

APPRAISAL OF CERTAIN SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

IN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4,

PARK COUNTY, MONTANA

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Upon taking over the superintendency of the Livingston Elementary Schools, the writer was surprised to find that the policies of the school board had never been assembled in an organized form.

An examination of the school board minutes, to ascertain what policies were in force, raised this question in the writer's mind, "Were the policies in force consistent with the general policies adopted by other school boards in the State of Montana?" It was the desire to answer this question that led to the selection of the problem for this investigation.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to have policies, which had been adopted by the Board of Trustees of School District No. 4, Park County, Montana, examined by certain first and second class districts in the State of Montana to ascertain if they had similar policies in force.

The writer believed that such a study would assist the Board of Trustees, of School District No. 4, Park County, Montana in re-evaluating these policies on the basis of the returns from questionnaires sent out to Montana school districts. The returns from the questionnaires might also aid the board of trustees in making a more intelligent approach in formulating future policies.

Procedure

The first approach to the problem was to make a study of available literature relative to the legal provisions of school board policies.

The next step was to examine the school board minutes and pick out all the policies passed from July 1, 1949 to June 30, 1957 for study and evaluation. Twenty-one policies were chosen from those previously adopted by the school board for appraisal by administrators in 8 of the 10 first class school districts and 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ second class school districts in Montana to ascertain if they had similar policies in force.

A questionnaire was formulated stating the policy and the question was then asked, "Have you such a policy now in force in your school system?" A direct answer of either yes or no could be made. An opportunity was given the superintendent to make any remarks he wished in reply to the question.

As a final step the results of the questionnaire were drawn together to isolate those policies in which the wording was ambiguous, or the legality was questionable. The questionable policies were presented to the Board of Trustees for further consideration in light of the findings.¹

Delimitation

This study was limited to the 21 policies chosen for study, and the 82 first and second class school districts contacted from the 88 first and second class school districts in the State of Montana.

The first procedure in the study was a review of literature pertaining to school board policies. This review was presented in Chapter II.

¹The adoption of a School Board Handbook was recommended as a result of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The child learns and develops best in a school which is a part of a system that operates smoothly, efficiently and fairly. Up-to-date, well-equipped buildings; well-run cafeterias, a good transportation system, an alert professional staff, cooperative principals, well-prepared teachers, satisfied patrons, do not just happen by themselves. They are rather the result of careful cooperative planning and efficient administration. Therefore, any procedure which is conducive to better administrative practices has a direct bearing on the welfare of the children and youth of our nation and has much to do with how well prepared for citizenship children are.

School board policies become statements which set forth the purposes and prescribe in general terms the organization and program of a school system. They create a framework within which the superintendent and his staff can discharge their assigned duties with positive direction. They tell what organization is wanted. They may also indicate why such policies and how extensive they are to be. There is great importance to be attached to policies and a distinction between these and rules and regulations.

Policies versus Rules and Regulations

Policies should deal with detailed descriptions of ways in which the purposes and objectives are to be accomplished. The specific directions, telling how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done, are labeled rules and regulations. They apply policy to practice.

"This distinction between 'policy' and 'rules and regulations' does not imply that policy should deal only with the abstract expressions of theory and philosophy. Policies must not become lofty pronouncements of high sounding purposes in no way connected with actual practices. At the same time they must not become hopelessly involved in a great mass of detailed directions and instructions,"¹ is the opinion of the committee representing the American Association of School Administrators and National School Boards Association.

Much of the confusion arising from efforts to draw a line between what is policy and what constitutes rules and regulations grows out of lack of a clear understanding of the relationship of the school board and its chief administrative officer, the Superintendent of Schools. By virtue of the powers with which it is vested, the school board is the final authority in setting of policy. A board of education is functioning within its sphere of activity when it approves the rules and regulations that are consistent with its policies. The execution of the policies step-by-step is the job of the school superintendent.

The idea of leaving the details of policy making to the administrative officer has been emphasized in the Rules and Regulations published by the Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas, which made this statement: "The revised rules do not include the minutia of administrative details and instructions necessary for the operation of the school organization; but rather the basic policies upon which decisions regarding procedure and functions are based."²

¹Written Policies for School Boards, American Association of School Administrators and National School Boards Association, 1956, pp. 3-23.

²Rules and Regulations, Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas, 1955, p. 7.

