district's educational goals and outcomes as well as ways for parents and other citizens to help the schools and to become more involved. For those adults without children, suggestions include having school facilities open to the community as a positive opportunity for people of all ages (pre-teen-agers to senior citizens) to learn about each other.

Another suggestion by the Chicago United and Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies is a community service requirement for students. Students learn that with their right to an education comes a responsibility to the community that supports their schools. Community service also gives the students an outlet for their energy and idealism, as well as benefit the community and have a possible positive affect upon the public's attitude toward the schools. Community outreach is another school policy suggestion as a requirement for teachers as part of their contract assignment. The community outreach takes the form of working with local social agencies and/or working in/with

local business or community organizations. This outreach program replaces time spent in playground duty, lunchroom duty and/or study hall duty. (Chicago United and The Roosevelt Center For American Policy Studies, 1985)

A public relations campaign acknowledged by the school board is recommended as becoming a necessity and not a luxury for connecting the schools to adults without children attending schools. Money spent in public relations (radio, newspaper ads, etc,) becomes part of the budget.

Another option for local district outreach is to develop a community resource bank that assists schools. This bank would be modeled on the "Learning Exchange" concept in which a file is kept on people with special skills, experiences, talents or knowledge. The individuals in this file would be matched with other people who seek information, but not knowing who to contact. At the same time the school is making up the resource bank, it is also reaching out and involving the larger community. Expanding the "Adopt-A-School" program was another suggestion by the Chicago United and Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies. This program connects the business community with the schools. The business community contribute time, personnel,

equipment and/or money to assist in a particular school's activities. The expansion of the program would include community organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons, the League of Women Voters, the Lions Club and/or any other civic organization. (Chicago United and The Roosevelt Center For American Policy Studies, 1985)

Jaffe (1990) conducted an ethnographic study of a rural agricultural elementary school district in Oregon that has a greatly diverse cultural population. The school district "is the largest employer in the village." (Jaffe, 1990, P. 39) It is a district that has a higher than state average transient population.

One area of commonalty in North America is sports as seen in the popularity on television.

Participation in sports provided incentive for some of the students. Some of the upper grade Hispanic males and females wanted to participate in the sports program and made some academic effort in order to remain eligible. (Jaffe, 1990, P. 98)

One of the cultural groups had several female players on a sports team. It was the Physical Education Teacher's opinion

that sports kept them in school. It's going to get a bunch of them to college who wouldn't get there otherwise. They have been playing together since fourth grade. They are really motivated, because they

know it's going to get them some place else.
(Jaffe, 1990, P. 99)

The community becomes involved with schools economically by paying taxes. The money the school district asks for are determined by the superintendent, the school board, and/or the budget committees. School board members are elected by the community to represent them on how the school district is managed and what programs in education they would prefer beyond those mandated by the state.

According to the Dis-satisfaction theory, when the community becomes dissatisfied, replacement of the school board members and/or the superintendent is sought. Iannacome and Lutz (1970) first published a description of the Dis-satisfaction theory. They stated that the democratic process is the vehicle for expressing the will of the people, but the democratic process is used only when enough people become dissatisfied with the existing conditions. The one thing the people have in common is their dis-satisfaction with what is going on in the school district. Dis-satisfaction can be suspected when more people run against the incumbent members of the school board, more people turn out to vote, and more votes are cast for the challengers. Eventually, the incumbents are defeated, a new superintendent is hired,

and the district's policy is changed. Additional studies of the Dis-satisfaction theory have been done by Lutz and others. (Danis, 1984; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970; Lutz & Iannaccone, 1969; Lutz & Iannaccone, 1978; Wang & Lutz, 1989)

Danis (1984) used the Dis-satisfaction theory as a basis to show that in school districts there were long periods of quiet and short traumatic periods of change. The fifty year period studied of one city school district was classified into three groups: (1) the quiet period which reflects consensus with the politics and the stability; (2) ascension indicators show an increase in conflict without subsequent reorganization; and (3) realignment that occurs after the removal of key officials which leads back to a quiet period.

Lutz with Wang (1989) updated the Dis-satisfaction theory as there seems to be some problems with people using the original model. The frustration led to the suggestion that election predictions were similar to weather predictions. The comparison between social/political data and meteorological data led to the hypothesis that variables were not stable over multi-year periods. (Lutz and Iannaccone, 1969)

Lutz and Wang (1989) developed a new model of the Dis-satisfaction theory which used another time reference and geographic place to predict an election. The variables that were used as predictors were: (1) changes in average daily attendance in schools - a measure of social change; (2) changes in assessed valuation and local tax levy - a measure of economic change; and (3) changes in total votes and challenges in school board elections - a measure of political change. As no single statistic demonstrates stability, some ratio representing a pattern of political events were suggested as a method of explaining the variance remaining in the defeat of the incumbent after the Dis-satisfaction factors entered the equation. The variable finally selected was the school board/superintendent pattern. The major problem with the theory and the variables were that they provided little time for the superintendent to make adjustments after becoming aware of dis-satisfaction and defeat of the incumbents. It is suggested by Wang (1989) that there may be a pattern in the school board/superintendent relations.

Allen's (1985) study on voting behavior in a school district financial referenda found significant predictors. Voters who had children enrolled in public schools were

more likely to support tax issues than voters with no children in school. The number of children in public school or private or a parochial school did not seem to make a difference. The number of years the voter has lived in the district appeared to make a difference in their participation. Those voters who lived at their present address between 5 to 10 years voted more than those voters who lived there shorter or longer periods of time. Age of the citizens was another predictor which demonstrated that the most likely voters were between age 31 and 50 years of age. Citizens with higher incomes were more likely to vote than those voters with lower incomes. Also, surveys showed that citizens who saved and invested income were among those who voted. The attitudes developed by the voters in the school district are not greatly influenced by school officials, but they can be influenced to some degree. What appears the more important aspect of building confidence "is to provide quality education for children that is perceived in a positive way by the community." It is believed that

such a perception will need to be built over a long period of time because short-term positive promotions for the sake of particular financial referenda do not appear to have a great deal of impact upon building voter confidence in the public schools.
(Allen, 1985, P. 362)

Dorsch (1989) investigated voter preferences in a financial election. Positive relationships were found between support for local school budgets and parents of children in local schools, some formal education beyond high school, and between the ages of 30 and 49 years of age. Those voters who showed opposition did not have school-age children, were not educated beyond high school, and were older than 50 years of age.

Smith (1989) researched older adults (fifty years and older) voting behavior and found that older adult females were more likely than adult males to vote in favor of a bond referendum. Among other characteristics found about adult female voters were higher levels of income, higher levels of education, and home ownership. As this group verbally interacted with others (other older adults, other adults and children), there was a greater tendency to vote for the bond referendum as compared to those who reported less interaction with others. Older adults have some form of exposure or interaction with the schools. They used these experiences as their source of information concerning schools, tended to vote more favorably for school referendums. In general, older adults had positive perceptions of the schools whether they voted for or against a bond issue.

The older adult group tended to believe in the ideal of education and therefore supported bond measures that were clear and showed real need. Older adults tended to vote the same as their spouses and their friends.

The concerns of the older adults about school financing were evidenced when they did not support a bond measure; cited too much waste, too many frills, as well as the need to use better planning practices concerning the use of school funds, and for the school district to provide more information about the need(s) and use(s) of the school funds. Local newspapers were identified as the most frequent source of information concerning schools among older adults. Older adults who had lived in the school district the shortest time (less than 5 years) and the longest amount of time (more than 20 years) were the least supportive of bond measure. (Smith, 1989).

Swinks' (1987) study on school-community relations concluded that people who are most involved in schools have greater knowledge of the schools. The emphasis of this study centered around the principal and the school staff, with the perception that the principal must have strong leadership skills for effective

home-school-community relations. Principals with strong leadership skills are seen to have

a high degree of intelligence, good judgement, alertness, strong verbal facility, being able to articulate school goals, policies, and procedures clearly, and to engage in social interaction with ease.
(Swink, 1987, P. 147)

The climate of the school or the first impression received upon entering a school seems to be very important. The climate identified what was going on in the school and the relationships between the students, staff, principal and community. The study by Swink (1987) suggests the "programs which develop effective home-school-community relations do not just happen; they are intentionally planned." The home-school-community relations plans "should be emphasized as a priority by central administrators, and programs unique to each school should be designed and implemented by school staffs."
(Swink, 1987, P. 161) Schools that allowed access to the facilities after school hours and on weekends for community activities are regarded more positively by the community. Strong academic programs, students who are happy and enthusiastic about their school, involving parents in student's work, involving non-parents in school activities, and communicating with the community on a regular, frequent bases with provision for community

feedback are some ways to provide positive support for the local school system. (Swink, 1987)

Community is seen as a process of "interaction and deliberation among individuals who share interests and commitment to common goals." (Westheimer and Kahne, 1993, P. 325) Members of the community pursue goals and use the talents of the individual members allowing for divergent ideas, leads to a sense of shared responsibility. Communities develop from shared experiences and in turn the community is formed by the experiences. (Westheimer and Kahne, 1993)

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Sometimes researchers or policy makers are puzzled by particular cases - unusual successes, unusual failures. Case studies of these unusual cases may generate particularly useful information. (Patton, 1990) Critical case sampling is particularly important where resources may limit evaluation of a study to one site. A critical case might be indicated by the financial state of a program. Therefore, a case study was chosen for this research as it was a means to describe an occurrence. Stoke (1988) described the case study as focusing "on a bounded system . . . usually under natural conditions--so as to understand it in its own habitat" (Stoke, 1988, P. 256). The methodology falls under the heading of qualitative research, but more specifically a case study. Interviews were conducted with school administrators and selected members of the community.

