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ARIZONA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND READING:  
BACKGROUNDS, OPINIONS, PRACTICES, AND WORKING CONDITIONS

*The University of Arizona*

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ARIZONA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND READING:  
BACKGROUNDS, OPINIONS, PRACTICES, AND WORKING CONDITIONS

by

Carol Anne Pierson

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF READING

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read  
the dissertation prepared by Carol Anne Pierson

entitled Arizona School Superintendents and Reading: Backgrounds,  
Opinions, Practices, and Working Conditions

and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement  
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SIGNED: Carol Anne Pierson

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the educational and professional backgrounds, opinions, practices, and working conditions of Arizona school superintendents with respect to their districts' reading programs.

The questions investigated for this study were: 1) What are the educational, professional and reading backgrounds of Arizona school superintendents? 2) What professional organizations and publications appear to be most influential for Arizona school superintendents? 3) What are the expressed important tasks of Arizona school superintendents? 4) Who advises Arizona school superintendents about reading matters? 5) What criteria do Arizona school superintendents use to select advisors in the area of reading? 6) What methods do Arizona school superintendents use to evaluate their reading programs? 7) What are the opinions of Arizona school superintendents regarding the effectiveness of their district reading programs? 8) What solutions to the reading problems of their districts do Arizona school superintendents propose? 9) What negative factors do Arizona school superintendents believe influence their districts' reading programs?

A stratified, randomized sample of (36) Arizona school superintendents was selected to participate in the study. Twenty-nine superintendents actually participated.

Superintendents tended to hold advanced degrees, and a majority of them had earned doctorates. Their advanced degrees were usually in education administration, while their undergraduate degrees were

very diverse. They tended to have few if any hours in reading courses. They did not read journals devoted to reading, nor did they attend reading conferences. Their reading advisors did not tend to be reading specialists, although superintendents stated that they valued "reading knowledge" and "reading experience" in their advisors. The solutions to superintendents' reading program difficulties tended to be external solutions, rather than solutions which could be implemented by themselves. A variety of other findings are reported in the study.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Rudolph Flesch published his book in 1955, yet we are still asking Why Johnny Can't Read. The amount of money spent on education since 1955 steadily increased until the public recently began to demand results for the dollars spent. News reports often tell stories of failed bond and budget override issues and declining test scores. Accountability, the competency movement, and the back-to-the-basics movement are critical issues with educators. States are adopting minimum standards and ways of testing them. Arguments continue over the definitions, the methods, and the materials which will produce student behaviors to satisfy the accountability-minded public.

The superintendent of schools is the chief school officer and, as such, is traditionally held accountable for the successes and failures of the school district. It is possible that no one person should be held accountable for a system which has such a complex task as educating every unique child who comes to it, especially when it is not the function of the superintendent to participate directly in the instruction of children. Nonetheless, it is the superintendent who receives the telephone calls from the school board and the public when the newspaper publishes a report of yet another year of declining SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) scores. It is the superintendent who must

appear before voters to justify the request for increased taxes. It is the superintendent who must present the results of each year's achievement testing and who must answer the questions of anyone who feels the testing has exposed flaws in the district's performance. Should a graduate bring an educational malpractice suit against the school district because s/he believes s/he graduated with insufficient skills, the superintendent is sure to be named in the suit.

The public has a right to demand a quality education for children at a reasonable price. If the cost of education is increasing, but test scores are reportedly declining, the public would seem to have a legitimate complaint that it may not be getting its money's worth. It is unfair to blame the superintendent for all failures since there is no simple relationship between spending more money and graduating better students. Children who come to the school in kindergarten already have unique five-year histories and backgrounds; transfer students have even longer histories. Additional inhibiting factors are that the community has many views of what education should be and do, and there is no one proven way of educating every child. What, then is reasonable for the public to expect, and what reasonably can be expected of the superintendent?

Carlson (1972) believes strong administrative leadership and administrative expertise in curriculum and teaching produce instructional excellence. If expert instruction, adaptable to individual needs, is available to all children who are willing to partake of it, the school has done the most it can do. The superintendent, as chief school officer, is then responsible for that instructional excellence.



Wynne (1972) would add that, along with being responsible for instructional excellence, the superintendent is also responsible for keeping the public informed concerning the condition of the instructional excellence at all times.

### Rationale for the Study

There is much traditional support for charging the superintendent with the responsibility of ensuring instructional excellence. The American Association of School Administrators (1971), p. 701, states,

Leadership in the development of the curriculum is the prime responsibility of the superintendent. Operation of a school system without strong leadership in curriculum is potentially a detriment to the quality of education each child receives.

The Arizona School Board Association advises its members to hire a superintendent capable of administering and supervising the entire educational program, to include methods of teaching, development, coordination, maintenance and evaluation. The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association (1965, p. 1) states,

The occupant of this position (superintendent of schools), more than any other single person in the community, influences the shape of public education.

Neagley et al. (1969, p. 54) note,

...his (the superintendent's) attitudes and actions in the top administrative post profoundly influence teaching methods and resources. In all respects he sets the tone for district philosophy and practice.

Even though superintendents are not directly involved in teaching children, they are, nonetheless, responsible for what it is they

require principals and teachers to do. As Schutz (1977, p. 1) states,

In any organization, the person at the top sets the tone. When the school leader is frightened, uncertain, domineering, incompetent, or irresponsible, the teachers and the school reflect these traits.

Conner and Ellena (1967, p. 313), reflecting the beliefs of most administration textbook authors, emphatically state,

Responsibility for the total school program remains with the superintendent acting for the school board.

Superintendents are given general goals for education by school boards and must then devise a system of instructional excellence to implement the goals.

Given this role for superintendents, it is appropriate to conduct an investigation into the backgrounds, opinions, practices, and working conditions of superintendents to determine if they are prepared to accept the role and if they are functioning in this role. However, the scope of the total instructional program is too broad to examine, and therefore, for the purpose of this study, the reading program has been chosen as a representative sample of the total instructional program. As Hunter (1975, p. 35) points out,

In educational accomplishment, reading maintains the position as one of the most critical indicators of success. We can argue whether or not this should be so, but the fact remains that it is so.

Parents are quick to praise or condemn the school, and often the teacher as well, according to their perception of their child's success in learning to read. In Arizona, the yearly administration of the California Achievement Test produces many scores

besides reading, but the news reports of the results seldom fail to include a comparison of Arizona reading scores to the rest of the nation as the lead item in the article. Carlson (1972) acknowledges that reading can be an explosive issue and a political issue, as well. In a society which values literacy and in which technology is advancing at an accelerated pace, the likelihood that high school graduates will face increased reading demands is great.

It is important to look at the way in which superintendents deal with reading in their districts. It is time to discover what they believe and how they view their responsibilities and performances.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify the educational and professional backgrounds, opinions, practices, and working conditions of Arizona school superintendents with respect to their district's reading program.

#### Questions Investigated

The following questions provided direction for the study:

1. What are the educational, professional, and reading backgrounds of Arizona school superintendents?
2. What professional organizations and publications appear to be most influential for Arizona school superintendents?
3. What are the expressed important tasks of Arizona school superintendents?

4. Who advises Arizona school superintendents about reading matters?
5. What criteria do Arizona school superintendents use to select advisors in the area of reading?
6. What methods do Arizona school superintendents use to evaluate their reading programs?
7. What are the opinions of Arizona school superintendents regarding the effectiveness of their district reading programs?
8. What solutions to the reading problems of their districts do Arizona school superintendents propose?
9. What negative factors do Arizona school superintendents believe influence their districts' reading programs?

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions applied to the study of the problem:

1. Arizona school superintendents are a valid source of data.
2. On the basis of a review by practicing superintendents, the questionnaire and interview questions used in this study for the collection of data were considered valid for the purpose of this study.
3. The size and stratification of the sample used in this study were sufficient to be representative of the population.

### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations applied to this study:

1. The study was limited to chief school officers in Arizona who hold an Arizona superintendent's certificate.
2. The free responses of the subjects on the written portion of the survey may have been subject to misclassification by the researcher.
3. The interview format of the oral portion of the survey was limited by the degree to which the researcher was consistent and unbiased in orally questioning the subjects.
4. Self-perception and recall by the subjects may not have been precise.

### Definition of Terms

#### 1. School Superintendent

This term is used to designate the chief school officer of a school district or districts in Arizona, and the holder of a valid Arizona superintendent's certificate.

#### 2. Instructional Excellence

This term is used to describe a flexible combination of objectives, methods, and materials which succeed in accomplishing the goals of instruction established by a school district.

#### 3. Accountability

This term is used to mean:

...systems or arrangements that supply the general public, as well as schoolmen, with accurate information about school output performance...(Wynne, 1972, p. ix).

#### 4. Competency Movement

This term is used to mean the internal and external pressures exerted on schools to improve instruction in basic subjects, such as reading.

#### 5. Reading Program

This term includes the personnel, materials, methods, and systems involved directly and indirectly in the teaching or remediating of reading in any subject or classroom in the school district.

#### 6. Coterminus

This term is used to describe the elementary and high school attendance areas of a school district which cover the exact same geographical area.

### Organization of Remaining Chapters

A review of the literature which has been organized into three categories is presented in Chapter 2. The categories include the following:

1. Administrators and Reading.
2. Roles and Functions of the Superintendent.
3. Accountability and Competency.

The research procedures used in this study are described in Chapter 3. Descriptions of the sample and the survey instruments are also included in Chapter 3.

The findings of the research are presented in Chapter 4. The conclusions, implications of the findings, and recommendations for further research are discussed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

A computer search of the ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts, and Psychological Abstracts data bases was conducted, as well as a search of the University of Arizona Library's holdings under the topic of superintendents. Three categories of literature were identified: 1) administrators and reading, 2) roles and functions of the superintendent, and 3) accountability and competency. In general, the literature in these areas is characterized by description and opinion, as opposed to research-based data, and is made up largely of textbooks on the subject of the superintendency.