There is a danger that written policies may become rigid and inflexible. However, this objectionable feature can be overcome if school boards will periodically devote a certain amount of time to the study and revision of their published policies. There is a second danger that almost as soon as they are written they will become obsolete. This problem can be overcome by adherence to the practice of including only the more basic policies in the School Board Minutes. The fundamental principles of the operation of a school system do not change very frequently. There will be, and should be, some changes from time to time, to meet changing conditions. This problem could be met by a yearly review of written policies. This responsibility should be borne by the administrator who should call to the attention of the board those policies needing change, or those which have become obsolete. Once policies have been reduced to written form and assembled, if they merely become dust catchers they might as well be scattered through the back pages of the minutes of the board meetings. The continuing problem of keeping them before those concerned must be done on a yearly basis. Committees of school personnel can be appointed to study the minutes and to make an appraisal each year.

Even the best policy is worthless unless it is lived up to. Policies must be uniform in their application. Board members have a real obligation to the teaching personnel to remember this fact, for they set an example for the entire system to follow by adhering to their own policies. Helping the administration to phrase the overall policies and having these policies conveniently assembled in a school board handbook should help board members to stay on the right tract,

The importance of printed policies has been clearly stated by Koehlman and a lengthy quotation is justified:

There is a feeling among laymen and even among many superintendents that printed policies are constrictive and tend to hamper action. A more enlightened minority believe that a complete statement in printed form is not only an excellent device for vivifying the statutes and the practices from which they are derived, but also for serving as an objective means of adjusting differences between community and schools, boards of education and executive personnel, and as an interpretive device.³

The American Association of School Administrators in their discussion of written school board policies said:

Written policies are the articles of agreement in the partnership of board and superintendent. They are the basic guide for policy and execution, and their precise meaning must be constantly reviewed.⁴

This review of policies at first glance, may not seem to require much time. If one considers, however, the rapid turnover of board members as indicated by an average of seven years of service, and of school superintendents as indicated by an average of six years in each community, it is clear that experienced board members or the superintendent will have to give a great amount of time to the briefing of new board members. Just reading the statement of policy and giving examples of how they have been carried out in the past will not be enough. If the new board member, or superintendent, is human, he will want to know the background for the policies, how they came into being, and may wish to express his own views concerning them. Each such review of policy could possibly

³Koehlman, A. B., School Administration, 1951, p. 146.

⁴Written Policies of School Boards, op. cit., p. 23.

result in changes. The new member of the board must work with the policies before the general picture can be understood.

No one likes to confess ignorance. This is as true of board members as any one else. The new member may not want to ask questions concerning a particular policy, yet it is ambiguous to him. Perhaps the best way out of this embarrassing situation is to establish a formal, annual review of policies, which the new member or superintendent will accept as a matter of routine rather than as an action aimed at him in particular.

Mort states the importance of school board minutes as legal records when he says:

Records of utmost importance in every school system are the minutes of the board of education. Since legally, boards of education speak only through their minutes, these records are the expression of the governing body of the school. They record the employment of teachers, and authorize the paying of salaries of all the school personnel. Through the minutes authority is given for the purchase of school sites, to build and equip school buildings, to purchase supplies, to prepare and administer the school budget, and to carry out all the functions in administering a school.⁵

Mort further makes clear the need of a periodic appraisal on the need of a handbook when he says: "The minutes of the school board are public records and in some states must be published in their entirety or summary form. They are always available to public scrutiny, although few citizens take the time to visit the administrative offices for this purpose. It is for this reason that periodic appraisal of the minutes should be made. For this reason the publishing of a school board handbook, which is available to the teachers and the public is recommended."⁶

⁵Mort, P. R., Principles of School Administration, 1946, p. 247.

⁶Ibid., p. 227.

Although the preceding statement by Kort has not said in so many words that the policies of the board are incorporated in the minutes of the board meetings, it is obvious that this was his intent when he spoke of a periodic appraisal of the minutes and the need of a school board handbook.