Patton (1990) states that

the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to access the perspective of the person(s) being interviewed. (Patton, 1990, P. 278)

Qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting. The research setting is a naturally occurring event, program, community, relationship or interaction with no predetermined cause established by and/or for the researcher. (Patton, 1990, P. 41) "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit." (Patton, 1990, P. 278) The research documents the phenomenon of interest while looking at the prominent beliefs and/or attitudes.

The Interview

Interviewing may be used as a technique for collecting data. Strengths of the interview are:

face-to-face encounter with informants,
 . . . facilitates cooperation from research
 subjects, . . . allows access for immediate
 follow-up data collection, . . . data are
 collected in natural setting, . . . provide
 great utility for uncovering the subjective
 side, as well as the native's perspective'
 of organizational process and facilitates
 analysis, validity checks and . . .
 tri-angulation." (Marshall and Rossman,
 1989, PP. 102-103)

Denzin (1978, P. 292) concludes that the logic of tri-angulation uses multiple methods in every

investigation. While Erickson (1986) describes multiple methods (case study, participant observation, ethnographic) as interpretive research.

This method involves careful recording of what happens in the setting by writing field notes and collecting other kinds of documentary evidence; subsequent analytic reflection on the documentary record obtained in the field; and reporting by means of detailed description, using narrative vignettes and direct quotes from interviews as well as by more general description. (Erickson, 1986, P. 121)

Marshall and Rossman (1989) describe two kinds of research base interviews: in-depth and elite. The in-depth interview focuses on the structure created beforehand and the latitude given in answering questions. Usually the interviewer is more conversational, where topics are explored to uncover the interview's perspective. This method is interactive with the purpose of obtaining valuable and reliable information. The researcher needs to convey the concept that ideas, perceptions, and information received are acceptable and valuable. In-depth interviews involve personal interaction, cooperation, and willingness to share all the information. There is however, a possibility of personal bias by the researcher.

Elite interviews focus on people who are influential, prominent, and well informed in the

community. The advantages to gather information from this group of people are: (a) "they can usually provide an overall view of organization" and/or "its relationship to other organizations"; (b) "are able to report on organizations' policies, past history, and future plans"; (c) "more likely to be familiar with legal and financial structure." A disadvantage in interviewing elite persons centers around the structure of the interview. Elite people resent the restrictions of stereotypical questions and straight question/answer sessions. (Marshall and Rossman, 1989)

This study used the elite interview with people who were currently or had been influential, prominent, and well informed about the school district. Elite interviewees resent the restrictions of stereotypical questions; therefore an in-depth conversational structured type interview was used. According to Patton (1990, P. 278) the informal conversational interview relies entirely upon the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction as part of ongoing participant observational field work. Direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiring, revealing the respondent's depth of emotion, the ways they have to organize their worlds, their thoughts about

what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions. (Patton, 1990, P. 24) The combination of in-depth conversational interviewing and elite interviewing techniques allowed the researcher more flexibility with the subjects and made data collection more meaningful.

In the present study, the researcher provided the subjects assurance of anonymity, which allowed the subjects to respond more freely. The subjects were interviewed either in their own offices or at home "to make use of the immediate surroundings and situation to increase the concreteness and immediacy of the interview questions and responses." (Patton, 1990, P. 282)

The strength of the informal conversational approach is that it allows the interviewer/evaluator to be highly responsive to individual differences and situational changes. (Patton, 1990, P. 282)

Validity

"The strength of a qualitative study that aims to explore a problem or describe a setting, a process, a social group, or a pattern of the interaction will be

its validity". (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, P. 145)

The parameters of the setting, the population, and the variables need to be stated by the researcher. One of the variables in this study is the researcher, who becomes the research instrument of the study. There is a need to know the personal biases and the experiences that frame the gathering and interpreting of data by the researcher.

Personal Background of Researcher

The Great Depression caused my father to leave Oregon for employment in the mid-western part of the United States. I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and less than two weeks later was on a train for Chicago, Illinois. Not only was it a time of economic depression, but war in Europe was coming and Japan was expanding its territories in the Pacific. Our family lived on the north side of the city with an easy commute to the center of town by either street car, bus, or elevated train; therefore transportation during the war years was not a problem, even with gas rationing. Chicago was made up of religious and ethnic neighborhoods. Our house was on the edge of Jewish, Swedish, Catholic, German

and Lutheran neighborhoods. The public school I attended was mostly Jewish. While my weekdays were spent in public school, my Saturdays were spent in classes at the Art Institute of Chicago and in exploration of the various museums in the city as well as attending the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. When gas rationing ended, by family began yearly trips west to see my grandparents as well as everything between Chicago and the Oregon Coast.

At the end of eighth grade came the choice of public or private high school. The city public school system was on accreditation probation and, to make sure that I could get to college, I went to a private high school. I also started working at a florist shop during the winter and spring holidays. When I was sixteen, I worked summers for a major department store. After graduation from North Park Academy, I continued to work when I was not in school. I graduated from North Park Junior College and then received my bachelor's degree from Elmhurst College, in Illinois. I was a classroom teacher in the suburban public schools of Chicago as well as the Santa Barbara public schools. I also functioned as the art director for both school districts.

I took up flying and became the first woman to sit on Santa Barbara's Airport Commission. After getting

married, I assisted by husband in restaurant management. Following his death, I worked in the company's main office as coordinator for the food and marketing departments and opened new restaurants for the company. After several years in the main company office, my parents started to encounter a series of increasingly serious health problems. In order to assist them, I left restaurant management, and taught school part-time. I then returned to college, leaving teaching, to complete my master's and doctoral programs. This would also allow me more flexible time to aid and care for my parents. My degree was in a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with majors in educational administration and curriculum, Pacific Northwest history, and women studies. My thesis was on "Case Studies of the Role of the Public School Superintendent in Community Relations in Oregon." The data were collected in interviews with Superintendents after anonymity was given.

As a home owner in California and Oregon I became aware of the problems relating to school finances and taxes. As an older than average female student, my contact with the subjects during my research has been more congenial. My life experiences, (cultural, religious, educational, and work) have given me a wide

perspective. All of this affected what I saw, what I heard, and how I interpreted the data.

The Setting

The unified school district in this study is located in a county whose principal industries are agriculture, lumber, research and development, electronics, and wineries. Agricultural products, and lumber and wood products form the bases for the county's economy (Oregon Blue Book, 1991). The town in which the high school, middle school, and one school is located is considered to be a bedroom community and/or suburb to the county seat. The colleges and the regional hospital are also located in the county seat. The economic base of the town is primarily related to the lumber and wood products industry. The town has a mayor/council with a city administrator form of government. (Oregon Blue Book, 1991) Recreational facilities available to the public are a community park, rodeo grounds, and when not used by the high school, an indoor swimming pool, tennis courts, and an all-weather track.

The people that settled the Willamette Valley after 1840 were mostly farmers with family oriented values.

This life style was described in hand made pamphlets and personal letters sent to potential settlers who would be attracted to an agricultural setting and in turn would reinforce the existing community values. It was not uncommon for one family member to return to the Middle West and personally describe what he had seen to other family members and good friends. Then the other family members and/or the extended family members along with their friends would then go to the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The settlers together with family members, clan members, as well as friends could make the hardships of the journey and the settlement, and the emigrants were then able to survive. (Vaughan/Bowen, 1977)

Most emigrants were from the Mississippi Valley area due to the record flooding of 1836, 1844, and 1849 which had destroyed many farms and fortunes. In an agricultural society, land determined the wealth. The United States Census of 1850 showed that the inhabitants of Oregon were mostly migrants who had traveled across the country in the preceding seven years. About 54 percent of the emigrants were from the Middle West, coming mostly from Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Southern areas of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The regions the settlers indicated that almost 19 percent

came from the Far West; almost 8 percent came from the Middle Atlantic states; about 6 percent came from the South Atlantic states; about 4.6 percent came from foreign countries; and just over 4 percent came from the New England states. The remainder of the settlers came from the Gulf states and Canada, with some settlers listing their birth place as unknown. (Vaughn/Bowen, 1977, P. 184)

With the discovery of gold in California, the emigrants to California and Oregon followed the same route as far as Fort Hall in the present state of Idaho. At that point the trail branched to the southwest toward California and to the northwest toward Oregon. The Oregon Pioneers, saw themselves as conservative, orderly, family-oriented people, while they perceived those going to California as less respectable fortune hunters. That feeling was clearly captured in an Oregon anecdote about a fork in the trail where a pile of gold-bearing quartz marked the road to California; the other road had a sign bearing the words "To California." Those who could read took the trail to Oregon. (Schwantes, 1989, P. 90)

Due to the gold rush in California, the Willamette Valley benefited from the economic boom which especially benefited wheat farmers, operators of the flour mills,

lumbermen and the saw mills owners. The areas along the Columbia River near Portland, and along the Willamette River near Oregon City benefited the most due to access of the ocean shipping vessels.