#### Administrators and Reading

On this topic, most authors describe building administrators or principals, and superintendents are infrequently mentioned; however, there is a tone of administrative responsibility throughout these references which touches on the educational leadership responsibilities of all administrators. Banks (1981) establishes a line and staff organization, or flow of authority, which establishes the superintendent as the supervisor of the district reading program and the one responsible for planning, organizing, hiring, purchasing, coordinating, and evaluating the total reading program. She believes the superintendent should appropriately delegate the actual tasks involved in



teaching reading. Others, such as Fitzgerald (1977) believe the superintendent's time is taken up with business matters and community relations. He urges district reading personnel to seize the opportunity to be the reading experts, guiding and advising the superintendent in reading matters.

Carlson's (1972) book is devoted to informing administrators about their roles and responsibilities in the reading program, about strategies for improving reading instruction, about innovative reading practices, and about the importance of reading research. While Carlson assigns ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the reading program to the superintendent, he believes that the superintendent must rely heavily upon the expertise of building administrators and reading teachers. Strang (1965) also assigns the responsibility for the reading program to the superintendent, but speaks mainly to building principals. Her belief that reading programs reflect the administrator's understanding of the field could easily apply to the superintendent if one acknowledges that the superintendent is ultimately responsible for everything in the school district. However, the reading program would more closely reflect the building administrator's interpretation of district goals and objectives than the superintendent's, especially in districts where the superintendent's knowledge of reading is dependent upon input from other personnel. In another book about administrators and reading Strang (1960) intends to teach primarily building administrators about the details of reading programs and instruction. However, her summary advice to administrators

if taken to heart by superintendents, would greatly improve their understanding and sensitivities.

Strang (1965) and Harker (1978) stress that reading is a learning vehicle which pervades and influences the entire curriculum. They urge administrative understanding, support, and sensitivity as the keys to successful reading instruction. Harker cautions administrators not to become too distant from the reading instruction; he believes that administrators slip into the habit of asking only for results and may tend to neglect the process of instruction, which leads to a breakdown of effective evaluation of the reading programs.

A study by Haggard and Meeks (1979) attempted to determine mainly what administrators know about reading specialists and programs, how much money their districts spend on reading, and the number of hours they have in reading. Of the one hundred administrators surveyed, only six were superintendents, which may account for the lack of discussion of the superintendents' responses in the conclusions.

Usova's study supports Harker's position. Usova (1979) found that among secondary principals, reading specialists, and content-area teachers, the more positive attitudes toward teaching reading were found among those groups with a greater amount of knowledge and understanding of reading.

E. B. Fech is a superintendent who was encouraged, during a reading workshop, to visit classrooms and observe reading instruction. Fech and Micetich (1977) analyzed what principals should know and then devised an in-service program to teach them. Learning theory, knowledge

of the reading process, different approaches to teaching reading, reading placement, reading disabilities, and reading diagnosis and remediation comprise the minimal knowledge principals should have if reading instruction is to be more effective. If their recommendations were carried out, then superintendents, who tend to serve as principals earlier in their careers, would be far more knowledgeable about reading.

### Roles and Functions of Superintendents

Authors of textbooks, written specifically to discuss the superintendency, tend to place the responsibility for instructional excellence on the shoulders of the superintendent (Neagley et al. 1969, and Campbell et al. 1970). Educational leadership is a primary role mentioned in all textbooks. Conner (1967) believes the superintendent acts for the school board by translating the board members' demands into the school program.

Burbank (1968), Clabaugh (1966), Schutz (1977), and Wilson (1960) provide comprehensive coverage of the variety of roles and tasks of the superintendent, giving the role of instructional leader a high priority, and calling for diligence and high standards in all tasks performed. Griffiths (1966) provides some insight into the evolution of the superintendency from a clerk to the chief executive of a highly complex and diverse organization.

Bogue and Saunders (1976) are concerned that superintendents often don't have an adequate knowledge base for what is expected of them. They feel that teaching in itself or being a principal cannot

adequately prepare a superintendent for the job. They offer sound advice when they suggest that action must be guided by knowledge and a "carefully constructed and clearly understood value framework."

Halpin (1966) stresses the importance of the superintendent's working situations in influencing their leadership effectiveness. Leu and Rudman's (1963) book reflects the trend of preparing superintendents as generalists more than specialists, but with one administrative specialty. Unfortunately, curriculum, learning, or reading are not consistently recommended as desirable specialties, which may account for still another factor which affects leadership effectiveness.

Merrow, Foster, and Estes (1974), on the other hand, recommends a more substantial specialty such as business management, abandoning administrative specialties as too shallow. Moore (1957) reports of the Kellogg studies, concluding that the superintendent should be the ultimate educator. These two authors highlight the continuing debate over whether the superintendent, in fact, must be an authority on educational matters, or just an effective manager.

The American Association of School Administrators (1960, 1963, and 1971) and the Educational Policies Commission (1965) clearly indicate that a vast majority of superintendents are educators, usually having had experience as both teachers and principals prior to assuming a superintendency. Additionally, the certificate requirements across the nation (Woelner, 1981) indicate that superintendents

generally are required to hold valid teaching credentials. Neither the American Association of School Administrators' recommendations or certification requirements, though, urge superintendents to have a reading specialty, nor do most textbooks on the superintendency include the importance of the issues involved in the success or failure of a district's reading program. Thomas and Simpson (1979) paint a bleak picture when they report that only twenty-eight states require teachers to take reading courses for certification.

#### Accountability and Competency

Neill (1978) describes the competency movement in detail in her critical issues report for the American Association of School Administrators. She cites the factors of growing public disenchantment with education, such as declining test scores and failure of bond issues, and urges administrators to lead the competency movement rather than be manipulated by it. Grant and Lind (1979) offer data in support of the declining test scores. Wynne (1972) warns that administrators frequently reject the idea that they are held accountable, and they tend to reject evaluative information (he calls it "output information") because they would then have to re-evaluate the instructional program and possibly make changes. However, Gronlund (1974) makes it clear that the public and the school boards do hold the superintendent accountable, and the best course of action is to establish the flow of responsibility, letting the superintendent off the hook when someone farther down the line fails to hold up his/her end.

There are those who believe that the public still has faith in public education. The poll conducted by Gallup (1981) for the Phi Delta Kappan indicates that the public schools are still receiving high grades from the public on quality and effectiveness, but there is the nagging contradiction of a steady increase in opposition to raising taxes to fund schools. Ravitch (1981) takes the position that the Gallup poll really indicates how much of an effect school policy has on student behavior and achievement. She concludes that schools do have the power to affect changes and that educational leaders should be re-examining what schools do.

#### Summary

The literature reviewed dealt with three topics: administrators and reading, roles and functions of the superintendents, and accountability and competency.

Few authors deal with the topic of superintendents and reading, preferring to highlight the principal, leading to the possible conclusion that most authors believe the real responsibility lies with personnel other than the superintendent. However, the understandings and sympathies of principals with regard to reading instruction may also be urged upon superintendents, who are likely to have been principals before they become superintendents. No author exempted the superintendent from responsibility in the quality of the

district's reading program, and some authors acknowledged that superintendents traditionally were not trained to assume more leadership in reading.

As for roles and functions of superintendents, the literature clearly indicates that they are assigned the responsibility for instructional excellence. Unfortunately, only a few authors emphasize the importance of adequate knowledge and training before assigning superintendents this task.

Finally, it is clear that the public is demanding excellent education at a minimal cost. Whether or not this is fair for the public to demand, superintendents are, nonetheless, charged with that task, and their success or failure dictates how long they will remain in a school district. The more control they take of the process, the better are their chances of survival.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROCEDURES

The procedures used in this study are described in the following sections: Introduction, The Population and Sample, Description of the Sample, Development of Survey Instruments, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

#### Introduction

The study was designed to determine the educational, professional, and reading backgrounds and beliefs of Arizona school superintendents. The study further sought to ascertain how Arizona superintendents prioritize their tasks, which factors inhibit their performance, how they select advisors, what priorities they set for reading instruction, and how their working situations influence what choices they make about reading and reading instruction.

#### The Population and Sample

The Arizona Department of Education reported that at the time this study was conducted, there were 229 school districts in the state. Of those districts, 153 were headed by an Arizona certified superintendent. The remaining 76 districts fell into one of the following categories: non-operating (3); transported students to another district (9); headed by principals (21); headed by head



teachers (38); headed by district managers, administrators, or business managers (3); or the chief executive's position was presently vacant (2).

The population of 153 districts headed by superintendents consisted of 75 unified districts, 14 high school districts, and 56 elementary school districts. Seven of the districts identified as unified districts were actually two districts, elementary and high school, headed by one superintendent and one board of trustees. These seven districts differed from unified districts in that the two districts were not coterminous (having exactly the same boundaries for attendance), although they were administered as one district. This situation arises when there is an elementary school district on government property (i.e., military and Indian reservations) and one on adjacent non-government property and both elementary schools send students to a common high school. One other district identified as a unified district contained two districts and had two school boards; however, the districts were administered by one superintendent, resulting in more unity of philosophy and policy than generally found in separate districts. Combining the eight districts discussed above resulted in an actual population of 145 districts.

A stratified, randomized sample of approximately 25 percent (for a total of 36 school districts) was selected from each of the three types of school districts. The sample was chosen to represent the variations in size of the school districts within each type, as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Description of the Sample.