There has been little doubt in the writer's mind that but a few school boards, in the State of Montana, periodically review their administrative policies. This feeling was substantiated by Kort when he said, "an examination of a large number of rules and regulations reveals that this problem of developing an 'internal legal structure' as a setting for local school operation is in need of attention in many school districts."⁷ He further points out that, "the powers delegated by the state legislature fall into two groups. The chief holder of these delegated powers is the board of education. The board is obligated to set up proper checks and balances on itself and its employees. These checks and balances should be carefully evaluated before final decision is made. These checks and balances should be carefully reviewed periodically in order to keep new members informed and to make sure they are accomplishing the purposes for which they were formulated."⁸

Summary

The review of available literature on school board policies made clear that it was only through policies, adopted by boards of education, that a school system can run harmoniously. Written policies constitute a form of checks and balances on policy making delegated to the boards of

⁷Ibid., p. 232

⁸Ibid., p. 232

education by their respective legislatures. Writers in this area seem to agree that these same checks and balances must be evaluated periodically in order to keep the new board members or a new superintendent informed.

There seems to be unity of opinion that only basic policies should be written up in the school board minutes. Rules and regulations for the operation of the buildings, and overall educational control of the system, should be formulated by the administration using the basic policies as a blueprint.

Constant evaluation has been pointed out as necessary in order to eliminate policies which are no longer applicable to existing conditions and to give a basis for new policies which become necessary from time to time to keep abreast of ever-changing conditions.

Various methods have been indicated for periodically evaluating existing board policies. Committees of key people in a system may be used. A yearly review of the policies by the board of education is another method that may be used. Questionnaires on questionable policies is still another method. A review of literature revealed that leaders in the field of school administration recommend a periodic review of policies either through the use of the committee system, the school board, or the questionnaire.

Because an evaluation of school board policies in School District No. 4, Park County, Montana, had not been made over a period of 30 years, the writer felt that there was a need for appraisal, by a representative group of Montana school administrators, of the existing policies before presenting them to the board of trustees for reaffirmation. It was this need that led to this investigation and the use of the questionnaire to school men of the state to determine their reaction to 42 policies which

were believed questionable. The results from the questionnaire are presented in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

APPRAISAL OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

The instrument used to assist in the evaluation of existing policies of School District No. 4, Park County, Montana, was the questionnaire. The policies adopted from July 1, 1949 to June 30, 1957 were copied from the "minutes book." Twenty-one policies were chosen for the study. One set of 10 policies was sent to 8 of 10 first class districts in Montana and $3\frac{1}{4}$ second class districts. A second set of 11 policies was sent to 42 of the remaining $1\frac{1}{4}$ second class districts. This method was used for two reasons. Certain policies were more applicable to first and larger second class districts than those of the third class. Because of the length of the policies, it was felt that a better return would be obtained by dividing them into separate sets and the samplings would give a more accurate picture of representative policies throughout the state.

The total return was very satisfactory. Of the first and larger second class districts 39 of the 42 questionnaires sent to superintendents were returned. Of the smaller second class districts 32 of the 40 questionnaires sent to administrators were returned. The probable reason for a better return from the first and larger second class districts was that these administrators were more experienced and appreciated more the importance of statistical studies. The superintendents in the smaller second class districts, in the majority of cases, teach classes and perhaps have less time to work on statistical studies of this nature. A time limit was set for the return of the questionnaire. This perhaps enhanced its return.

The questionnaires, copies of which appears in Appendix A and B, was so constructed as to allow for a "yes" or "no" reply and for remarks. The opportunity for the administrator to make pertinent remarks was one of the most valuable parts of the questionnaires. Through the analysis of the remarks the present policies were checked for ambiguity.¹ Policy No. 8 found in Appendix A, as an example, states that student teachers be allowed to do their practice teaching under the direction of the superintendent. This policy was interpreted by a number of administrators to mean that the superintendent did not delegate the supervising of cadet teachers to the classroom teachers in whose rooms they taught. This was very important in rephrasing existing policies and in formulating new ones.

Policies as Appraised by First and Larger Second Class Districts

The appraisal by first and larger second class districts of the sampling of school board policies in force in School District No. 4, Park County, Montana, indicated that few, if any, of the first and larger second class districts have uniform policies. This is shown in Table 1 by the variation of frequencies of policies in force. The policy number in the table corresponds to the policy as it appears in the questionnaire in Appendix A and B.

¹ Ambiguous policies were presented to the School Board for evaluation.

TABLE 1. STATUS OF 11 SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES AS APPRAISED BY FIRST AND LARGE SECOND CLASS DISTRICTS.