The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 "recognized the claims established under Oregon's provisional government and set up a system for acquiring additional land." (Schwantes, 1989, P. 103) The Homestead Act of 1862 provided citizen eighteen years of age or older to 320 acres for a single white male and (in Oregon) if married, his wife could hold an additional 320 acres in her own right. This act imposed a racial and ethnic pattern on the pioneer in Oregon, for its provisions excluded blacks, Hawaiians and Native Americans.

During the same time period, missionaries from various Christian denominations were also came to the Oregon Territory to provide religious education to Native Americans and settlers alike. There was also a concern back East about the people who were settling the Willamette Valley. The amount of land involved was in the Land Act of 1850 the size of a southern plantation, and a fear existed that the land holder might resort to slavery as a cheap means of working the farms. In

1859, when Oregon was admitted to the Union, the Oregon constitution had prohibited slavery. (Schwantes, 1989)

In the late 1850s, investors were interested in the area of Coos Bay, along the southern Oregon coast. Coos Bay provided a natural shipping port that had easy access to raw lumber and a shorter shipping distance to San Francisco than either the ports of Portland or those in the Puget Sound area. Investors sought to "establish a sea-oriented traffic in lumber" tying Oregon economically to California, a relationship which was to last into the 1960s. (Robbins, 1988, P. 12)

"Financial transactions too large for Portland banks were handled in San Francisco." (Vaughn/Clark, 1977, P. 283)

Oregonians who traveled east were required to use steamship or overland wagon south to San Francisco and then board the Central Pacific railroad to continue their journey east. Some of the products of Oregon - mainly wheat, lumber and tinned salmon - "were shipped around the Horn, while the great bulk of the exports found their way to California markets, with the results that Oregonians looked south, not east." (Vaughn/Clark, 1977, P. 283) The California markets became Oregon's more important customers.

The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, which joined the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific in Utah. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, P. 30) In 1870, a railroad track was completed from Portland to Salem by the Oregon Central Railroad. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, P. 91) In 1871, the railroad track from Sacramento was nearing Redding, California, but due to general poor economic conditions, work was done only when compelled by the government. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, P. 89) In Oregon that same year, trains operated from Portland to Eugene with stage line completing the route to Redding, California. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, p. 91)

"Oregon was the most isolated of the 37 states." Seventeen years after admission to the Union (in 1876) Oregon was without rail connection with any other state or territory. (Vaughn/Clark, 1977, P. 283) In 1883, the Northern Pacific railroad joined the Great Lakes area and the Puget Sound area. That same year, Portland was also connected to the East by the Northern Pacific coming south from Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. (Vaughn/Mills, 1977, P. 293) Portland also connected to the main line to the East at Spokane by way of the Oregon-Washington Railway. (Schwantes, 1989) In 1887, the rail line between Red Bluff, California and Ashland,

Oregon was completed. (Hofsommer, 1986, P. 5) The main rail line of the Southern Pacific Railroad then went from Portland through Eugene, to Roseburg, to Grant's Pass, through the Siskiyou Mountains, to Dunsmuir, and continued on toward San Francisco, California.

(Hofsommer, 1986, P. 6) Weather during the winter months made train travel through the Siskiyou Mountains slower and at times, impassible due to snow. "Heavy grades and tight curves" did not allow for anticipated increased traffic between the Portland/Willamette Valley area and California. (Hofsommer, 1986, P. 94)

The railroads had used large amounts of timber after the Civil War not only to repair existing rail lines, but to build new ones. Timber had come mostly from the Great Lakes area as timber from the south was considered inferior. The Northwest offered new sources of timber, like the kinds that were grown in the Great Lakes area. "National lumber production had nearly doubled the previous decade." It was only natural that "a broad spectrum of the public was aware by the 1890s that the eastern forests were in trouble." (Robbins, 1988, P. 21)

The railroads had been given Federal land for the building of the railroad lines. Land not used by the railroads was put up for sale. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952)

Railroads avidly promoted the settlement of their huge tracts of western land through sales campaigns both in North America and Europe. Their advertisements appeared in thousands of newspapers, and they distributed tens of thousands of elaborate, often multicolored promotional brochures in English, German, Norwegian and other languages. The Northern Pacific published its own promotional magazine, and its timetables carefully explained to travelers how to acquire a homestead in the new Northwest. Railroads regularly ran homeseekers' specials and hauled immigrant families and their belongings at reduced rates. (Schwantes, 1989, P. 161)

The Southern Pacific also sold prospective settlers special tickets which would permit the train fare to be applied to the purchase price of the land. The immigrant trains became social affairs due to living in close quarters while crossing the country. In 1889, the price wars ceased until 1901 when Southern Pacific Railroad established special spring and fall one-way "colonist fares." This promotion lasted to about 1916 resulting in 794,824 people coming west on the colonist fares. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, P. 88)

Between 1898 and 1914 the western lumber industry became a major element in the nation's economy and provided many of the raw materials needed for building urban

America - East, South, North, and West.
(Nash, 1973, P. 28)

Next to farming, timber was a major economic influence in many cities and towns. The East and Middle West had already exhausted their supply of timber by the turn of the century. Besides turning to the forests in the Pacific Northwest for new product, lumbermen who had been displaced from the Great Lakes area came to the Pacific Northwest. Production increased largely due to the use of machinery and use of railroad extensions to logging camps. "In 1914, lumbering accounted for 38 percent of the value of all manufactures, and for 55 percent of all payrolls." (Nash, 1973, P. 30)

The western migration was now mostly by rail and according to Nash (1973), was very different from earlier waves of settlers. "Between 1895 and 1905 wealthy individual were one prominent group." This group of emigrants was attracted mostly to the larger towns on the Pacific Coast.

They were followed sometime about 1905 by another wave of emigrants, composed to a considerable degree of affluent middle-class people, many of them comfortably situated in the Middle West, who were seeking retirement havens in the Southwest or on the Pacific Coast. (Nash, 1973, P. 12)

These people came with wealth, intelligence, and exhibited above average skill in enterprise, talent, intellect,

culture, and had a civic vision. They also brought their religious values, a belief in temperance and in education, as well as wanting all the refinements of civilized life. (Nash, 1973, P. 13) Many of these values and attributes would fit into the already established communities in Oregon. (Nash, 1973) The people that came from the Middle West were of a high percentage of foreign born. There was also a very high percentage of people who had a least one foreign born parent. "Among the region's foreign born, immigrants from Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark), Great Britain, Canada, and Germany were by far the most numerous." (Schwantes, 1989, P. 187) "Between 1900 and 1910 the population of Oregon increased by 70 percent." While the population "of Portland more than doubled; from 90,000 to 207,000." (Vaughn/Clark, 1977, P. 298)

Between 1905 and 1915, a large portion of the emigrants were composed of well-to-do middle-aged or older retired middle-class people mostly from the Middle West. They come to retire and enjoy a life of leisure. (Nash, 1973)

By the end of 1909, railway track had been laid from Natron (just to the east of Eugene/Springfield) southeast to Oakridge. The Southern Pacific engineers

and operations men as well as the public wanted an alternative southern route going east of the Cascade Mountains. This route could mean "a shorter, faster, less steep and less of a curved route between Portland and California." (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, P. 112) The belief was that with the Cascade route in operation there would be more commercial traffic as well as "avoiding the difficult operation over the Southern Pacific's older Siskiyou Line." (Hofsommer, 1986, P. 42)

Many of the immigrants to the Pacific coast between 1914 and 1919 were drawn to those towns that had jobs created by World War I, such as ship building in Portland. The war stimulated demand for timber and became the areas' important source of income.

Not all of these gains should be attributed to the influence of the war, for the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 made it possible for western lumber to reach Eastern and European ports more cheaply and more quickly than it had ever reached them before.
(Nash, 1973, P. 66)

At the end of the war, (in 1919) brought to an end to the jobs that were war time related as well as an economic depression between 1919 and 1921. The 1920s also brought another group of newcomers to the Pacific Northwest. These people

tended to be of the lower-middle-class background from the Middle West and also

from the South. A sizable number were from Appalachia, drawn by the promise of jobs in the lumber camps and the surrounding towns. (Nash, 1973, P. 76)

Construction was resumed on the Natron Cut-off in September, 1923 by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

(Wilson/Taylor, 1952, and Hofsommer, 1986) In 1926, the Cascade Line or Natron Cut-off was opened first to freight and local traffic and then, in the following year to all through traffic. The Cascade Line is now the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad from Portland through to California. (Wilson/Taylor, 1952, and Hofsommer, 1986)

Lumbering and agriculture continued to be important sources of income in the Pacific Northwest. Like the other areas of the economy there was a fluctuation in prices. The economy in the Pacific Northwest ranged from the war time boom to the postwar depression from 1919 to 1921, prices rose until 1925, and then a small decline and some improvement from 1927 to 1929. During the industrial expansion - 1927 through 1929 - the lumber industry and food processing continued to be the major source of income, with some development in furniture and paper products. There was some diversification by businessmen which was reflected in a significant expansion of clothing manufacturing factories, and printing plants.