Type of District	Number of Schools in District	Districts Headed by Arizona Supts.	Total Operating in State	No. in Sample
Unified	2-3	36	37	9
Unified	4-5	28	28	6
Unified	10-14	7	7	2
Unified	21 or 98	2	2	1
Unified	46 or 98	2	2	1
Elementary	1	23	80	6
Elementary	2-4	19	21	4
Elementary	4-9	7	7	1
Elementary	14 or 18	3	3	1
Elementary	26 or 32	4	4	1
High School	1	8	10	2
High School	2-4	4	4	1
High School	10 or 12	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals		145	207	36

The districts were numbered randomly within their type and size designation, and a table of random numbers was used to select the sample from within those categories. The 25 percent sample selected within each type of district included at least one district in each size category, resulting in slight deviations from the 25 percent. It should be noted that this study was endorsed by the Arizona Department of Education, and, as a result, more superintendents were expected to participate in the study than actually participated. For this reason, and because of the financial, travel, and time considerations

of conducting personal interviews, it was assumed that sampling 25 percent of Arizona school superintendents would be sufficient to ensure an actual sample rate of 15-20 percent, because it was expected that at least 75 percent of those sampled would respond.

#### Description of the Sample

Of the 36 superintendents selected in the sample, 29 superintendents agreed to participate. This represents a participation rate of 80.5 percent. Twenty-one superintendents agreed to fill in the questionnaire and participate in the interview. Seven superintendents agreed only to be interviewed, and one superintendent agreed only to fill in the questionnaire. The seven superintendents not participating and their reasons for not participating are described on the following page (Table 2).

Follow-up procedures were employed to ensure a maximum response. Several Questionnaires contained incomplete sections, due mainly to specific objections of individual superintendents to filling out those sections. Incomplete or missing data in any section of the questionnaire did not affect the analysis of the other sections of the questionnaire.

Data were collected from 29 superintendents between April 20 and May 12, 1982. Twenty-one superintendents returned the questionnaire and participated in the interview. One superintendent returned the questionnaire but did not participate in the interview.

Table 2. Reasons for not Participating.

Superintendent	Type of District	# of Schools	Reason
1	Unified	2-3	District has too many problems
2	Unified	2-3	Form returned - explanation was not offered
3	Unified	4-5	Superintendent too busy
4	Elementary	1	No longer had a superintendent
5	Elementary	1	No longer had a superintendent
6	Elementary	2-4	Superintendent refused to participate in any University study
7	High School	10 or 12	Superintendent too busy

Seven superintendents participated in the interview but did not fill out the questionnaire. Tables 3 and 4 show the superintendents who participated in the study.

Several superintendents left various sections of the questionnaire blank. At the time of the interview they were asked why the sections were left blank. Their most frequent response was that the blank sections were too time-consuming to complete. A few superintendents indicated they did not have access to certain

Table 3. Participation in the Study.

Type of District	Number of Schools in the District	Number in the Sample	Completing Both Instruments	Completing Questionnaire only	Completing Interview Only	Not Participating	Percent of Sample Participating
Unified	2-3	9	5	0	2	2	77.7
Unified	4-5	6	5	0	0	1	83.3
Unified	10-14	2	1	0	1	0	100.0
Unified	21 or 25	1	1	0	0	0	100.0
Unified	46 or 98	1	0	0	1	0	100.0
TOTAL - Unified		19	12	0	4	3	84.2
Elementary	1	6	4	0	1	1	83.3
Elementary	2-4	4	1	1	1	1	75.0
Elementary	4-9	1	1	0	0	0	100.0
Elementary	14 or 18	1	1	0	0	0	100.0
Elementary	26 or 32	1	1	0	0	0	100.0
TOTAL - Elementary		13	8	1	2	2	84.6
High School		2	1	0	0	1	50.0
High School		1	1	0	0	0	100.0
High School		1	0	0	0	1	0.0
TOTAL - High School		<u>4</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>50.0</u>
TOTAL - All Schools		36	22	2	6	7	80.6

Table 4. Participation by County.

County	Number in Population	Number in Sample	Number Participating	Completing Questionnaire	Completing Interview
Apache	7	1	0	0	0
Cochise	11	3	3	2	3
Coconino	6	0	0	0	0
Gila	6	1	0	0	0
Graham	5	2	2	2	2
Greenley	3	1	1	0	1
Maricopa	42	13	12	11	12
Mohave	6	1	0	0	0
Navajo	9	1	0	0	0
Pima	10	4	4	3	3
Pinal	16	6	5	3	5
Santa Cruz	3	1	1	1	1
Yavapai	10	2	1	1	1
Yuma	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	145	36	29	23	28

information or did not wish to reveal that information. All data were reported with the numbers of participants who filled out questionnaires and participated in the interview.

Five of the six superintendents who participated only in the interview cited a lack of time as their reason for not completing the questionnaires. They stated that they frequently turned down requests to participate in studies because of their crowded schedules. They did, however, agree to participate in the interview because of the more personal format. The sixth superintendent in this group agreed to participate in the interview after a friend of his urged him to. The researcher asked others to help convince the reluctant superintendents to participate, but to no avail.

The data gathered from the interview instrument were intended to be the main source of information to be used to answer the "Questions Investigated." The questionnaire was intended to be an advance organizer for superintendents before the interview, as well as a source of general trends and characteristics of superintendents. Information from the questionnaire was intended to add to or expand the interview data. The two sets of data do not represent precisely the same superintendents; however, it was believed that the questionnaire data still adequately represented the total group of superintendents who participated in the study, and the questionnaire data were included as additional information as the "Questions Investigated" were answered.

Table 5 shows the ages of the 19 superintendents responding to that item of the questionnaire.

Table 5. Ages of Superintendents Participating in the Study.

Age	Number of Superintendents
55	1
53	1
52	3
51	1
50	1
49	3
47	1
46	1
45	1
43	3
39	2
35	1 Mean 46.9

Superintendents ages ranged from 55 to 35 and the mean age was 46.9. No one age seemed to be common to most superintendents.

All superintendents who participated in the study were male. All superintendents in the original sample were also male.

Table 6 shows the categories of district enrollment displayed by type and size for the 21 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire. The majority (76 percent) of districts in this sample had under 5,000 students. No common size of district was evident.



Table 6. District Enrollment.

Enrollment Category	Number of Superintendents
≤20,000 students	2
≤10,000 students	3
≤ 5,000 students	9
≤ 1,000 students	4
≤ 300 students	3

#### Development of Survey Instruments

A survey of the literature, informal discussions with teachers and administrators, and discussions with college professors who have had dialogue with school district superintendents, resulted in the identification of areas of concern about school district reading programs over which the superintendent may have some influence. Factors which might affect a superintendent's knowledge, practices, and/or commitments regarding reading were also identified.

Once the areas of concern and factors were identified, they were translated into survey items. The items were then divided into 2 groups which, 1) could be answered more easily in a written format or, 2) could be answered more easily in an interview format. These original items were then sent to Dr. James McAllister and Mr. Edward Neary of the Arizona School Administrators, Inc., and Dr. Thomas Reno, Deputy State Superintendent of Instruction, for their

criticisms, additions, and/or deletions. Revisions were made in several items as the result of their comments. Dr. Reno expressed an interest in reviewing the results of the study and agreed to write a letter encouraging participation in the study (Appendix A).

Both instruments were then reviewed by three superintendents in the local area who had not been selected in the sample. The three superintendents represented three different types and sizes of districts. These superintendents were contacted by telephone, and the design and purpose of the study were outlined. They were asked to critique the items on both instruments for appropriateness, completeness, clarity, response format, and the likelihood that superintendents might find items offensive or difficult to complete. Both instruments were mailed to the three superintendents. Appointments were then made with each superintendent to discuss the instruments. Final revisions were then made in the survey instruments (Appendix B and C).

A cover letter to be mailed with each questionnaire had been developed. This letter was also sent to the three superintendents for their evaluation. Their advice to personalize and expand this letter was unanimous. The cover letter actually used (Appendix D) reflected their suggestions.

#### Data Collection

The questionnaires, along with the cover letters and Dr. Reno's letter, were mailed to distant locations and were hand-delivered to district offices which were more centrally located.

Within a few days, telephone calls were made to each district to request an appointment with the superintendent once he had completed the questionnaire. The data collection procedure then became a matter of the investigator appearing at the time of the appointment, collecting the questionnaire, and discussing selected items on the questionnaire. Interview responses were recorded on the interview form. Interviews were conducted between April 20 and May 12, 1982.

### Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires, sections A, B, C, and F were coded and transferred to cards to be tabulated by the computer. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data, and means and ranges were computed when appropriate. Tables were constructed to depict visually the data gathered from some of the items. Any items which produced unusable data were noted and explained. Items in Sections D and E of the questionnaires were recorded and charted.

Data from the interviews were analyzed to provide answers to the "Questions Investigated" listed in Chapter 1 of this study. Data from the questionnaires were used to provide additional information.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

Following are the "Questions Investigated" and the presentation of the findings and data relevant to each question. The final section of the chapter was reserved for data which did not lend themselves to analysis.

#### 1. What Are the Educational, Professional and Reading Backgrounds of Arizona School Superintendents?

In order to respond to this question data were gathered about superintendents' degrees, institutions and majors; their undergraduate majors; their teaching experience; the credit hours in reading they have had; and the types of teaching certificates they held. These data are shown in Tables 7 through 12. The superintendents were also asked to respond to the statements "All teachers should be teachers of reading," and "Anybody who can read can teach someone to read."

Table 7 shows the highest degrees earned, institutions, and majors of the 22 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire. The highest degrees held by the superintendents completing this section of the study were: 14 superintendents held the doctoral degree, representing 63.6 percent of the sample; two superintendents, representing 7.1 percent, held the educational specialist degree; the remaining six superintendents, 27.3 percent,

Table 7. Degrees, Institutions, Majors.