Policy No.	No. of Districts With a Policy in Force	No. of Districts With no Set Policy
1	23	16
2	8	31
3	10	29
4	7	32
5	4	35
6	15	24
7	9	30
8	16	23
9	17	22
10	6	33
11	7	32

Staff Unexcused Absences — Policy No. 1 regarding the unexcused absences by teachers varied from no excused absences to five days emergency absence in addition to the regular sick leave allowance. In a number of districts the teacher or janitor pays the difference between the substitute's salary and his own. In one district the teacher or janitor pays the substitute. One district leaves the "emergency leave" up to the discretion of the superintendent. One district gives no unexcused absence. The teacher or janitor is "docked" in the event he is away from the building. One district allows extra consideration to faithful employees. One district has the janitors make up the time they are away from their work.

Summary — It was evident from the replies regarding this policy that each district solved its problem in a manner best fitted to the individual teacher or custodian involved.

The Custodian -- Allowing the custodian to take all or part of Saturday off with pay, as reported in Policy No. 2, showed little variation. Some districts are on a 40-hour week. A number of the districts had the custodian work on Saturday morning while others did not require the custodian to be present on Saturday.

Summary -- The general procedure was to allow the custodian Saturday morning off if his work was completed.

Requiring Physical Examination -- Requiring the custodian to have a physical examination, as stated in Policy No. 3, ranged from such answers as, "We have a good janitor over our school," to annual physical examinations. A number of superintendents indicated that this was a worth while policy and they would either like to have such a provision or were going to incorporate it into their set of policies next year. It appears from the replies that only a minority of the districts answering the questionnaire were concerned about the physical health of their custodians.

Shop Fees -- Policy No. 4 regarding the collection of manual training fees shows that some districts collected shop fees when convenient. Others had the students keep the payments up-to-date. A number of districts required payment when the project was taken home. One district collected the money as the lumber is issued. Another district required the students to pay in advance or buy the lumber at the local lumber yard as needed. One administrator stated that such a policy was not the school board's business, but lies in the realm of administration. One system collected its shop bills at the beginning of each semester. One school district has a system of selling shop cards at the beginning of the school years.

Summary -- The collection of fees from the boys vary with the individual districts. Each district offering manual training required each boy to pay for the lumber used. This would indicate that the materials used in the shop program is not considered a part of the instruction program.

Pregnancy -- Policy No. 5 which provides for terminating the contract of the teacher in the event of pregnancy was answered in a variety of ways, ranging from "a good idea" to "illegal". A number of districts left the problem up to the discretion of the superintendent. One superintendent felt that the problem should resolve itself. One district stated that it hired only single women and thus far had only one problem involving this issue. A number of districts reported policies which allowed the teacher to teach from three to six months after pregnancy. One district gave the teacher reasonable time off to have the baby. A few administrators asked the married teacher to notify them in the event of pregnancy in order that they might secure a substitute before the regular teacher's resignation.

Summary -- With the shortage of teachers it will become more and more necessary to employ married women. Since married teachers will be raising families the problem of the pregnant teacher will be an ever-re-occurrent one. This problem will require understanding on the part of boards of education in the future.

Fund Raising -- Raising funds by projects, as shown in Policy No. 6, indicated that schools make certain exceptions to the policy. Some extra-curricular groups are allowed to raise funds for their activities. A few schools limited this activity to Junior Red Cross, March of Dimes, T. B. Seals and Easter Seal drives. One system had only one fund raising

activity. The profits from this activity go to the school. Any worth while drive was allowed if carried on by adults in one district. This same district refused soliciting or participation by the students for fund raising activities. In one district soliciting was done in the elementary school only. A number of districts said that each request, for soliciting funds, was reviewed by the board of education. A few of the larger districts left the approval of the requests for soliciting funds up to the superintendents. In the smaller second class districts the questionnaire brought out that soliciting for funds was very difficult to do away with.

Summary -- The raising of funds in the schools was handled differently in the various districts. All of the districts reported that they allowed fund raising in their schools. The number of organizations which were allowed to solicit in the schools varied from one to five in number. The smaller the district the less chance there seemed to be of eliminating fund drives in the schools.

Substitute Teachers' Salaries -- Policy No. 7 regarding salaries for substitute teachers indicated that many systems had a definite policy dealing with this problem. The returns showed that wages paid substitutes varied from \$10.00 per day for elementary teachers to \$17.50 per day for secondary teachers. Some districts increased the substitute's pay after five days of consecutive teaching. Other districts did not put the teacher on regular pay until after 30 days of consecutive teaching. One district kept the substitute teacher on the substitute scale indefinitely. Another district reported an interesting schedule for the substitute. It started with a base pay of \$10.00 for the elementary and \$12.00 for the secondary, but after five days of consecutive teaching

the substitute's salary was raised \$2.00 per day.