(Nash, 1977) "Lumber manufacturing in the United States had been declining steadily since the mid-1920s when home building and commercial construction began to lag." Not unlike other timber and wood products communities of the Northwest, the "statistics for Coos County reveal a gradual decline in production beginning in 1925, a brief recovery in 1929, then a precipitous drop in 1931 and 1932." Starting from 1925, the county's saw mills did not regain production levels until 1937. (Robbins, 1988, P. 78)

The Great Depression from about 1929 until about 1942 was most felt by those people who were in areas that were heavily industrialized and in heavily agricultural areas. In regions with a diversified economic base, the effects were moderate at first, but then become severe after 1931. Postwar (World War I) "lumber production in the United States peaked at 41 billion board feet in 1925, declined to 26 billion feet in 1930, and then plummeted to just over 10 billion feet in 1932." (Robbins, 1988, P. 80)

As the depression continued, jobs were eliminated. The larger companies like major banks sought to consolidate their business at their main offices in the Middle West and the East Coast. (Nash, 1977) "Everywhere

production outstripped demand, even in the face of curtailed operations and periodic shutdowns." (Robbins, 1988, P. 80) The depression was not as severe to those people who lived in the country as to many who lived in the big cities. "Residents of cities and towns were only one generation removed from the family farm; therefore, returning home was always a possibility." (Robbins, 1988, P. 87) By returning home these people could feed themselves, and have a warm dry shelter. In many parts of the Pacific Coast area including the Willamette Valley, "wood for heating and cooking was readily available, and the nearby rivers and ocean provided a variety of fish and seafood." Gardens, fruit and nut trees, and "wild fruits, especially blackberries, were abundant in season and could be preserved easily and cheaply." (Robbins, 1988, P. 87) The only items that needed to be purchased were staples like sugar, flour, salt, coffee and/or tea. When money was very scarce, people resorted to bartering food and services. (Robbins, 1988)

Before World War II, the lumbermen in the Pacific Northwest furnished the nation with more than one half of its softwood, such as Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine (Nash, 1973, P. 199). During the war, the output did

not appreciably increase, but the lumber was produced primarily for the war effort, not for domestic use. Consequently, after the war there was a lack of housing. Schwantes (1989) mentions that an increase in the number of families, the move to suburbia and the lack of home construction during the war were the primary reasons for the high levels of production after the war. This trend continued for about the next 20 years, although production was not quite as high as it was before World War II. "Logging and saw-milling regained their prewar status as Oregon's leading industry as early as 1946." (Schwantes, 1989, P. 339)

Beginning in 1960, forest products employment began to decline; although mill failures and mergers into fewer competing units accounted for some of the reduction, the increased mechanization of mill and logging operations was of far greater consequence. (Robbins, 1988, P. 120)

Through the 1960s and into the early 1970s economic conditions were relatively good for most people. In the timber and wood products industry, there began to be growing concern about the availability of the supply became apparent.

Since the late 1970s, the timber/wood products industry in the Pacific Northwest has experienced a recession. One reason for the decline in the wood

products industry was the emergence of new construction materials. Nash (1973) contends that "expansion in the paper and pulp industry was insufficient to take up the existing slack" (Nash, 1973, P. 237).

Robbins (1988) states that "the departure or failure of so many forest products firms have made the timber communities in the Pacific Northwest even more dependent on and, therefore, vulnerable to the few that remained." (Robbins, 1988, P. 169)

To make matters worse, there has been no social or resource planning for the future, and in few areas has the absence of a broadly based social strategy been more harmful than on Oregon's southern coast. (Robbins, 1988, P. 154)

The is also true of many communities in the Willamette Valley.

In this case study, those people in the community associated with the wood products industry are not unlike those in other timber communities in the Pacific Northwest. They have developed a certain attitude. Money that is hard to come by should not be easily spent, and that everyone should live within their means. The family and the extended members remain very close and supportive of each other. Several generations live within a short distance of each other. Both the attitudes about money and the family are not unlike those of the early

pioneers. (Taxpayer #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5, Administrator #1, #2, #3 and #4)

Another group of people living in the town and its environs work in the neighboring county seat, in occupations that deal with research and development, education, and/or the electronics industry. This group tends to be highly interested in education, as many of their jobs require a high level of education. However, the nation's unsettled economy has affected people in the electronics industry and in research and development. Likewise, people in education had been affected by the economic problems of the state and the community. This group has a central family, but the extended family members are not in the area or even located in the state.

The Population

The interviews were conducted with members of the administrative staff of the school district. These members included the superintendent, and three school principals representing the elementary, middle and secondary schools of the district. The superintendent had been with the school district and in the community for less than five years, having come from another part

of the state. The principals had averaged over 10 years in the school district. School administrators are described by Marshall and Rossman (1989) as being influential, prominent, and/or informed. All interviews were conducted in the office of each administrator. The principals chose early afternoons, while the superintendent chose the latter part of the morning as the best time to meet. At the start of each meeting with an administrator, assurances were given as to their anonymity as well as the anonymity of the school district and the community.

Other interviews were conducted with members of the community who are currently, or had been directly involved with the school district. Some members in the community who were approached, for various reasons, did not wish to be interviewed. The five community members who consented to be interviewed, chose as the best place to meet was at either at their home or at their office. Three community members are currently on philanthropic boards. Three of the community members have and/or had been on the school board and/or finance committee. All five community members chose mostly the early afternoon shortly after the lunch hour as the best time to get together with them. One community member chose the middle

morning as the best time for the interview. At the time of the meeting, each of the community members was promised anonymity. Of the five community members, three community members had lived in the area over thirty years, while the remaining two had lived in the area about ten years.

All the interviews were conducted between March, 1992 through May, 1992. The interviews with the school administrators and the community members ranged from forty-five minutes to just over two hours. The interviews with the administrators lasted from forty-five minutes to over an hour. While the interviews with the community members lasted from an hour and fifteen minutes to over two hours.

A tape recorder was not used during the interview due to the sensitivity of the questions asked. Therefore, according to Patton (1990) notes must become much more thorough and comprehensive. It is also critical to gather as many quotations as possible. When the interviewee has said something that seems particularly important or insightful, it may be necessary to say

I'm afraid I need to stop you at this point so that I can get down exactly what you said, because I don't want to lose" this information. It is important to capture what people say in their own words. (Patton, 1990, P. 352)

Therefore, during all the interviews, information was noted by pen and paper. After each interview, notes were reviewed and recorded in a journal.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

"Just getting people to the school site can only be positive in the long run," stated an administrator of the school district. (Administrator #1) Encouraging people in a community to visit the district's school encourages their becoming familiar with that school district. One way to begin the familiarization process is to encourage the public to attend programs, events, or activities held at the school. The school district has the opportunity to instill visitors with positive attitudes toward education.

The people in the school district consider themselves to be conservative and down to earth. The community sees itself as a small town; some community members refer to the town as a bedroom community to the adjacent county seat. The town is made up mostly of families and extended family members. (Taxpayer #1, #2, and #5)

The people take pride in their town and their work. Many people in the area are or have been involved in the timber/wood products industry are opposed to the many "so called" conservation groups and people who

advocate measures to save the spotted owl and the old growth forests. (Taxpayer #1, #3, and #4) The timber industry sees the trees as a crop to be tended, thinned out as needed, harvested and replanted as would be done to any other crop. (Taxpayer #1 and #4)

The taxpayers relate that the administrators with which the community comes into direct contact with are referred to as being conservative, and involved with their students, the parents and the staff. These administrators are well liked, and are considered to have a positive influence on the students. The parents consider these administrators and their staff approachable. (Taxpayer #1, #2, and #4)

The positive perceptions the community develops appear to center on school-based activities such as student activities, communications, and community involvement.

Student Activities

Student activities include, but are not limited to, athletics, musical programs, school events, and club activities. Community interest in school activities was commented on by all community members interviewed.

There are no commercial entertainments in the town; all commercial entertainment (e.g., movie house, concerts) is in the neighboring city. The community uses the programs, events, and athletics at the school district as a form of entertainment and socialization.

Administrator #1 commented that "people in the community were 'tight with their money', which would also explain the community's interest in school activities."

Taxpayer #3 commented that "school athletics are of great importance to the community." Interest in school athletics begins with seventh and eighth graders participation in after-school sports, which include football, basketball, softball, volleyball, soccer, track, and swimming. In team sports such as football and basketball, all students who want to participate have the opportunity to play and are assured a certain minimum of playing time. The amount of playing time may vary, depending on the sport and the number of participants.

Administrator #1 said,

there are no bench warmers; every student who goes out for a sport is given the opportunity to participate, regardless of the student's current skill level. Those parents who want their child to have more playing time or want only the best skilled students to actively participate make up a small minority of the community.

The community is very interested and supportive of the high school athletic programs. This interest in athletics affects the community's perception of the overall educational program. Administrators #3 stated that "the community views the success of the high school athletics program as a measure of the total educational progress or the quality of the academic program."

Administrators #1 and #2 felt that

if any of the high school athletic programs (e.g., football, basketball) has a winning season, then the public's perception is that the teachers must be doing a good job in the classroom.