Degree	Institution	Major
Doctorate (14)	Arizona State University (6)	Educational Administration (12)
	Northern Arizona University (2)	Curriculum (1)
	University of Arizona (1)	Elementary Education (1)
	Michigan State University (1)	
	University of Kansas (1)	
	University of Nebraska (1)	
	The Ohio State University (1)	
Educational Specialisit (2)	Illinois State University (1)	
	Nova University (1)	Educational Administration (2)
Masters (6)	University of Arizona (1)	
	Arizona State University (3)	Educational Administration (3)
	University of Arizona (2)	Education (3)
	University of Southern California (1)	

held a masters degree. The majority of superintendents who participated in the study held a doctoral degree as the highest degree earned. Of those superintendents reporting their doctoral majors, twelve of the 14, or 85.1 percent, majored in educational administration. Both superintendents who earned educational specialist degrees majored in educational administration. Half of the superintendents who earned master's degrees also majored in educational administration.

Table 8. Undergraduate Majors.

Subject	Number
Business	3
Elementary Education	3
Physical Education	3
Science	3
Social Science	3
Agriculture	1
English	1
Health Education	1
Math	1
Spanish	1

No undergraduate major is common to all the superintendents in this sample.

Table 9 shows the levels taught and the number of years of experience of the 22 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire.

Table 9. Teaching Experience.\*

Number of Years	Unified Dist. Supts.	Elementary Dist. Supts.	High School Dist. Supts.
1	0	2	1
2	1	1	1
3	2	1	0
4	3	0	0
5	2	0	0
6	0	2	0
7	2	0	0
8	3	1	0
9	0	1	0
10	0	1	0
11	1	0	0
12	1	0	0
17	1	0	0

\*Note: Five superintendents reported teaching experience at more than one level.

The range of years of teaching experience was from one to 17 years. There was no pattern relative to the number of years of teaching experience superintendents had. No differences were evident between the total years of teaching experience of elementary and unified district superintendents, but one of the high school superintendents taught 17 years before becoming a superintendent.

Table 10 shows the total number of years taught according to the type of district.

Table 10. Total Years Teaching Experience.

Total Number of Years	Unified Supts.	Elementary Supts.	High School Supts.
17		1	
12			1
10	1		
9	1		1
8	2		1
7	1	1	2
6	1		1
5			2
4			3
3	3		

The range of total years taught was three to 17 years. Most superintendents taught less than eight years. No differences were evident in the total years of teaching experience among superintendents of different types of districts.

Twenty-two superintendents completed the Administrative Experience section of the questionnaire. Eighteen superintendents reported having had experience as a principal; eight superintendents reported experience in other administrative positions (i.e., directors or coordinators); 11 superintendents reported experience as assistant superintendents; and two superintendents reported no administrative experience prior to becoming superintendents. Seven superintendents



reported previous experience as superintendents before assuming their present position.

Table 11 shows the number of reading credit hours earned of the 20 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire.

Table 11. Total Reading Credit Hours Earned.

Total Number of Reading Credit Hours	Number of Superintendents
15	1
14	1
12	1
11	1
10	2
9	1
8	1
6	1
4	2
3	2
1	1
0	6

Six superintendents (30 percent) had never taken a reading course, and the other superintendents had earned between one and 15 credit hours in reading. No superintendents reported having a reading specialist certificate.

Table 12 shows the teaching certificates of the 22 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire.

Table 12. Types of Teaching Certificates Held.

Superin- tendents	Elementary Teaching Certificate Only	Secondary Teaching Certificate Only	Both Certificates
Elementary	4	1	4
High School		2	
Unified	1	8	2
TOTAL -	5	11	6

In Arizona, a superintendent's certificate may be issued only if a valid teaching certificate is held. All superintendents in this sample held teaching and superintendents' certificates. Five superintendents have elementary teaching certificates only. Six superintendents have both elementary and secondary teaching certificates. Sixty-seven percent of the total sample have secondary certificates. The majority of superintendents in unified districts had secondary certificates; however, the majority of elementary and high school superintendents had certificates which matched the grade levels of their districts.

Item 1 of the interview asked superintendents to reflect on their teaching experiences and to discuss how students' reading abilities affected how and what they taught. Twenty of the 28

superintendents responding indicated that students' reading abilities caused them to adjust their instruction. Sixteen of those twenty superintendents indicated that the impact of reading abilities on classroom practices was extremely serious. Of the eight superintendents reporting no impact of reading abilities on classroom practices, seven reported that the subjects they taught did not require students to read, and one superintendent reported that his students were all good readers. All 28 superintendents reported that reading was a critical issue in elementary classrooms and classes which required students to read. Twenty-two of the superintendents indicated that they were largely unprepared to accommodate poor readers other than by compensating with lecture. No differences were observed among the responses of superintendents of elementary, high school, or unified districts.

Item 12 of the interview asked superintendents to react to the statement "All teachers should be teachers of reading." This item was intended to indicate the beliefs of superintendents regarding the importance of reading in all grades and subjects. Nineteen of the 28 superintendents responded "Yes" and indicated that reading was critical to all grades and subjects. One superintendent agreed with the statement as long as the subject required students to read. Seven superintendents agreed with the statement but felt that it was not possible to implement. They stated that few teachers, other than reading specialists, had sufficient backgrounds in reading, and under

state requirements at the time the study was conducted were not likely to in the near future. One superintendent disagreed with the statement indicating he believed that students today depended much less upon reading than we believe they do.

Item 13 on the interview asked superintendents to respond to the statement "Anybody who can read can teach others to read." This item was intended to indicate the degree to which superintendents understood and appreciated the technical qualifications necessary to teach reading. Twenty-two of the 28 superintendents indicated that they did not agree with the statement, citing the qualifications and training required to teach a skill as complex as reading. The remaining seven superintendents agreed with the statement to a lesser degree, indicating that someone other than a trained teacher could help with aspects of reading instruction, such as learning sight words or practicing phonics.

To summarize Question 1, it was found that most superintendents in the sample had doctoral degrees and all of them had graduate degrees, the majority of which were in educational administration. Superintendents' undergraduate degrees were very diverse. The superintendents had between one and 17 years of teaching experience. The majority had less than eight years experience. Only two superintendents had no administrative experience prior to becoming superintendents, while a majority of them had been principals at one time, and half of them had experience as assistant superintendents. A majority

of the superintendents reported that their teaching experience was impacted upon by students' reading abilities. The number of reading credit hours superintendents had earned ranged from zero hours to 15 hours. Most superintendents had secondary certificates. Superintendents were committed to the importance of reading in all subjects at all levels, and they understood and appreciated the technical qualifications necessary to teach reading.

2. What Professional Organizations and Publications Appear to be Most Influential for Arizona School Superintendents?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about the journals which superintendents read and the value of those journals. Superintendents were asked about the organizations they belonged to, how actively involved they were, and the value of the organizations to them. Tables 13 and 14 contain these data.

Table 14 shows the journals read by the 22 superintendents completing that section of the questionnaire.

The Phi Delta Kappan and the Executive Educator were the most frequently read journals. Reading journals were the least frequently read. Item 2 of the interview asked superintendents to discuss a journal they read and the reasons they read it. Nineteen of the 28 superintendents interviewed discussed the Executive Educator and often some other journal. Seventeen superintendents discussed the Phi Delta Kappan and often some other journal as well. These were the most frequently read of the journals discussed. Superintendents reported that the Executive Educator was read because it was considered

Table 13. Journals Read Regularly.

Journal	Number of Supts. Who Read It	Percent
Phi Delta Kappan	18	78.3
Executive Educator	16	69.6
Education Digest	12	52.2
Educational Leadership	7	30.4
National Elementary Principal	5	21.7
NASSP* Bulletin	4	17.4
NOLPE**	4	17.4
Curriculum Review	2	8.7
Journal of Reading	2	8.7
English Journal	1	4.3
High School Journal	1	4.3
Reading Research Quarterly	1	4.3
Reading Teacher	1	4.3

\* National Association of School Principals

\*\*National

to be practical, topical, current, brief, and to the point. They reported that they read the Phi Delta Kappan because it helped them keep up with current issues and timely research. Only one superintendent reported that he did not read any journals regularly. He stated that he kept current by attending workshops and county and state administrators meetings. All 28 superintendents interviewed indicated that finding time to read was a difficult thing. They shared a concern that they did not have enough time to read in order to keep up with their profession. They also indicated that when they did read, they preferred articles which were well-written, brief, and to the point.

Table 15 shows the organizations and amount of involvement of the 22 superintendents who completed that section of the questionnaire.

All superintendents in this study who filled out the questionnaire belonged to Arizona School Administrators, Inc., and tended to be moderately to very active in the organization. Eighty-seven percent of the superintendents belonged to The American Association of School Administrators, but fewer superintendents were very active in this organization. Seventy-four percent of the superintendents belong to Phi Delta Kappa. The six superintendents who reported that they belonged to the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English stated that their school districts had memberships in these organizations for the benefit of reading or English teachers in the district. None of these six superintendents participated personally in these two organizations.

Table 14. Organizations Superintendents Join.

Organization	# Who Are Very Active	# Who Are Moderately Active	# Who Are Not Active	# Who Don't Belong
Arizona School Admin- istrators, Inc.	11	11	1	0
American Association of School Administrators	3	14	3	3
Phi Delta Kappa	2	10	5	6
Association for Super- vision and Curriculum Development	1	5	5	12
National Education Asso- ciation	0	3	7	13
National Association of Elementary School Principals	0	2	7	14
National Association of Secondary School Principals	0	2	5	16
International Reading Association	1	0	6	16
National Council of Teachers of English	0	1	6	16



Item 3 of the interview asked superintendents to discuss the reasons they belong to one or two organizations. The reasons given for belonging to professional organizations were that the organization: 1) provided a way to keep up with current issues and trends; 2) offered a network for peer interaction to share ideas and solutions; 3) offered conferences and workshops; 4) published journals; 5) provided a stimulus for political action; and 6) met professional obligations. All superintendents interviewed indicated that they belonged to their county superintendents' organization, a group which had not been listed on the questionnaire. The benefit of belonging to the county organizations was reported that the meeting provided ready access to other superintendents when help or advice was needed. Similar reasons were stated for the usefulness of belonging to Arizona School Administrators, Inc. This group has a full-time staff of experts and advisors who are available to help members.