Summary -- The school districts do not pay uniform salaries for substitute teachers. The salary schedules indicate that a greater value is placed upon the services of the high school substitute teacher than upon the elementary teacher.

Cadet Teachers -- Policy No. 8 which deals with student teachers brought out several interesting replies. Teachers work with the superintendent and supervising teachers. The superintendent makes the assignments. One man is in charge of scheduling. There is no supervision done by college instructors. The responsibility rests with the classroom teacher and superintendent. The teacher supervises rather than the superintendent. Only high school cadets are allowed to do practice teaching.

Summary -- This policy is not clearly stated. It leaves the impression that the superintendent does the supervising instead of delegating it to the principal and classroom teachers. It was obvious that the cadet teacher is under supervision while practice teaching.

School Directories -- Policy No. 9, which referred to school directories, brought forth a variety of replies. There were only two school districts which gave affirmative answers to Policy No. 9 regarding school directories. One district claimed to have such a policy but it was not written. Another district indicated that it had no written policy as such but such a policy is followed in practice. In a majority of school systems directories were made available to commercial and service clubs only. One district superintendent asked the question, "Why coddle and protect?" He undoubtedly was referring to the teachers.

Summary -- School directories are made available to commercial concerns as well as the employees in a majority of the school districts.

Teachers' Summer School Attendance -- A number of districts indicated in Policy No. 10, which referred to summer school attendance that they have no policy requiring teachers to attend summer school. Other districts reported they required the teacher to acquire 3 quarter hours credit within each 3-year period provided that they did not have a Bachelor of Arts degree. One system would exempt teachers with life certificates.

Summary -- There was no uniformity regarding the policy of attending summer school.

Health Requirements -- Policy No. 11 regarding physical examinations of school employees was answered in a variety of ways. It was interesting to find that one large district had no written policy regarding the health of the employees. The requirements of others reporting ranged from no requirements for health examinations to a negative X-ray or tuberculin test every year. Some districts pay for the X-ray which then becomes the property of the district. A number of districts reserved the right to request a physical examination when desired.

Summary -- Although health is one of the main objectives of education, the answers to this policy indicated the practice of requiring physical examinations of school employees was far from uniform in the State. The policies varied from one examination each year to no examination.

Policies as Appraised by Smaller Second Class Districts

Policies in the smaller second class districts vary according to the type of policy presented as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. STATUS OF 10 SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES AS APPRAISED BY SMALL SECOND CLASS DISTRICTS

Policy No.	No. of Districts With a Policy in Force	No. of Districts With no Set Policy
1	2	30
2	0	32
3	2	30
4	26	6
5	15	17
6	6	26
7	2	30
8	21	11
9	16	16
10	1	31

Kindergartens -- Policies 1, 2 and 3 regarding entrance ages to kindergarten, care of the childrens' feet, and rest periods brought out only two affirmative answers. The replies clearly showed that there were only two districts in this class with policies in force. The remaining districts do not have kindergartens. One district with a kindergarten had no restrictions on footwear while classes are in session. The remaining district allowed its children to attend classes in their stocking feet. It was evident that little or no consideration had been given to the care of the childrens' feet in kindergarten in these districts.

Summary -- The questionnaire clearly indicated that kindergartens are the exception rather than the rule in Montana school systems. In those schools, which did have kindergartens, the returns showed that little or no consideration was given to the childrens' feet. The question concerning rest period went unanswered.

First Grade Entrance Ages -- Entrance ages to first grade as reported in Policy No. 4 revealed that there were only 15 districts whose entrance age for grade one was "on or before" October 1st. Five districts admitted children whose birthday fell not later than October 15th. Four districts have set the entrance age as October 31st. One allows children to enter as late as November 1st and one as late as December 31st. Those districts which have no policy apparently follow the constitutional provision for entrance to first grade.

Summary -- Returns indicated that there was a need for greater uniformity throughout the state for entrance ages to grade one.

Restrictions for Entering Grade One -- Policy No. 5 restricting children who have attended classes in first grade, outside the district, from entering grade one in Livingston, School District No. 4, unless they were six years of age on or before October 1st of that school year has been adopted by approximately 50 per cent of the school districts reporting. The districts having entrance ages other than October 1st evidently had a similar policy regarding entrance to first grade within their district, if the pupil had previously enrolled elsewhere.