High school athletic events are well attended by students, parents, and community members. The local media provides coverage of the events on the radio stations and in the local and area newspapers. Kindred (1990) and other authors have strongly cautioned against too much emphasis on sports programs. What they see is the possibility of loss of control by school authorities in favor of an advocacy group. The pressure would be to replace unsuccessful coaches, to overlook eligibility requirements, and to allow students to neglect their studies in favor of the athletic activities. (Kindred, Bagin, & Gallagher, 1990; Brownell, Gans, & Maroon, 1955) It is suggested that

since athletic teams may be the major image of the school community, it is wise for an administrator to ensure that a team is properly coached and organized, that it has presentable uniforms, and that it follows acceptable rules of conduct and fair play. (Kindred et al., 1990, P. 136)

The superintendent and the principals commented on trying to keep athletics in perspective of the overall educational program.

Secondary school athletics, by their very nature, attract much public attention. As a result they have strong potential as public relations assets or liabilities. Varsity athletic contests attract audiences, sometimes very large audiences, of adult as well as student spectators. (Bortner, 1972, P. 186)

Bortner (1972) discusses how the games represent a certain part of the athletic program and student activities such as band and cheer leading add a pageantry to the event. The pageantry has as emotional appeal for those attending that can carry over in the attitude toward the school or the school district.

The elementary, middle, and high schools have musical programs featuring students performing vocal and/or instrumental compositions. The middle school has three major musical programs during the year. The music performances are held in the school gymnasium. The spring music programs are held in an auditorium at one of various locations in the neighboring town. There are two reasons

for the change of location. The first reason is that the gymnasium cannot accommodate the large number of people who come to the programs (parents, extended family members, and friends). The second reason is that people have complained about the hard seats in the school gymnasium while the auditorium has soft seats. Taxpayer #3 felt that this may due to the number of older community members who attend these programs and do not like to climb into the bleachers.

Administrator #4 reported that the elementary school holds "M & M Day," a day when parents and other adults are invited to the school for music and media. The program consists of singing, playing of musical instruments, and recitations. The media portion includes the arts as well as written material (stories, poems). Taxpayer #2 felt that parents and extended family members are provided another opportunity to visit the schools and to see what takes place there. Administrator #4 believed that the public comes to the school with a positive attitude and then there is an opportunity for the administrators and staff to meet and to talk with the parents and the community members.

Each year the school district holds two events designed especially for parents and grandparents and/or

senior adult neighbors/friends of the students: Parents Day and Grandparents Day. Administrator #4 reported that parents are invited to visit their child's classes on Parents Day to meet the teachers, to see samples of the students work, and to meet other parents.

Grandparents Day involves elementary school students inviting their grandparents to visit them in class. Taxpayer #2 and #3 commented, "Grandparents Day in the schools is very big, because a great number of grandparents, uncles, aunts and other family members live in the area." Students who have no grandparents or grandparents living in the area may adopt a senior neighbor as a grandparent for the day. Many senior citizens seem to enjoy this social activity. (Taxpayer #2)

Administrator #1 felt that: "club activities help students develop good citizenship through service to the community." Taxpayer #3 stated that the clubs at school "provided a diversity of interests" for the students.

Administrator #2 explained that in the middle and in the high school, students become more involved with the community and in the community. At the high school clubs focus on business or forestry. The clubs foster

the development of good citizenship as one of their primary goals as well as academics, competition, and social interaction. Usually the clubs have projects throughout the year to accomplish these goals. One project - "Fall Rake and Run," - students go to the homes of the elderly or infirm in small groups, and quickly rake the leaves into piles and then run away. This community activity does not place the senior citizen in an embarrassing position of feeling obligated to pay or provide a treat (e.g., cookies). Future business students speak about club projects and school events to the local Chamber of Commerce and service clubs. Students also get involved in the Chamber's service projects. A recent project with the Chamber involved checking to see whether the signs in town were in compliance with community code. The signs are ones that are attached to a building, in a building window, free standing near the place of business, and/or painted on the place of business. The size of the sign, the location of the sign and the content of the sign are checked against the town sign code. This provided the students with some understanding of the workings of the town government and the reasoning behind the sign code.

Music groups from the middle and high schools perform at the local retirement homes and at service clubs. Middle school students plant trees on the school grounds and in the community. They obtained the trees either from the local nursery or from one of the local tree growers. The students then make arrangements with the proper authorities for the placement of the trees before digging the holes and planting the trees themselves. (Administrators #2 and #3) The effort the students make to beautify the town was appreciated. (Taxpayers #1, #3, #5)

Communications

Schools that communicate with their external public in some organized way enhance their chances of obtaining better public support, minimizing criticism, learning the values and priorities of a community, and receiving many functional ideas that will help them educate the students better. (Kindred et al., 1990)

Brownell et al. (1955) warns that it is a mistake to assume that the general public understands the objectives, the programs or the achievements of the school. . . . The gap between the school and the community must be bridged. (Brownell et al., 1955, PP. 39-40)

This is accomplished by a public relations program which promotes goodwill. Public relations is considered best done by administrators, teachers, and then students.

Personal contact and publicity are the most successful way of bringing to people the story of the policies of the school.
(Brownell et al, 1955, P. 44)

The publicity and the contacts need to be on a continuous basis least it be construed as propaganda.

The community, observed in this case study receives their information about the school district through local radio stations, the regional television stations, and through the articles in the local and regional newspapers.

Administrator #1 reported that

the local newspaper carries an article each week about something which happens in the school district. The articles are written by the administrators on a rotational basis and cover a wide range of topics about the educational system.

He further related that

the local and the area newspapers also carry articles about the students and events in the school district. Some of the articles are about the various sporting events, the student community service projects (e.g., planting trees), and the district school board business such as bond levies, employee salary negotiations, and/or district elections. The area newspaper employs students from the local high school and other high schools in the surrounding districts to write articles about high school teen life. The articles represent the ideas/views of the individual high school

teen-agers and not necessarily that of their schools. The area newspaper does inform the public that the teen-age writers do not represent the school district, but they represent their own individual viewpoint, derived from the community in which they live and the school they attend. The local radio stations provide information as well about the various events taking place in the school district and the community. The area television stations provide information about the scores of the high school football or basketball teams. Other sports information is about the high schools participation in regional or state play-offs. The other times the community is mentioned is when there is something of interest to the region and/or to the state.

Other publications come directly from the school district in the form of a newsletter or a newspaper. The elementary school produces a newsletter, which is sent home on the last day of the school week. The newsletter provides specific information about events that are to occur in the upcoming week. Included are timely articles related to education, written by the principal. There are samples of student work such as poems and short stories. There was also recognition of students, volunteers, teachers, and staff.

(Administrator #4) A community member referred to this recognition as "pats on the back." (Taxpayer #2)

The high school newspaper is written by the students, who are advised by a school faculty member. These

students are made sensitive to both sides of an issue. They learn that freedom of speech is both a privilege and a responsibility. (Administrator #2)

Personal contact occurs when adults come to the school for activities, events, and programs. The music programs bring members of the adult community together in a non-threatening school event which showcases one area of the curriculum. Parents, grandparents, and extended family members attend special programs to view and share part of the student's life. At the time the adults are in the school with the students, the adults also have an opportunity to observe the students. The adults see how the students dress, the behavior of the students toward their peers, student interaction with teachers and staff, displays of student work and student care of the school site. (Administrator #2) Adults talk with teachers at parent-conferences or at some school activities. While at the school site, adults may talk with school secretaries, the principal, the custodian, and/or volunteers.

Away from the school site, community members talk with school personnel as well as school board members and district bus drivers. The setting for talking about the school district may be informal or formal. Each

of the five community members interviewed stated that

the people of the community discuss school activities, sports and the students in an informal setting such as the local coffee shop, or during athletic events, or in the lobby of the post office or other non-school community related activities.

A formal setting was viewed by Taxpayer #2, #3, and #5 as a talk about what activities, programs or problems in the school district, given by either a member of the school administration, teaching staff, or a member of the student body to a club or an organization. The school district board meetings in the school district office or at one of the schools is another formal setting to find out about the various activities within the school district. Adults also talk with the students to find out their reaction to the various school programs and/or the problems.

Community Involvement

Community involvement manifests itself in the form of direct support for the school district and the use of the school site. Administrator #4 states that

the school district enjoys the contributions of volunteers, parents, and charitable groups. This assistance by volunteers to the school district has to be kept in the perspective of the goals of education.

Adults volunteer many hours to the school district. At the elementary school level, volunteer help may include shelving books in the library, retrieving books for an individual class, getting study materials ready for student use, and/or helping teachers with playground supervision.

He further related that

volunteers are provided with a 'workroom' where they can work on their various projects. Besides making student study materials, the volunteers assemble books that have been written and illustrated by the students. The volunteers work under the direction of the principal to assemble and to print the newsletter.

Furthermore,

volunteers need direction to best serve the students and not interfere with the educational process. The elementary school is aware of the possible situation and has provided a special place for the volunteers to keep their supplies and projects such as teaching aids, that they are working on for one of the teachers. By having a specific work area, the volunteers can have a place to work and to be able to socialize together at the same time. Students then become aware of the organized volunteer support for their school.

Administrator #3 stated that

the middle school has volunteers who help with student study materials, assist at the school science fair, and assist with or teach special interest classes. Special interest activities and classes occur during the week that statewide testing is conducted. After the testing is over for the day, students go to those interest activities and classes that they would like to try, learn more about, or participate in with other students. The activities may include

some form of community service work, such as visiting a retirement home, working on a school or community beautification project, and/or exploring the arts such as wood carving or stain glass construction. A group of students wanted to explore skate boarding as an activity. They went about organizing the activity, and finding an adult volunteer to teach the class. The middle school has an easy time finding volunteers to assist with or teach the special interest classes.