### 3. What are the Expressed Important Tasks of Arizona School Superintendents?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about the tasks superintendents perform, the tasks which they believed were the most important, and the tasks which took the greatest amount of their time. These data are shown in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 15 shows the categories of tasks which 20 superintendents who completed this section of the questionnaire believed were the most important tasks they perform.

Table 15. Categories of the Perceived Important Tasks Which Superintendents Perform and the Number of Times they were Mentioned.

Categories	#
Curriculum and Instruction	18
Finance	17
Selection and Management of Personnel	15
School Board Duties	14
Public Relations	14
Policy Making	11
Supervision and Evaluation	10
Facilities	5
Transportation	4
In-service	3
Discipline	2
Negotiations	2
Recruiting	1
Food Services	1
Classroom Observation	1
Paper Work	1

All but two superintendents included curriculum development and instructional tasks in their ten most important tasks. All but three superintendents included finance-related tasks. Only one superintendent reported that classroom observation was an important task. Only one superintendent reported that recruiting was an important task.

Table 16 shows the most important and most time-consuming tasks identified by the 28 superintendents who completed this section of the questionnaire.

Table 16. Most Important and Most Time-Consuming Tasks of Superintendents.

Categories	Most Important Tasks	Most Time-Consuming Tasks
Personnel	8	
Curriculum/Instruction	5	
Human relations/Managing People	3	
Communicating with Various Groups	3	
Executive Officer of School Board	3	
Leadership	2	
Decision-making/Thinking	2	
Finance	1	
Executive Officer of the Board		10
Personnel		5
Finance		5
Managing/Decision-making		4
Communicating with Various Groups		1
Instructional Duties		1
Political Process		1
School Site Problems		1

Item 4 of the interview asked superintendents which was the most important task they performed. During the first interview, the superintendent responded to the question by stating which task took the most of his time, as well as the task which was most important. Thereafter, the question of which task took the most time was added to Item 4 of the interview. People-oriented tasks were most often listed as the most important tasks performed by the superintendents who participated in the interview. Tasks for the school board were reported to be the most time-consuming although those tasks were only considered most important by three superintendents. Curriculum tasks were considered relatively important, but they were not considered to be among the most time-consuming tasks.

#### 4. Who Advises Arizona School Superintendents About Reading Matters?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about; 1) the persons who advise superintendents about reading, 2) the perceived strengths of the advisors, and 3) the frequency with which superintendents confer about reading. These data are shown in Table 17 through 19.

Table 17 shows the reading advisors of the 28 superintendents who answered Item 8 of the interview.

Administrators at the district or building level were most frequently described (69.1 percent) as the chief reading advisors

Table 17. Reading Advisors for Arizona Superintendents.

Reading Advisors	#
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum	7
Building Administrator	6
District Reading Specialist	6
Key Teachers	5
Directors	2
Curriculum Committee	1
Myself	1

of superintendents. Only one superintendent considered himself to be his district's chief reading advisor. Approximately one third of the superintendents who selected administrators as their chief advisors selected district-level reading specialists. In elementary districts, key teachers tended to be the major advisors to superintendents, rather than assistant superintendents for curriculum and district reading specialists. However, smaller districts usually did not have assistant superintendents or reading specialists, thus key teachers then assumed the advisory role. Both high school districts had reading specialists. Unified districts tended to have more administrative and reading personnel than small districts, and these people were usually the reading advisors in their districts. One superintendent of a unified district assumed the responsibility for his districts'

reading program. This superintendent was the only one who reported having 15 hours in reading, and he was the superintendent who indicated he was active in the International Reading Association. Most superintendents conferred about reading as the need arose. Superintendents of unified districts tended to meet more regularly about reading matters. The superintendent who administered his own reading program was the superintendent who reported that he conferred almost daily with the many reading people and committees. Table 18 shows how often the 28 superintendents who answered Item 8 of the interview conferred about reading.

Table 18. How Often Superintendents Confer About Reading and the Number of Superintendents Reporting Each Condition.

Reading Habits	# Superintendents
As the Need Arises	20
Regularly	3
Monthly	1
Every Two Weeks	1
Weekly	1
Twice a Week	1
Almost Daily	1

Most superintendents met with their advisors as the need arose. Only 28.6 percent of them scheduled regular meetings. The superintendent who functioned as his district's reading expert stated

that he met with some group or committee about ongoing reading program business on almost a daily basis.

5. What Criteria do Arizona School Superintendents  
Use to Select Advisors in the Area of Reading?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about the perceived strengths of the reading advisors of superintendents. Twenty-eight superintendents answered this item in the interview. Table 19 shows their responses.

Table 19. Perceived Strengths of Superintendents' Reading Advisors and the Frequency of Superintendents' Reporting Them.

Perceived Strengths	#
Reading Knowledge and Experience	21
Proven Success	3
Forceful and Convincing Behaviors	2
Managerial Ability	1
Authority	1

"Reading knowledge and experience" were considered the greatest strengths of the advisors of 75 percent of the superintendents. "Proven success" accounted for only 11 percent of the perceived strengths of advisors. Personal power in the form of "forceful and convincing behaviors" and "authority" also accounted for 11 percent of the perceived strengths.

6. What Methods do Arizona School Superintendents  
Use to Evaluate Their Reading Programs?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about the evaluative procedures used by superintendents to assess their reading programs and which procedure was most important. These data are shown in Tables 20 and 21.

Table 20 shows the evaluative procedures employed by the 19 superintendents who responded to that section of the questionnaire.

Table 20. Evaluative Procedures Used by Superintendents and the Frequency of Use.

Evaluative Procedures	#
Student Test Scores - All Types	19
Evaluation by Staff	10
Board Surveys to Parents	6
Materials Review	5
Program Review	5
Observation	2
Student Performance While Reading	2
Accountability Systems/CUES	2
External Evaluation	2
Student Time on Task	1

A wide variety of methods were reported by superintendents for evaluating their reading programs. The use of various types of tests was mentioned most frequently (39.3 percent). Evaluations by teachers and administrators were mentioned next most frequently.



Table 21 shows the evaluative procedures which the 28 superintendents interviewed indicated were the most important procedures used in their districts. Standardized tests were considered the most useful evaluative measure by 39.3 percent of the superintendents. Staff evaluations accounted for only 17.9 percent of the evaluations.

Table 21. Perceived Most Important Evaluative Procedures Used by Superintendents and the Frequency of Superintendents Reporting Them.

Evaluative Procedures	#
Standardized Tests	11
Teacher Evaluation	4
Criterion-referenced Tests	3
Classroom Observation	2
Overall Student Performance	2
Administrative Evaluation	1
CUES	1
Reading Committee Evaluation	1
Reports from Curriculum Superintendent	1
Reports from Language Arts Specialist	1
Students' Success in College	1

Item 7 of the interview asked superintendents how they utilized standardized test data in their districts. Those superintendents who did not consider standardized tests to be their most useful

evaluative procedure stated that they utilized standardized tests as: 1) only one measure of many; 2) a state requirement, or 3) a trend analysis for their districts. The superintendents who did consider standardized tests to be their most useful evaluative procedure utilized them for: 1) student, class, and building comparisons; 2) gain score analysis; 3) diagnosis of weak areas in the reading program; 4) teacher evaluation; and 5) student placement. Many considered standardized tests to be the only readily accessible measure of reading performance.

7. What are the Opinions of Arizona School Superintendents Regarding the Effectiveness of Their District Reading Programs?

In order to respond to this question, data were gathered about: 1) superintendents' evaluations of their reading programs; 2) the reasons for their evaluations; 3) the criteria they used to hire reading personnel; 4) who made the reading program decisions in their districts; 5) who developed their reading program goals; and 6) who selected reading materials in their districts. These data are shown in Tables 22 through 26.

Item 1 of Section E of the questionnaire asked superintendents to rate the effectiveness of their districts' reading programs. Five possible responses were listed: A) Leaves Much to be Desired; B) Marginal; C) Satisfactory; D) Very Satisfactory; and E) Excellent. Twenty-two superintendents completed this section of the questionnaire. The six superintendents who participated only in the

interview rated their programs at the time of the interview. The ratings of all 28 superintendents are categorized by type of district in Table 22.

Table 22.. Superintendents' Evaluations of Their Reading Programs.

Rating	Type of District		
	Unified	Elementary	High School
A) Excellent	5	2	0
B) Very Satisfactory	6	4	2
C) Satisfactory	4	3	0
D) Marginal	1	1	0
E) Leaves Much to be Desired	0	0	0

Only two superintendents (seven percent) rated their programs as Marginal. A fourth of the superintendents rated their program Satisfactory. Most superintendents (42.9 percent) rated their programs as Very Satisfactory. A fourth of them rated their programs as Excellent. No differences among the ratings of superintendents of various types of districts were evident. Overall, superintendents tended to rate their reading programs according to their students' performance on norm-referenced tests, and they tended to attribute student test results to the degree of commitment they themselves made to reading instruction in their districts.