Summary -- There seemed to be some uniformity in refusing children admission to first grade even though they had attended school elsewhere, unless they were of entrance age according to the regulations of that district.

Summer School Remedial Work.-- The replies in Policy No. 6 regarding summer school remedial work indicated that the majority of schools felt that there is no need for such a policy. One school used such a policy for a time and then became dissatisfied with the results and gave it up. One school used summer classes at Eastern Montana College of

Education at Billings for its summer school remedial work for students.

Summary -- There seemed to be consensus of opinion that children who fail during the regular school year should repeat the grade. There was serious objection by administrators to summer school for children.

Manual Training Statements -- The replies for Policy No. 7 regarding statements of amounts due the manual training department varied. A number of districts do not offer manual training below grade nine, however, some interesting comments were made. A few districts had students pay their fees in advance. Others allowed a maximum debt for materials, at which time payment must be made. Some refused to give marks at the end of the year unless the manual training bills had been paid. One district required the student to pay for the project before it was taken home. Several districts indicated that they were much in favor of the policy and would take action on a similar one. It was quite obvious to the writer that such a policy was not applicable to all districts. Each district had conditions which did not warrant such a policy.

Summary -- The statement to parents regarding charges for manual training materials each six week period was considered of little or no value in small second class districts.

Home Economics Fees -- In Policy No. 8 regarding fees for home economics classes the policies varied from school to school. There were 21 districts with such a policy while 11 had no policy of this kind. Three districts reported that they had plastic dishes and did not need to make a charge. A majority of the districts felt that normal breakage was considered a part of instructional costs. Four districts stated that they did not teach home economics below grade nine. Two districts made a charge when there had been flagrant abuse and carelessness in the

handling of the kitchen ware. One district stated that it made a \$1.00 charge per student.

Summary -- The general policy regarding fees for home economics was that no fee was charged in a majority of the schools. The cost of food and breakage of dishes is considered as part of the cost of instruction.

Immediate Family -- In Policy No. 9 regarding the immediate family the replies indicated that 16 school districts had a similar policy and 16 had no policy of this kind. The result differed among ten of the districts replying in the affirmative. The question in the minds of the administrators in these districts seemed to be on the interpretation of "immediate family". Two districts had interpreted "immediate family" to include relatives by marriage. One district included a relative if living within the same household. One district answered in the affirmative that such a policy is in existence and then made a notation that it is not qualified to say as to who an "immediate family" includes. Two districts stated that they had broadened the policy on special occasions. One district had such a broad interpretation of the term that it allowed "absence to attend trials" under it. Three districts included death under their interpretation of sick leave policy. A number of administrators did not answer yes or no but attempted to formulate a question of their own.

Summary -- A policy to cover "sick leave" was far from uniform in the several smaller second class school districts. The problem the majority of school boards faced was the interpretation of "immediate family." It appeared from the answers on the questionnaire that the problem is one which each individual district will have to solve.

Leave of Absence -- Policy No. 10 regarding leave of absence for pregnant women teachers was answered in the negative by 31 of the 32 districts replying to the questionnaire. Only one district had a policy granting a leave of absence to female teachers who become pregnant while under contract. This district stated a few married teachers were hired and that those who were hired were chosen with great care. Although one district did allow a leave of absence, it did not have such a policy. The superintendent grants the leave apparently with the school board's approval. One district felt that the policy as written could not be legally upheld. Four districts indicated that such a policy might be wise.

Summary -- There appeared to be little or no consideration given to the welfare of married teachers in many of the smaller second class districts.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Some important observations regarding school board policies in the first and second class districts in the State of Montana were brought to light through the questionnaire. It showed that there was no unanimity of opinion regarding school board policies regardless of the size of the system or the class of the district. One first class district may have had a policy regarding a certain problem while another district in the same class had no policy in force regarding the same problem.

The results of the questionnaire seemed to indicate that the class and size of the district had some effect upon whether a school board had adopted written policies regulating the operation of its school system.

In the remarks made by superintendents there appeared to be some indication that in a few systems where the administrator has had a long period of service in that particular school district there were fewer written policies than in districts where there had been more frequent administrative changes.

A few of the superintendents stated that the fewer the policies the better. They seem to feel that written policies had the effect of limiting the effectiveness of the administration.