There is a very strong boosters club in the school district. The membership consists mostly of parents who help with the high school sports program. (Taxpayer, #2, and #3) One of the projects by this group was providing materials and manpower to build bleachers at the sports field. (Taxpayer #2, #3, and #4) In addition, the booster club works with the school and the students. Taxpayer #2 further reported that

due to reduced amounts of money going to sports, the school district began charging a fee for each sport that a student wanted to participate in. The district had to raise the fees in the second year. For those students that the fees presented a financial hardship, the booster club provided scholarships from monies it had raised in the community.

The superintendent anticipated that there would be a decline in sports participation by the students. Instead, there was a substantial increase in the number of students participating in sports. (Administrator #1 and #2)

There is an awards banquet which recognizes students who excel in various academic endeavors, achieve in sports, or exemplify good citizenship. The banquet is arranged, supplied, and managed by volunteers, mostly parents and/or family members. (Taxpayer #3, and #4)

Members of the community have provided assistance to the school district and its students by way of specific gifts and scholarships. Most gifts to the school district are a one-time expression. Such gifts have been musical instruments, books for the libraries, or athletic equipment such as an all-weather track, outdoor field lighting, or a swimming pool. Another kind of gift can take the form of scholarships, grants, or prize awards usually awarded to graduating seniors for college use. These monies usually have some kind of requirement attached to them. It may range from a residency requirement in the district, to a certain degree of excellence in grades or athletics. (Taxpayer #2, #3, and #4)

Volunteer help comes from all parts of the community, mainly from parents and extended family members. Recently, there was a concern among volunteer leaders as to whether or not to call those people who were affected by the job losses in the lumber/wood products

industry. A volunteer leader - Taxpayer #2 stated that

one was hesitated to call on people who were unemployed to volunteer, especially when it was to provide food for an activity. What the volunteer leaders found was that in some cases the unemployed people called them, upset, to complain about not being called to provide some of the food. In other cases, the unemployed people called the volunteer leader, volunteering to bring dishes of food or desserts.

It appeared to the volunteer leader "that economics did not seem to play a role in lack of support for activities."

Schools sites are used outside the normal school hours. Groups such as the Scouts meet in the schools, and the village youth groups use the school grounds, the gymnasium and the swimming pool. Adult groups use these same facilities in the evenings. Some adults are in aerobic classes that use the school gymnasiums, and in groups representing various businesses who get together for team sports that use the school gymnasium, and the school grounds. (Administrator #3, and #4) In the past, the scheduling of after-hour use of school facilities did not allow enough time for janitorial service between groups. Should the first group run over in time, there might not be enough time to get the facility ready for the next group.

For example, a youth group using the gymnasium for a project accidentally ran over their time. Clean-up was required, but the next group was scheduled to start immediately after the preceding group; there was no time for the custodian to clean the floor. Should the next group scheduled have been an aerobic class paying for the use of the facility, the situation could have generated a negative attitude toward the school district as a whole. The administrator had to learn how to say no nicely to tight scheduling. (Administrator #4)

The district's school board holds most of its meetings in the newer of the school gymnasiums, to accommodate the many people who come. (Administrator, #3) Community hearings, food drives, blood donation drives, and voting also are held in the school gymnasiums. (Administrator #2 and #3) The administration believed that these uses provide opportunities for the public to come to the school site. (Administrator #1)

Community Issue: Growth

Administrator #1 stated

changes had been taking place in the community. The school district had been experiencing an ever-increasing number of students. There had been increase of about 100 students in the school district over the last year. All the schools in the district were having an increasingly difficult time providing room, under already strained conditions.

The middle school had seen an overall enrollment increase of 8.7 percent (about 30 students) in the last three years. (Administrator #3) In the elementary school there had been a gain of ten students the day after spring break. (Administrator #4)

The administration was asked where the new students were coming from and had a segment of the population left the school district and the area. The superintendent explained

the increase in the number of students was mostly due to transfers from the surrounding larger communities. Several factors had recently accelerated the growth of the area. The town's housing was less expensive than the city adjacent to it. The property taxes were also lower than in the county seat. The town and its environs provided a more rural setting. Some families with school age children moved into the school district to take advantage of the scholarships and grants. In some cases, grown children who had formed new families were staying in the area where their parents lived.

Scholarships, grants and award monies to students in the district have been an expression philanthropic bequests. According to Odendahl (1990) there is an underlying philosophy relating to money and its use. The money which is earned is put back to earn ("seed") more money. "Seed money" is never spent; only the income it generates is spent. The individuals who have made large fortunes prefer to give money to things that they

know something about and feel are safe. Many very wealthy individuals believe in the education they received and the need for education. Education is seen as away for acquiring wealth, while money, its use, is seen as a way of controlling and is not given without strings. In the case of this district, there is a residency requirement for the students in order to be eligible for some of these monies.

A community member (Taxpayer #3) related that her husband was still in the lumber/wood products industry and she had had a retail business until after her children were grown. Her children had attended the schools in the district and the local college and had taken advantage of the grant money to further their education. The children were now married, with families, living in the school district area, but not working in the lumber/wood products industry.

The town lists the lumber/wood products industry as one of its major economic resources. State-wide, lumber mills and wood products plants have been closing, consolidating, and/or reducing their staffs. Economic problems can be seen in the mills and plants in the town. Yet one principal (Administrator #4) stated "that the

economic problem only affected ten families with children at the elementary level."

Electronics companies and research and development companies with offices located in this area have been reducing the number of their employees. Previously, employee reductions and reorganization occurred at company locations outside the area and outside the state. People originally from this area who had gone to other locations in various capacities, have been returning to the area. Real estate companies in the town and the county seat have placed advertisements in the newspapers outside of the area and outside of the state where the reductions were occurring. (Administrator #1, and #2, and Taxpayer #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5) The real estate advertisements emphasized the lower costs of housing in the town, the lower property taxes, and the many benefits for the children of the school district. The advertisements have attracted other people with families who were originally from the area where the layoffs took place. (Administrator #1, and Taxpayer #2, #4, and #5)

Some community members (Taxpayer #1, #2, and #5) saw the town as a bedroom community next to the county seat. Other community members (Taxpayer #3, and #4) would be very upset about the reference to the town.

All of the people interviewed did not want the character of the town to change. Comparing the people of the town and the people from the county set is like comparing opposites. (Taxpayer #1, #2, and #5) One principal (Administrator #4) noted that the people from the community found change difficult. This was shown when parents wanted the same teacher(s) that the oldest child had had for younger children in the family. Parents then had to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the child's placement. People coming from outside the area presented another problem as indicated by the same principal. The parents would want to come into all the classrooms to evaluate the teachers before sending the child to the school. "This does not happen frequently, but often enough--mainly people from out of state." (Administrator #4)

The administration felt that there had not been any part of the population who left the area had affected the school district. Two principals believed that there was a growing population in the area, which did not have children in school. (Administrator #1, #2, and #3)

One area of concern to both the community and the school district appears to be the growing awareness of the existence of the town. The real estate advertisements

to other states and the publicity by area newspapers concerning the benefits of the school district for its students were viewed negatively by all community members and all the school administrators. One community member (Taxpayer #1) commented that the benefits "had been quietly known in the school district." Some community members (Taxpayer #2, #3, and #4) expressed anger that the benefits were made know, resulting in crowding in the schools. Two community members expressed concern about the benefits and the scholarships not being available at a later time for the students who are now entering kindergarten. (Taxpayer #2, and #3) One principal (Administrator #2) blamed the real estate people for touting the benefits to the students in the school district (i.e. scholarships) as opposed to touting the educational program. A principal expressed frustration at the increase of students being very hard on the school site and the education system, especially in light of the reduced timber revenues and Measure 5 which is to reduce local property taxes and for the state to replace the revenues. (Administrator #2)

In the face of increased enrollment, mounting repairs, and decreased revenues, the school district considered submitting a bond issue to the voters. The

school district first sought to find out if the people in the community would favor a bond measure of about eight dollars per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

"The people who favored a proposed bond measure seemed to be aware of the school district's needs."

(Administrator #4) "The people opposing the proposed bond measure indicated that taxes were already too high and the school district needed to manage with the funds that it already had." (Administrator #2) This attitude of staying within a budget prevails among the people who have been in the community for a long period of time. A community member indicated that "the older people, especially the senior citizens, do not want to pay any more in taxes as they just do not have it." (Taxpayer #2)

The school district chose to go ahead with a bond measure, but at a reduced rate. The proposed bond measure would have increased property taxes four dollars per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. This is half of the amount that had been mentioned in the community inquiry. After the defeat of the bond measure, the superintendent felt that the community was indeed reacting to the uncertainty of Measure 5 and the uncertainty of the timber/wood products economy in general. "It was

a matter of the taxpayers not wanting to spend any money, if anything they were looking for lower taxes."

(Administrator #1)

Due to the influx of people into the area, the price of housing and assessed valuation has risen. The community as whole was perceived to want lower taxes.