Item 5 of the interview asked superintendents to explain their evaluations of their reading programs. The two superintendents who rated their programs as Marginal felt that bilingual demands and a transitory student population limited what could be accomplished in reading performance in their districts. These superintendents also stated that their students performed poorly on the California Achievement Test given statewide during the previous spring. Six of the superintendents who rated their programs as Satisfactory stated that they knew there is much room for improvement in their programs. All six of these superintendents reported various steps they were taking to improve their programs. One superintendent who gave his reading program Satisfactory believed that this was a complimentary rating and that few, if any, school districts could hope to do better. He also stated that his students did well on the state achievement test and that his teachers worked very hard to accomplish these results. All superintendents who rated their programs as Very Satisfactory cited state and district test results as evidence of good reading programs. These superintendents also stated that they and their districts had a strong commitment to reading instruction which they felt accounted for their districts' good test results. Superintendents who rated their programs as Excellent cited, as evidence, extremely high achievement on the part of their students, strong philosophical and monetary commitment to reading, individualized or diagnostic/prescriptive instructional techniques, and high standards. One of

the superintendents who rated his program as Excellent added that he felt his programs' success was also attributable to a district of highly motivated students and supportive parents.

Table 23 shows the criteria used to hire reading personnel in the districts of the 18 superintendents who completed this section of the questionnaire.

Table 23. Criteria Used by Superintendents to Hire Reading Personnel and the Frequency of Superintendents' Reporting Them.

Criteria	#
Reading Knowledge	18
Experience	12
Ability to Communicate and Relate to Others	11
Enthusiasm	4
Knowledge of Learning Theory	4
Dedication	4
References	4
Grades	3
Reading Certificate or Master's Degree	3
Professional Involvement	1
Leadership	1
Organization/Efficiency	1

Knowledge of reading was the most frequently cited of the criteria. Experience was the second most frequently mentioned.

Ability to communicate and relate to others was listed next most frequently. Reading certification or masters' degrees were mentioned by only three superintendents. References and grades were not widely used criteria in hiring reading personnel.

Item 6 of the interview asked superintendents if they used the same criteria to select regular teachers as they did to select reading teachers. This item was intended to examine superintendents' commitment to reading instruction at the classroom level. All 28 superintendents answered affirmatively, but to varying degrees. Superintendents of elementary and unified districts stated that they attempted to apply the same criteria to hiring elementary teachers because of the importance of reading in the elementary school. High school and unified district superintendents all stated that few secondary teachers received the amount of reading hours which would enable them to meet the standards set for reading personnel. Superintendents in the metropolitan areas reported success in hiring classroom teachers with good reading backgrounds. The superintendents of rural, outlying districts reported that they hired the best qualified of often small numbers of applicants. They also felt that teachers with strong reading backgrounds and experience in reading tended to seek employment in the larger cities. If these teachers did work in the outlying districts, it was only until jobs could be found in the larger cities.

Table 24 shows who made the reading program decisions in the districts of the 28 superintendents who participated in the interview.

Table 24. People Who Make Reading Program Decisions and the Frequency of Superintendents Reporting Them.

Reading Program Decisions	#
Teaching Staff	10
Administrative Staff	9
Superintendent	4
Curriculum Superintendent	2
Title I Director	1
School Board	1
Curriculum Advisory Council	1

The people who made the reading decision in elementary districts tended to be teachers in the smaller districts and administrators in the larger elementary districts. Administrators made the reading decisions in high school districts and most unified districts, although teachers made the decisions in 18 percent of the unified districts.

Table 25 shows who developed the reading goals/objectives in the districts of the 28 superintendents who participated in the interview.

Staff (both teaching and administrative) tended to have developed the reading goals and objectives in most districts (64.3 percent). Only 29 percent of the superintendents reported that the school board had established their goals and objectives.

Table 25. People Who Developed Reading Goals and Objectives and the Frequency of Districts Utilizing those People.

Developed Reading Goals	#
Staff	17
School Board	8
Curriculum Committee	1
Needs-assessment Committee	1
Superintendent	1

All superintendents indicated that they were satisfied with their reading goals and objectives at the time of the interviews, stating that revisions and updating of the goals and objectives was done as needed in 20 districts and on a regular schedule in eight districts.

Table 26 shows who selected the reading materials in the districts of the 28 superintendents who participated in the interview.

Table 26. People Who Select Reading Materials and the Frequency of Districts Utilizing those People.

Personnel Selecting Reading Materials	#
Teachers	25
Reading Specialist	1
Superintendent with Staff	1
Teacher-parent Committee	1



Eighty-nine percent of the superintendents reported that teachers were responsible for selecting the materials in their districts. The reading specialist was assigned that responsibility in only one district.

8. What Solutions to the Reading Problems of Their Districts do Arizona School Superintendents Propose?

In order to respond to this question, superintendents were asked what one most important thing would improve reading in their districts. They were also asked what advice they had for professors of reading. The data on suggested improvements are shown in Table 27.

No two elementary or high school superintendents listed the same solution to their reading problems. Superintendents of unified districts also cited diverse responses, however, 37.5 percent of these superintendents felt that better trained teachers would improve reading in their districts. None of the superintendents mentioned improving their own knowledge when considering what would improve reading in their districts.

Item 18 was the final question in the interview. Superintendents were asked if there was anything else they wished to add. The first superintendent interviewed responded that he wanted to tell reading professors how important it is for them to provide teachers with more practical, real-world experiences. For each succeeding interview, Question 18 was changed to "Is there anything you would like to tell reading professors?" Of the 28 superintendents interviewed, two superintendents had no advice for reading professors. Twelve

Table 27. Suggested Improvements for Reading Programs and the Frequencies of Superintendents Reporting Them.

Suggested Improvements	#
Better Trained Teachers	8
More Motivated Students	2
More Money	2
A District Reading Supervisor	2
More Student Time on Task	2
A Student-monitoring System	2
More Teacher Aids	1
Parents Who Read to Their Children	1
More Inservice for Staff	1
More Structure in Remedial Program	1
A Developmental Reading Program	1
More Reading Resource Teachers	1
A Good Outside Consultant	1
Better Program Evaluation Procedures	1
An Individual Education Program for Every Student	1
A Way to Convince Students Reading Is Important	1

superintendents urged reading professors to train teachers who were able to implement theory in practical, real-world situations. Five superintendents urged reading professors to provide teachers with many ways of teaching the same thing. Five superintendents urged reading professors to set high standards of admission to and graduation from teaching programs generally, and reading courses specifically. One superintendent felt that teachers must possess classroom management

skills and discipline alternatives to be able to teach reading. One superintendent hoped that reading professors would convince more secondary students to learn how to teach reading in content areas. One superintendent suggested that reading professors could emphasize the role of parents in reading instruction and show teachers how to involve parents. One superintendent suggested that reading professors should encourage professors of educational administration to provide administrators with more knowledge of reading. This superintendent believed that superintendents and principals who were reading experts themselves had the most chance of insuring quality reading instruction.

9. What Negative Factors do Arizona School Superintendents Believe Influence Their Districts' Reading Program?

In order to respond to this question, superintendents were asked to identify which factors were negative influences on their districts' reading programs. They were also asked to identify the most serious of those factors and possible solutions for correcting them. These data are shown in Tables 28 through 30.

Table 28 lists the frequency of the responses of the 22 superintendents completing this section of the questionnaire. Table 29 extracts the most frequently and least frequently selected factors in each category.

Funding was the most frequently mentioned serious factor, but only nine superintendents selected it. The numbers of superintendents who selected any factor as a serious factor were far less than

Table 28. Factors Indicated by All Superintendents.

Factor	Not a Factor	Somewhat a Factor	Serious Factor
Collective bargaining agreement	17	5	0
Funding	5	8	9
Teacher/administrator communication	11	9	2
Space/Physical Facilities	16	6	0
Competence of Central office staff	16	5	1
Competence of building administrators	12	8	2
Competence of teaching staff*	8	11	2
Competence of office help	21	1	0
Federal, State, or local regulations	10	12	0
Legal requirements	15	7	0
Board policies	21	1	0
Teachers' knowledge about reading	6	12	4
Administrators' knowledge about reading	8	11	3
Time available for my professional reading	4	13	5
Time available for my professional courses	7	13	2
Time available for my conferences/conventions	11	11	0
Time available to be alone to think and plan	3	17	2
Long-standing traditions in the district	12	9	1
Community attitudes/pressure	17	5	0
Student attitudes/pressure	9	11	2
Teacher attitudes/pressure	7	13	2
Teacher tenure	9	11	2
Teacher turnover	12	8	1
Student turnover	8	10	4
Time available to deal with curriculum	3	15	4
Time available to visit classrooms	5	14	3
Time required to deal with business management	9	11	2
Salary negotiations	17	5	0
Instructional methods employed by your staff	6	11	5
Instructional materials used by your staff	13	8	1
Bilingual demands in your district	12	8	2
Continuous Uniform evaluations System (CUES)	14	8	1
<u>Unusual Circumstances (Explain Below)</u>			

\*One superintendent left this factor blank.

Table 29. Most Frequently Selected and Least Frequently Selected Factors.

Factor	Not a Factor	Somewhat a Factor	Serious Factor
MOST FREQUENT			
Competent Office Help	21		
Board Policies	21		
Collective Bargaining Agreement	17		
Community Attitudes	17		
Salary Negotiations	17		
Space	16		
Competent Central Office Staff	16		
Legal Requirements	15		
Time to Think		17	
Time for Curriculum		15	
Time to Visit Classroom		14	
Time for Professional Reading		13	
Time for Professional Courses		13	
Teacher Attitudes		13	
Regulations		12	
Teachers' Knowledge		12	
Funding			9
Time for Professional Reading			5
Instructional Methods			5
Teachers' Knowledge			4
Student Turnover			4
Time for Curriculum			4
Administrators' Knowledge			3
Time to Visit Classrooms			3
LEAST FREQUENT			
Time to Think	3		
Time for Curriculum	3		
Time for Professional Reading	4		
Funding	5		
Time to Visit Classrooms	5		
Instructional Methods	6		
Time for Professional Courses	7		
Competent Teaching Staff	8		
Administrator's Knowledge	8		
Student Turnover	8		
Competent Office Help		1	
Board Policies		1	
Collective Bargaining Agreement		5	
Competent Central Office Staff		5	
Community Attitudes		5	
Salary Negotiations		5	
Space		6	
Legal Requirements		7	
Collective Bargaining			0
Space			0
Competent Office Help			0
Regulations			0
Legal Requirements			0
Board Policies			0
Time for Conferences			0
Community Attitudes			0
Salary Negotiations			0

the numbers of superintendents who selected factors in the somewhat serious category. The following factors are least likely to be negative influences on superintendents reading programs: collective bargaining agreement, space, competent office help, legal requirements, board policies, community attitudes and salary negotiations. When serious and somewhat serious factors are considered together, the following factors affect 68 percent or more districts: funding (77%), teachers' knowledge about reading (73%), time for professional reading (82%), time for professional courses (68%), time to think (86%), teacher attitudes (68%), time for curriculum (86%), time to visit classrooms (82%), and instructional methods (73%).