The replies to the questionnaires indicated to the writer that in those districts where the administrator had enjoyed a rather long tenure little or no change in policies had been made over a period of years and the administrator had a free hand in the operation of the school. If

this were true there could be repercussions when administrative changes ultimately do take place.

The answers to the questionnaire regarding individual policies gave some interesting side lights. It seemed quite obvious that policies affecting children directly received less attention by the boards of education than did those affecting the finances or teaching personnel.

The questionnaire results pointed out that written policies varied with the class of the school districts, the number of years an administrator had been in a particular district and the individual community. Whether the school system had written policies may have been the result of the administrative leadership in that district.

It was interesting to note that there were very few public school kindergartens in the State of Montana. The writer wondered why. Is it due to lack of financial support or apathy on the part of the citizens? Do administrators believe that the kindergarten is an educational frill? Is the tax money being spent more wisely by reducing the enrollments in the first grades through the addition of a teacher or teachers instead of having a kindergarten?

In those schools having kindergartens, there seemed to be little or no consideration for the care of the childrens' feet, or else they were allowed to wear street shoes in the classroom.

In small second class districts nearly twice as many school systems make no charge for home economics as do those schools who do make a charge. This would indicate that the cost of the groceries used in the cooking classes was considered a part of the instructional costs.

It was found from the replies of the first and second class districts that four systems had a policy terminating the contract of a

teacher in the event of pregnancy. Montana law states that a teacher can have his teaching certificate revoked for, "incompetence, immorality, intemperance, physical inability, crime against the state law, refusal to perform duty, or general neglect of the business of the school."¹ Nothing is mentioned concerning the pregnancy of the teacher. This would indicate that a contract could not be terminated for this reason. It would also appear that these districts were either in ignorance of the law or else they were using this policy as a subterfuge.

Implications

The overall results of the questionnaire were very satisfactory. The returns were very good and the statements under remarks brought out a wealth of opinions regarding the existing policies in School District No. 4, Park County, Montana.

The writer found that there was a divergence of opinion regarding written policies regardless of the class of the respective school district reporting. The general opinion was that by-and-large school administrators in Montana were in favor of written school board policies and that practices as revealed and suggestions given in remarks would be helpful in revising policies for the planned school board handbook of School District No. 4 Park County, Montana.

In reviewing the replies to the policies appearing on the questionnaire it was found that some of the policies now in force in School District No. 4, Park County, Montana, are questionable according to general practice and should be presented to the school board for evaluation.

¹School Laws of the State of Montana, Helena, Montana, p. 87.

Policy No. 2 in Appendix A states that the custodian may take Saturday morning off with pay, provided he notifies either the superintendent or clerk of his intentions previous to the Saturday requested. Since the custodian must give either the superintendent or clerk prior notice of his intentions this policy might well be changed and put in the administrative rules and regulations.

The collection of money from parents or pupils by the manual training instructor and the billing of lumber bills to parents as found in Policy No. 4 Appendix A and Policy No. 7 Appendix B need not be a basic school board policy. This policy could best be put in the teachers' handbook and the proposed school board handbook as a rule or regulation and removed from the minutes of the board of education of School District No. 4, Park County, Montana.

The policies regarding pregnancy of female teachers as found in Policy No. 5 Appendix A and Policy No. 10 Appendix B should probably be rescinded and removed from the school board minutes. In the event of a test case before the courts this policy would probably be declared illegal. It is apparently now being used as subterfuge to force a married teacher to hand in her contract in the event of pregnancy. This problem could better be handled through good public relations between the teacher involved and the administration.

The policy regarding student teaching found under No. 8 Appendix A should be reworded. The implication is that only the superintendent does the supervising of student teachers.

Policy No. 4 Appendix B which states that a child must be six years of age on or before October 1st of the same year before he may be admitted to first grade is in conflict with the Constitution of the State

of Montana.² Since this policy is illegal in all probability it should be rescinded. Policies No. 5 in Appendix A, No's. 4, 5 and 10 in Appendix B should be rescinded because they are in conflict with Montana School Law.³

Those policies which rightly are classed as rules and regulations should be removed from the minute book and be placed under the proper section of the proposed School Board Handbook.

An analysis of the questionnaire makes it clear to the writer that the school board policies of School District No. 1, Park County, Montana should be evaluated by the Board of Education and brought up-to-date.