(Taxpayer #2, #3, and #4) "The older citizens and those out of work can not afford to pay any more more money on property taxes or any other kind of taxes." (Taxpayer

#2) There also was a group of people in the community which saw the need to repair the buildings as long as it didn't cost themn any more money. (Taxpayer #1, #2,

#3, and #4) Taxes were perceived as an emotional issue, with a dividing line between those adults who have

children attending the schools in the school district and those adults who do not have children attending

schools in the school district. (Administrator #1 and

Taxpayer #2) The school board, the budget committee,

and the administration had also been coping with less

timber revenue monies in planning the school district's

budget. In the past, the school district had been able

to rely on a regular supply of timber revenue monies.

(Administrator #1) This has not been true in recent

years. With irregular reduced timber monies, the planned

maintenance and repair work was greatly reduced or put off to a later date. To complicate problems for the school district, there have been strong rumors in the community about monies given to the district being designated for roof repairs and being used for other unnamed purposes. (Taxpayer #2, and #3)

After the bond measure defeat, a school board election was held to fill two vacancies. Only one candidate ran for one vacancy, while two candidates ran for the other vacancy. All the candidates had children in the schools in the district. The unopposed candidate for the school board seat was a woman who was on staff at a college in a neighboring town. The two candidates seeking the other school board seat were men. One of the male candidates was a teacher in another school district while the other candidate was in retail sales and had a high school education. The teacher candidate supported education and educational needs. His opponent, who had "spending less money" and "having better students" as his platform, was elected by a slim margin of 14 votes. (Taxpayer #2, and #3) The Dis-satisfaction Theory (Lutz and Iannacone, 1978) would support that some kind of change could possibly be occurring in the community.

One member of the community talked about the election of the school board members.

A group of long-time residents were concerned about too many educators on the school board. The feeling was that teachers are too idealistic and not very realistic. The educators do not seem to understand the real world of the community because too many of the teachers are viewed as "environmentalists". There was also the feeling that when educators get on the school board and/or committees such as the budget committee, the tendency was to rubber stamp what the teachers want. (Taxpayer #3)

This may explain why the election of the candidates went the way it went resulting in the election of one teacher and one non-teacher.

The school district is now considering another bond measure to submit to the community. Monies are still needed for the repair of the buildings and for additional classroom space.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Perceptions of the Administration

The school administrators' perceptions are that the community's attitudes are influenced through their experiences with the school district. These experiences occur for parents when they come to their child's school. These visits to the school bring the parents into contact with the teachers, the staff, the principal, the school site, and the peers of their child. The administrators spoke of the attitudes developed by adults when they were visiting the school site(s). One principal was aware that the visiting adults were being influenced by the appearance of the school site (cleanliness, state of order and repair). (Administrator #2) This is what the adults without children saw when they came to the school site for non-student activities. This principal was also aware that when adults were on the school site during school hours, attitudes were being developed about the school district. (Administrator #2) The adults without children in the school district were more likely

to perceive the students in the same light when they were in school, while adults with children in the school district are less likely to be critical about the students' dress and general behavior. (Administrator #2)

The administrators were concerned about what happens away from the school site that involved school district students negatively. (Administrator #1, #2, and #3) When negative activities happened, the administrators were aware that they would be questioned about the role of the students involved, the relationship of the school district student to the incident, and the relationship of the school district to all involved. (Administrator #1, and #2)

The community members, especially those adults without children, are more likely to develop their attitudes from the newspapers. (Smith, 1989) The local and area newspapers highlight both the good and the bad in the school district. The administration sees the winning athletic games, winning contests, and doing community service being perceived by the community as the school district doing a good job in education. (Administrator #1, #2, and #3) On the other hand, poor sportsmanship at games, riotous and/or destructive

behavior in public, and criminal acts (speeding, drag racing, drinking, drug usage, theft) by students is perceived by the administration to reflect badly on the school district. The administration feels that the community perceives that the school district is doing something that is not right and does not deserve the support of the taxpayers.

The weekly column in the local newspaper by the school district administrators reaches the parents and non-parents in the school district on a regular basis. (Administrator #1) This is the one vehicle that the administrators feel the school district has to reach the community members, especially those taxpayers without children in the school district. But there appears to be no specific program for getting the adults without school-age children to the school site, or to having them become aware of the happenings in the school district. (Administrator #1)

School activities in this school district involve the students, the parents, extended family members, and some other community members. The administrators found the school programs, events, and sports were very well attended. (Administrator #2, #3, and #4) One principal found that the parents had been very supportive of the

school programs with no real opposition. (Administrator #4) The school district administrators did not appear to know if these activities made a difference in students' dropping out of school and not completing the high school program. One administrator did not seem to see activities as a major consideration for keeping students in school. Yet, the background of that administrator suggested otherwise. This administrator talked about being in a sports program as a child and participating in sports throughout his school years. The administrator said "that the interest in sports kept him in school so he was able to get a sports scholarship to college and after college a coaching job." The administrators believed that student dropouts usually have a negative impact on the community, which in turn the community members then blames the school district for the dropout problem. (Administrator #1, #2, and #3)

The school district faces the problems of change. Change is occurring in the make-up of the community members, in the source of funding for the school district, and in the economics of the area. Administrators see the community members change from a predominately timber/wood products and/or support occupations, to community members whose occupations require high levels

of education. (Research and Development, Educators)
(Administrator #1, #2, and #3) Due to the problems in the lumber/wood products area, school district timber revenue monies has declined in an erratic manner. At the same time the costs of running the school district has been rising, even without the influx of students. (Administrator #1 and #2)

The school district conducted research to determine how the people in the community felt about the job the school district was doing. The people of the community responded by saying that the school district was doing a very positive job. Some of the things mentioned were that the students were doing well in their studies, the teachers were concerned about the children doing well, and that the teachers were dedicated. Almost 80 percent of the people questioned in the survey indicated that education was very important. (Administrator #1 and #2)

Based on the information from the community survey, a bond election was held and it was defeated. The administrators felt that it was more a reaction to the voters "not being able to afford it," than a reaction to the school district. (Administrator #1, #2, #3, and #4)

Perceptions of the Taxpayers

The community has long been made up of mostly people related to the lumber/wood products industry. The families have had a tendency to stay in the area. It is not uncommon for three or four generations to live in the same general area - in some cases the same school district. (Taxpayer #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5) These community members have been influenced in their lifestyle by the lumber/wood products industry. The ups and downs of the lumber/wood products industry have created a conservative approach to everything. One person related the conservative nature to the Depression mentality. It is an attitude of "if it works, don't touch it, wait until it is broken." (Taxpayer #5)

The people in the community have developed a deep concern about money. This deep concern about money is reflected in how the people spend their own money and how they feel the public money should be used. The community wants the schools to provide a good education, but they do not want to pay for a "Cadillac" school district. (Taxpayer #2)

These people center their socialization and entertainment around the family and the activities of

the local school district. (Taxpayer #2, #3, #4, and #5) The observances of attendance at the various school activities, concern over the cost of running the schools, and the awareness of volunteer support to the school district activities gives an indication of how the adults in the community spend their non-working time. (Taxpayer #1, #2, #3, and #4)

The town has the usual stores (grocery, drug), coffee shops, branch banks, gas stations, some specialty shops (video, gift, auto repair), some small churches, and a few real estate offices. The lack of commercial entertainment can be seen by a drive through the town. The community also goes to the county seat to attend the some of the churches there and to avail themselves of some of the commercial entertainment. Attendance at school district activities has been described by the administration and community members as being good. "In order to get a seat at the school programs (i.e. music), you must get there early." (Taxpayer #2) Community members relate the lack of problems in finding people to volunteer their time and services to the school district. (Taxpayers #2, #3, and #4)

In recent years, people from outside the area have been moving into the community. At first it was

primarily people coming from adjacent communities. In the last few years, there have been additional people from outside the state moving into the community. One thing that seems to be common about the people new to the area is that they have children who they expect will be going onto college. (Taxpayer #2, #3, and #4)

Another thing these people have in common is that the parent(s) were employed in jobs in adjoining towns and cities. (Taxpayer #2, #3) The reasons for picking the town and its environs seem to be economically motivated: the lower cost of housing, the lower assessed property tax rate, the increased square footage of a house, and the larger property size than for one at the same price as a comparable one in the county seat, and the benefits available to the students of the district. (Taxpayer #1, #4, and #5) The benefits of certain grants and scholarships available to students of the district are not offered in the adjoining school districts, especially the school district located in the county seat. (Taxpayer #5) The move for the family was considered not a hardship as much as a benefit for the whole family. As a consequence, the outcome for the school district was an increase in enrollment, a greater demand on school

services, and an increased use of school facilities.

(Administrator #1 and Taxpayer #2, #3, #4)

Concern for less timber monies was expressed by community members. (Taxpayer #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5) With property taxes rising, the community has been taking a closer look at how their tax money is spent. Teacher salaries were cited as being too high when the benefits (health, medical and retirement) were taken into account. The "over-paid" teachers were perceived to be mostly environmentalist who were out of touch with the real world. That is why the lumber/wood products community did not want teachers on the school board. When timber monies were more plentiful the community members felt that teacher salaries were not as much of an issue.