Table 30 shows the single most serious factors the 28 superintendents interviewed selected. Each factor is followed by the solution superintendents suggested for that problem. Twenty-five percent of the superintendents indicated that instructional methods were the most serious factor, and they believed that the solution was better training and more in-service. Eighteen percent of the superintendents selected funding as the most serious factor, and their solution was creative budget management. The remaining factors were diverse and reflected the unique problems of each district.

Item 15 of the interview asked superintendents what the impact of non-native English speakers was on their reading programs. Twenty-one of the 28 superintendents interviewed either had none or few students of this type, or their programs and resources easily

Table 30. Perceived Single Most Serious Factors Affecting Reading Programs and Suggested Solutions.

Factor	#	Suggested Solution
Instructional Methods	7	Better Training and Inservice
Funding	5	Creative Budget Management
Student Turnover	3	Better Diagnosis and Placement
Bilingual Demands	2	Better Trained Teachers
Teacher Commitment	2	Try to Get Teachers Enthused
Time for Professional Reading	2	Longer Days
Complacency	1	Show a Need
Long-Standing Traditions	1	Slow, Steady Pressure
Poor Student Attitudes	1	Keep Offering Quality Opportunities and Encouragements
The Home Environment	1	Educate the Community

Note: Three Superintendents stated that they did not have any serious factors affecting their reading programs.

accommodated such students. Three superintendents felt that their districts were not doing as much as should be done for such students. Four superintendents reported very large numbers of these non-native English-speaking students and stated that those students drained district resources.

Item 16 of the interview asked superintendents if they were satisfied with the amount of money spent on their reading programs. Twenty-four of the 28 superintendents interviewed reported that at the time the study was conducted, they were satisfied with the amount of money spent on their reading programs. Although these superintendents stated that more money could always be put to constructive use, they felt that the amount they spent on reading was supplying good programs. These 24 superintendents also felt that their programs were funded for maximum reading performance and that more money would not help significantly more students. They further remarked that the things which would really improve reading in their districts could not usually be provided with money. The four remaining superintendents had serious funding problems because of the loss of federal monies which could not be compensated by their districts' budgets.

#### Additional Information

Item 8 of Section A of the questionnaire asked superintendents to report the percent of their students who were non-native English speakers. Nineteen superintendents responded to this item,



but it was discovered that the superintendents had defined non-native English speakers in several different ways. Only two superintendents were willing to recalculate the percentage when the researcher defined the term, thus rendering the data uninterpretable.

Item 9 of Section A of the questionnaire asked superintendents to indicate the percent of their district budgets spent on reading. Fourteen superintendents responded to the item, but during the interview, ten superintendents commented that the number they circled was really a guess. Their districts did not use program budgeting; therefore, they did not have a precise way to determine how much money was spent on reading. Data from this item were uninterpretable.

Item 4 of Section A asked superintendents to report average per pupil expenditure for their districts. It was discovered after the data was collected that superintendents had computed that figure two different ways, using either the maintenance and operation portion of their budget or the total budget. The two different computations rendered the data uninterpretable.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### Summary

The purpose of this study, was to identify the educational, professional and reading backgrounds, opinions and practices of Arizona school superintendents. The study further sought to ascertain how Arizona superintendents prioritize their tasks, which factors inhibit their performance, how they select advisors, what priorities they set for reading instruction, and how their working situations influence what choices they make about reading and reading instruction.

#### Conclusions

Based upon the findings in Chapter 4, the following conclusions were drawn. These conclusions are presented as they relate to the "Questions Investigated" which provided direction for the study.

1. What are the educational, professional and reading backgrounds of Arizona school superintendents?

A. Superintendents' undergraduate teaching preparations do not fit such common stereotypes for superintendents teaching backgrounds as physical education, nor do they bring common teaching backgrounds or experiences to the job.

B. Superintendents still appear to follow the traditional pattern of serving as principals and assistant superintendents before becoming superintendents, although younger superintendents' career patterns indicated that this may be changing.

C. Superintendents value furthering their education beyond basic requirements.

D. The philosophies of Arizona universities are an important influence on Arizona superintendents.

E. Departments of Educational Administration have a greater influence on what superintendents learn than any other university departments.

F. Superintendents demonstrated a sensitivity to and appreciation of the complex technical nature of reading instruction, even though they did not demonstrate a technical knowledge of reading instruction.

G. Superintendents did not have sufficient training in reading to enable them to guide the reading programs of their districts.

2. What professional organizations and publications appear to be most influential for Arizona school superintendents?

A. Superintendents' actions and knowledge were most influenced by Arizona School Administrators, Inc.

B. The philosophies and editorial policies of the Phi Delta Kappan and the Executive Educator influenced superintendents more than those of any other journals.

C. The major way superintendents have to learn about current reading research and issues is through whatever reading information, if any, they encounter in the journals they read or at the conferences they attend.

D. Information about reading issues and research of importance to superintendents which is presented in reading journals or at reading conferences does not reach most superintendents.

E. Superintendents gave their professional reading a low priority, placing people and problems ahead of their reading.

3. What are the expressed important tasks of Arizona school superintendents?

A. Superintendents believed people-oriented tasks were more important than administrative detail tasks and reading tasks.

B. Although superintendents rated instructional tasks as important, they did not list such tasks among those which took the most of their time.

4. Who advises Arizona school superintendents about reading matters?

A. Superintendents' chief reading advisors are not reading specialists and do not deal with reading matters as their only task. They tend to be administrators who perform many duties along with their reading tasks. Therefore, the quality advice superintendents receive about reading matters is dependent upon the amount of time the advisors spend on reading tasks and the amount of knowledge they have about reading matters.

B. Superintendents do not give reading matters in their districts systematic, regular attention.

5. What criteria do Arizona school superintendents use to select advisors in the area of reading?

A. Although "knowledge" and "experience" were the stated most valuable criteria used to select reading advisors, superintendents had little personal knowledge about reading upon which to judge the quality of the knowledge and experience their advisors reported.

6. What methods do Arizona school superintendents use to evaluate their reading programs?

A. Superintendents' dependence on standardized tests as evaluative measures suggests that they are sensitive to the accountability demanded of them by the Arizona State Department of Education and the public.

B. Staff evaluations were not considered as useful as more objective measures of evaluation, such as tests. It was teachers, however, who most often wrote the reading program goals and selected the reading materials.

7. What are the opinions of Arizona school superintendents regarding the effectiveness of their district reading programs?

A. Superintendents allowed the evaluations of others, such as the Arizona State Department of Education, to dictate the evaluations they themselves made of their reading programs. Superintendents tended to point out effective or negative

aspects of their districts' reading programs, depending upon the performance of their students as evaluated by outsiders.

B. Superintendents looked to others, such as universities and certification agencies, to ensure the hiring of competent staff, placing the effectiveness of their reading programs in the hands of others.

C. Since teachers most often wrote the reading program goals and selected the reading materials, it appears inconsistent that superintendents did not more fully consider teachers' opinions in judging the effectiveness of their district reading programs.

8. What solutions to the reading problems of their districts do Arizona school superintendents propose?

A. The solutions superintendents proposed were mostly external solutions, such as better teachers, more help, and more motivated students, rather than solutions which could be implemented by themselves, indicating that superintendents did not have a sense of control over the testing of their own reading programs, despite a deep commitment.

9. What negative factors do Arizona school superintendents believe influence their districts' reading programs?

A. Most of the factors affecting reading programs listed in the survey instrument are potential problems for reading programs in Arizona schools.

B. Superintendents' solutions to the negative factors affecting their programs were dependent upon external forces rather than solutions they could implement themselves.

#### Implications of the Study

Implications of the study are listed for superintendents, school boards, professors of education administration, professors of reading, professors of elementary and secondary education, for teachers, and for the State Department of Education.

#### Implications for Superintendents

1. When superintendents deal with reading matters only as the need arises, rather than on a regular basis, they run the risk of letting situations get out of control before they are discovered and dealt with.
2. Superintendents select reading advisors on the basis of knowledge and experience, but their own limited knowledge of reading may not allow them to discriminate among advisors who are truly knowledgeable and those who only claim to be knowledgeable.
3. When superintendents place a high value on the "communication skills" of reading personnel but do not have an adequate knowledge of reading matters themselves, they run the risk of hiring people who spend more time talking about reading matters than acting.
4. Superintendents' commitment to finding classroom teachers who have strong backgrounds in reading makes them dependent

upon what teachers learn in their reading classes. Superintendents must determine the extent to which reading courses train teachers with skills superintendents think their districts need.

5. When superintendents seek external solutions to their reading problems they are placing their programs in the hands of others. The situation becomes even worse if the superintendents do not have the knowledge which will allow them to evaluate what they ask others to do for their district.

6. Because accountability for reading programs is assigned to superintendents, they should demand training and experiences which help them learn the skills needed to have control over the programs for which they are held accountable.

7. The tasks assigned to superintendents are many and varied. Superintendents must insist that they be held accountable only for tasks which they are trained to perform and for tasks over which they have control. Superintendents must ask their school boards and communities to clarify their priorities and provide training opportunities.

#### Implications for School Boards

1. Even though superintendents generally state that their major reading advisors are administrators, the majority of superintendents say that teachers write reading program goals and select reading materials. This suggests that the actual control of



the reading programs is in the hands of teachers who may or may not have adequate reading backgrounds, rather than the administrators which school boards have hired to do this job.

2. Even though superintendents are spending time and money on reading, their confidence in their programs is dictated by state tests. The tests do not provide an accurate picture of the district's reading program because they report only the current year's performance as opposed to longitudinal data.

3. Superintendents' reliance on standardized tests to evaluate their reading program implies that the information about their programs is dependent upon the appropriateness and precision of the tests employed.

4. When administrators are selected as reading advisors, the amount of time spent on reading is shared with their other duties. Since their philosophies are likely to have been shaped by Educational Administration departments, they may not be significantly better qualified than superintendents to deal with reading programs.

5. Superintendents place people and problems ahead of their professional reading, but they say that they regret that situation. This suggests that they are doing what they believe is expected of them rather than what they think is best for themselves and their districts.

6. Superintendents are spending their time on tasks which they do not perceive too important, implying that the tasks they perceive to be important to their districts are not receiving sufficient attention.

#### Implications for Professors of Educational Administration

1. Information about reading could easily be required of superintendents in their educational administration graduate work because most superintendents select educational administration as their graduate major.

#### Implications for Professors of Reading

1. Knowledge of the technical skills of reading has not been a prerequisite to making superintendents committed to reading, but the lack of that knowledge makes them dependent upon a variety of advisors with varying degrees of knowledge about reading matters. Superintendents may not need to know how to administer their programs directly, but they do need enough technical knowledge of reading to select advisors who are truly capable in reading.

2. The diversity of factors which superintendents indicated affected their reading programs suggests that there are no universal solutions to school districts' reading problems.

3. Important reading research and issues probably will not be discovered by superintendents unless that information is published in journals they read or is presented at conferences they attend.

### Implications for Professors of Elementary and Secondary Education

1. Students in elementary and secondary education classes should be trained to participate in reading program decisions that will be required of them when they become teachers.

### Implications for Teachers

1. Teachers are likely to be asked to participate in the shaping of a school district's reading program and should take courses which help them fill that role.

2. Superintendents are more likely to hire teachers who have good backgrounds in reading rather than teachers who have just good grades or good recommendations.

### Implications for the State Department of Education

1. Any commitment on the part of the State Department of Education to improving reading instruction would be enhanced by certification recommendations which insure reading knowledge among superintendents.

### Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations for further research are made:

1. A study of the content of educational administration programs should be made to determine precisely what information superintendents should have and do receive about reading practices.

2. A study should be made of the journals and organizations of superintendents to determine the extent to which they discuss reading matters and the extent to which they will accept more articles about various aspects of reading.

3. A study should be made of the tasks superintendents choose to perform in comparison to the tasks they are trained to perform.

4. A study should be made of school districts which have successfully solved or alleviated their major reading problems.

5. A study should be made of the methods and experiences reading professors transmit to students in comparison to the methods and experiences superintendents expect of classroom teachers and or reading specialists.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

CAROLYN WARNER  
SUPERINTENDENT



Arizona  
Department of Education  
1535 WEST JEFFERSON  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007  
255-4361

April 13, 1982

Dear Superintendent:

Carol Anne Pierson, the author of this study, has reviewed the research design with our office.

On behalf of the study, we support your participation in the data gathering effort and hope the results are beneficial to you, our profession and the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Reno".

Thomas R. Reno, Ph.D.  
Associate Superintendent

cme

## APPENDIX B

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

RETAIN THIS SURVEY - HOLD FOR INTERVIEW

## ARIZONA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND READING

### A. SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. 

Name of Superintendent	Name of District
------------------------	------------------
2. 

Age	Sex	Central Office Address
-----	-----	------------------------
3. 

Telephone	City	Zip
-----------	------	-----
4. 

District Enrollment (approximately, now)	Average Per Pupil Expenditure	# of Schools
---	----------------------------------	--------------
5. Number of certified teachers \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of certified building administrators \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of certified central office administrators \_\_\_\_\_
8. Approximate % of pupils who are non-native English speakers \_\_\_\_\_
9. Approximate % of district budget spent on reading (circle one)  

0-15	16-25	26-50	51-75	over 76
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## B. PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

- ## 1. Education

<u>Degree</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Year Completed</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>


- ## 2. Teaching Experience

<u>State</u>	<u>Subject Level</u>	<u>Dates</u>
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3. Administrative Experience

<u>State</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Dates</u>

4. Reading Courses

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Year Completed</u>

5. Certification

List all Arizona certificates you currently hold.


C. PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS1. Professional Publications

<u>Journal</u>	<u>Personal Subscription</u>		<u>Read Regularly</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Executive Educator				
NASSP Bulletin				
Educational Leadership				
The Kappan				
Read. Research Quarterly				
Curriculum Review				
Journal of Reading				
English Journal				
The Reading Teacher				
NOLPE				
High School Journal				
Education Digest				
Nat. Elem. Principal				

2. Membership in Professional Organizations

<u>Organization</u>	<u>How active are you?</u>			<u>How useful is membership?</u>		
	<u>Very</u>	<u>Moder.</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Moder.</u>	<u>Not</u>
AASA (national)						
ASA (state)						
NEA/AEA						
NASSP						
NAESP						
Phi Delta Kappa						
Intl. Read. Assn.						
Nat. Council of Teachers of English						
ASCD						

D. TASKS

List the 10 most important tasks you perform in your role as the superintendent.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

E. DISTRICT READING PROGRAM

1. In your opinion, how effective is your district's reading program?  
(Underline one choice below)

A. Leaves much to be desired  
B. Marginal  
C. Satisfactory  
D. Very Satisfactory  
E. Excellent

2. What criteria, in order of importance, are used generally in selecting reading personnel in your district?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What systematic steps are taken to evaluate your district's reading program?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### F. INFLUENCES ON PRACTICES

Listed below are factors which may, at times, restrict or prevent your reading program from being what you want it to be. Please mark an X in the appropriate boxes to indicate which factors have affected you in the last year.

Factor	Not a Factor	Somewhat a Factor	Serious Factor
Collective bargaining agreement			
Funding			
Teacher/administrator communication			
Space/Physical facilities			
Competence of central office staff			
Competence of building administrators			
Competence of teaching staff			
Competence of office help			
Federal, State, or local regulations			
Legal requirements			
Board policies			
Teachers' knowledge about reading			
Administrators' knowledge about reading			
Time available for my professional reading			
Time available for my professional courses			
Time available for my conferences/conventions			
Time available to be alone to think and plan			
Long-standing traditions in the district			
Community attitudes/pressure			
Student attitudes/pressure			
Teacher attitudes/pressure			
Teacher tenure			
Teacher turnover			
Student turnover			
Time available to deal with curriculum			
Time available to visit classrooms			
Time required to deal with business management			
Salary negotiations			
Instructional methods employed by your staff			
Instructional materials used by your staff			
Bilingual demands in your district			
Continuous Uniform Evaluation System (CUES)			
Unusual circumstances (Explain below)			

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In your own teaching, how did students' reading abilities affect your classroom practices?
2. You selected \_\_\_\_\_ as a journal you read regularly. What information do you receive from it?
3. You indicated that you are active in \_\_\_\_\_. What is the value of this organization for you?
4. Which one is the most important of the tasks you listed in Section D of the questionnaire?
5. You evaluated your reading program as \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you evaluate it that way?
6. Do you use the same criteria to select other teaching personnel as you do reading personnel?
7. Which is the most useful evaluative procedure you use? How do you use standardized test data?
8. Who advises you on reading matters? What are their strengths? With which reading people do you regularly confer? How often? For what reasons?
9. Who makes the reading program decisions in your district? By what means are the decisions made?
10. Who developed the goals/objectives of your reading program? What, if any, changes would you make?
11. How are reading materials selected in your district?
12. React to "All teachers should be teachers of reading".
13. React to "Anybody who can read can teach others to read".
14. You listed \_\_\_\_\_ as a serious factor in restricting your reading program. Why is it a serious factor? Is it the most serious factor? What could or should be done about it?
15. How do non-native English speakers impact upon your reading program?
16. Are you satisfied with the percent of your budget spent on reading?
17. What one most important thing would improve reading in your district?

**APPENDIX D**

**COVER LETTER**

Dear Arizona School Superintendent:

I need your information and opinions about how you deal with reading programs in your district. I am a doctoral student at the University of Arizona working on a degree in reading. I believe that my knowledge of reading is incomplete without gaining the perspectives of the chief school officer, the one person with the knowledge of all the factors affecting the reading program. It is the purpose of my dissertation to profile the backgrounds and working conditions of Arizona school superintendents in light of the reading program decisions they make. In other words, I want to view your reading program through your eyes.

Your district has been selected to participate in this project because of its representativeness of type and size. The Arizona Department of Education has endorsed the project (see enclosed letter). The information you provide will greatly assist me in drawing an accurate picture of the unique situations and problems of Arizona school superintendents.

The questionnaire enclosed should be completed at your earliest convenience. I will contact you to make a half hour appointment to pick up the questionnaire, go over it with you briefly, and ask a few additional questions. No names will be used in reporting the data and all information you provide will remain completely confidential. You are under no obligation to complete sections of the questionnaire which you might find objectionable.

Your giving me the completed materials and answering questions during the interview will be considered your permission for me to use the data you provide for the purpose of this project.

Sincerely,

Carol Pierson



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