(Taxpayer #1 and #3)

Among the major concerns of the school district as perceived by the community, were funding, overcrowding, maintenance, and budget cuts. The school district was considering a bond levy to cover the cost of increasing classroom space and repairing aging buildings. One member in the community observed, during heavy rains the roof leaks and pails were needed to collect rain water.

(Taxpayer #2) This would seem to be a very clear example of the need for money for repairs to the building.

However, "progressive maintenance is not an option," was the way one community member summed up the feelings of the older area residents. (Taxpayer #5) At present the school board has been holding its meetings in the newest of the school gymnasiums. This is due not only to the condition of the building, but to accommodate the large attendance.

Summary

All of the district school administrators were interviewed by the researcher, and their perceptions of the attitudes of the community toward the school district seem to be viewed through a very different perspective than the communities. While exploring the perceptions of administrators and taxpayers of the influence of school based activities on voter behavior, more questions were raised. The school district administrators and teachers are considered to be concerned about the students. Yet, many of the teaching staff were perceived by the community as "environmentalists." The teachers' vocal views on environmental issues are in direct conflict with the community majority and the

major community economic base. The school district board and the administration need to address this issue.

The administration is aware that getting the community members to the activities at the school site(s) can make a difference in how the school district is perceived. Due to the positive attitude of the community toward school activities, as well as large attendance at these functions by the public, the administration may have placed too much weight to local support. They may feel that large attendance at school functions indicates positive support. However, when reviewing the demographics of the community, these school activities appear to be more social in nature due to the lack of commercial social activities in the community. The parents and extended family members are involved in the schools' programs as well as using them as a place of social interaction. The large attendance at school activities may be a case of the family members supporting their children in their endeavors rather than supporting the school district.

The administration is also aware that a sizable segment of the community does not have children in school. However, the administration, it appears, based on the interviews, that there are no active budgeted plans to

reach or to influence the segment of the community of adults without children attending any of the schools in the district.

The community members interviewed feel that the school district should live within their budget. The interviews revealed that community members want to provide a good education but with the present budget. The members of the community feel that since they are paying taxes for the school, they have a right to say how and why the monies are spent and how the schools are managed. The school district may need to become more sensitive about furnishing information to the community about how and why the monies are being spent by the school district. There seems to be some lack of trust by the taxpayers for the handling of school district monies. This might be corrected by a more aggressive budgeted program about the workings of the school district and a more timely method of informing the taxpayers of how and why the monies are spent. Information about how the district manages the budget may be solved by conducting Town Meetings on a regularly scheduled basis to allow the community input to the financial processes of the school district. This forum can also be used to give the

community members familiarization about the school district.

Recommendations for Further Study

The analysis of the data resulted in the generation of the following questions;

1. Is the administration of the school district placing too much emphasis on large attendance at school functions as positive support for the school system?
2. Can school based activities be identified that would bring taxpayers with out children in school to the school site?
3. Are teachers with vocal views on certain issues that are counter to the majority of the taxpayers under-minding the running of the school district?
4. Are school districts with an active, budgeted plan to reach and influence taxpayers without children in the school district, making a difference in the support for the school district?

Recommendations for Replication of This Study

The manner in which the information was obtained in this study was key importance to the quality of the information collected. To facilitate replication of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Almost all of the subjects who participated in the study commented either before the start of the formal part of the interview or after the interview about the researcher's "in-person" approach to gathering information. The general comment was that they could better express themselves talking to an interviewer. The administrators indicated that they receive anywhere from 5 to 15 lengthy questionnaires a month in the mail from students doing research. The time demands of their position do not allow them to respond to their requests. Whereas the community members felt that questionnaires on the whole were an intrusion. They wanted to know how the information was going to be used and if the information was going to make a difference.

In this study, the researcher sent a letter, then immediately followed up with personal telephone calls. The questions were not mailed out, instead the questions were indicated at the time of the telephone call. Based

on the response of the people interviewed, in this area of research, personal contact by telephone and in person is favored over written questionnaires.

2. The researcher should drive through the school district to become familiar with the area before speaking with any of the subjects to be interviewed. This would better enable the researcher to relate and understand the references the individual may make to places in the school district community.

3. The researcher did not use a tape recorder, believing that its use might inhibit or limit what the individual might otherwise say. Active listening, rather than mechanical recording, was employed. In all of the interviews, the researcher "put the pen down" while the individual went into certain detail about a situation in the district. (Patton, 1990)

4. In all interviews the researcher gave each individual a personal assurance that no names or identifying references to them, the school district or the specific location would be used. They were told what general identifications would be used. This assurance allowed the interviewee to speak more freely about their perceptions.

REFERENCES

- Allen, A. L. (1985). Predictors of voting behavior in school district financial referenda. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.
- Bennett, W. J. (1988). American education, making it work; A report to the president and the American people. Department of Education, Washington D.C.
- Bogelan, R. C., & Beklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education--an introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bortner, D. M. (1972). Public relations for public schools. Cambridge: Schenkman.
- Brownell, C. E., Gans, L., & Maroon, T. L. (1955). Public relations in education. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Chicago United & The Roosevelt Center For American Policy Studies (1985). Education as a public good: Reconnecting people to their schools (Working Paper #5). Chicago: Author.
- Danis, R. (July, 1984). Policy changes in local schools: The dissatisfaction theory of democracy. Urban Education, 19(2), 125-144.
- Dechant, E. V. & Smith, H. P. (1977). Psychology in teaching reading. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Prentice Hall
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods. New York; McGraw-Hill.

- Dorsch, N. A. (1989). Voter preferences in the finance of characteristics: A community survey and its implementation in Clinton, Connecticut. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Hofstra University.
- Dost, J. (December, 1968). Reassessment of the school location problem: A multifunctional role for the school in the urban environment. Annals of Regional Science, 2(2), 136-142.
- Dougherty, K. J., & Hammack, F. M. (1990). Education and society - a reader. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Elam, S. M., Rose, L. C., & Gallup, A. M. (September, 1991). The 23rd annual Gallup poll of the Public's attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan 73:41-56.
- Elam, S. M., Rose, L. C., & Gallup, A. M. (September, 1992). The 24th Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public's attitudes toward the Public schools. Phi Delta Kappan 74:41-53.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching. New York: MacMillian
- Garms, W., S. W. Guthrie, & L. Purce. (1978). School finances: The economics and politics of public education. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). Ethnographic and qualitative design in educational research. Orlando: Academic Press/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Griffiths, D. (1966). The school superintendent. New York: Center for Applied Research.

- Hofsommer, D. L., (1986). The Southern Pacific: 1901 - 1985. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Hoopes, J. (1979). Oral history: An introduction for students. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Iannaccone, L. & Lutz, S. W. (1970). Politics, power and policy: The governing of local school districts. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.
- Jaffe, C. I. (1990). An ethnography of a rural elementary school district containing three types of minority students. Unpublished thesis, Oregon State University.
- Kindred, L. W., Bagen, D., & Gallagher, D. R. (1990). The school and community relations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kirk, J., & Miller, M. L. (1986). Reliability and validity in qualitative research. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newberry Park, CA: Sage.
- Lutz, F. W., & Iannaccone, L. (1978). Public participation in local schools; The dissatisfaction theory of American democracy. Lexington, MASS: Lexington Books, D.C.Heath.
- Lutz, F. W., & Iannaccone, L. (1969). Understanding educationl organizations: A field study approach. Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (1989). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Nash, G. D. (1973). The American West in the twentieth century: A short history of an urban oasis.
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Odendahl, T. (1990). Charity begins at home: Generosity and self-Interest among the philanthropic elite.
New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Oregon blue book. (1991). Salem, OR: Secretary of State.

Oregon Department of Education. (1989). Elementary and secondary education: A report to the 65th legislative assembly. Salem, Or: Author.

Oregon Department of Education. (1991). Oregon laws. Salem, OR: Author.

Oregon Department of Education. (1991). Oregon school directory 1991-1992. Salem, OR: Author.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods, 2nd Ed. Newbury Park, Ca.: Sage

Robbins, W. G. (1988). Hard times in paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon, 1850-1986. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Russell, D. H. (1956). Children's Thinking. Boston, Mass.: Ginn Publishers.

Sandrack, J. W. (1983). Life-span development, 3rd Ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers.

Schwantes, C. A. (1989). The Pacific Northwest: An interpretive history. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.

- Smith, M. D. (1989). Voter behavior of older adults in school bond referendums. Unpublished doctoral thesis, East Texas State University.
- Solso, R. L. (1988). Cognitive psychology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Stake, R. E. (1988). Case study methods in educational research: Seeking sweet water. In R. M. Saeger (Ed.), Complementary methods for research in education (PP. 253-300). Washington, DC: American Education Research Association.
- Swink, E. C. (1987). Characteristics of schools with effective home-school-community relations. Unpublished doctoral thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University.
- Vaughan, T. (1975). The Western Shore: Oregon country essays honoring the American Revolution. Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society
- Wang, L. V., & Lutz, F. W. (November, 1989). The Dissat-Factor: Recent discoveries in the Dissatisfaction theory. Educational Administration Quarterly, 25(4), 358-376.
- Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (December, 1993). Building School communities: an experience - based model. Phi Delta Kappan 75 (4), 324-328.
- Wilson, N. C., & Taylor, F.J. (1952). Southern Pacific: The roaring story of a fighting railroad. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.