The principal value gained from this study has been to show that there is a constant need for evaluation of school board policies on an annual basis. This fact has been emphasized by writers in the field of school administration. Through an annual review of policies, new members on the board are kept informed without being embarrassed by having to ask questions concerning policy. The board, as a whole, is kept up-to-date and necessary changes in policy can be made without conflicts in preceding policies.

²Ibid., p. 11.

³Ibid., pp. 11 and 87.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

School Board policies of School District No. 4, Park County as evaluated by 39 first and larger second class districts in Montana

	Yes	No
1. That teachers and janitors be docked full salary for any unexcused absences not covered by the sick leave regulation.	23	16
2. That the janitors be allowed to take all or a portion of Saturday morning off with pay, provided the individual janitor notifies the Clerk or Superintendent that he would not be at the building.	8	31
3. That all janitors and custodians employed must present satisfactory evidence of good health to be presented on a form supplied by the School District and signed by a medical doctor.	10	29
4. That the shop instructor be required to collect lumber bills each six-weeks period instead of at the end of the year.	7	32
5. That the Board of Education may terminate the contract in the event of the pregnancy of the teacher.	4	35
6. That no fund raising programs be allowed to be carried out in the local public schools.	15	24
7. That the wages to be paid any substitute teacher who teaches in one position for one teacher for more than ten consecutive teaching days shall be set according to the schedule such substitute teacher would receive if she were regularly employed.	9	30
8. That a student teacher be allowed to do their practice work in the elementary classrooms under the direction of the superintendent.	16	23
9. That directories of the employees of School District No. 4, Park County, will be made available to the employees, members of the Board of Trustees of said district, and to such other organizations and individuals, upon request, who do not use such directories for commercial purposes.	17	22
10. That in view of the present state law requiring teachers to attend summer school periodically to secure re-newal of their teaching certificates that the policy of the Board requiring all teachers to attend summer school once in each 5-year period be and it is hereby rescinded.	6	33

11. That before a contract may be issued, all new candidates for teaching positions in the public schools of District No. 4 must successfully pass a complete physical examination, including a chest X-ray, conducted and reported by a medical doctor on forms to be supplied by the school district. All teachers who have reached the age of 60 who seek re-election to positions in the public schools of District No. 4 must successfully pass a similar examination including a chest X-ray, conducted and reported by a medical doctor not later than March 1 of each year on forms to be supplied by the school district; provided that the school district will pay not to exceed \$10.00 for each such examination required of teachers who have reached the age of 60. This regulation shall not affect candidates for re-election who are under the age of 60.

Appendix B

School Board policies of School District No. 4, Park County, Montana,
as evaluated by 32 small second class districts in Montana

	Yes	No	Par- tial
1. That October 1st shall be the deadline set for entrance to kindergarten.	2	30	
2. That parents of kindergarten children shall furnish tennis shoes or keds for the children instead of bedroom slippers.	0	32	
3. That the kindergarten have a period of relaxation during class periods if the temperature at floor level is 68 degrees or higher; provided the rest period may be on rugs on the floor, or at tables at the discretion of the teacher.	2	30	
4. That children entering the first grade in the public schools of School District No. 4 on or after the first day of school must be 6 years of age on or before October 1st of the same year.	15	6	11
5. That the rule regarding admission of children in the first grade be interpreted to include all children who had not reached the age of 6 before October 1st regardless of any attendance elsewhere.	12	17	3
6. That all remedial work during the summer vacation period must be conducted by an instructor holding a valid teaching certificate in the State of Montana. Such remedial work must be in those subjects recommended by the Superintendent. After completion of the work outlined, and upon the recommendation of the remedial teacher and the Superintendent the student may be promoted to the succeeding grade for the ensuing year.	6	26	
7. That the Manual Training instructor be required to send to the parents of Manual Training students a statement of amounts due the department each six weeks period and to have such statements signed by the parents and returned to the teacher.	2	30	
8. That no fee be charged in the Home Economics department to cover the breakage of dishes.	21	11	
9. That the term "immediate family" in the sick leave regulations shall be henceforth interpreted to mean parents, sisters, brothers, spouse or children.	16	16	

	Yes	No	Par- tial
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10. That no leave of absence be granted to female teachers who become pregnant while under contract; and further that a clause be inserted in all future contracts to the effect that such contract is subject to termination if the teacher becomes pregnant while teaching under such contract

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Appendix C

Copy of Letter Sent With Questionnaire

Date

Mr. Bill Smith.
Superintendent of Schools
Brown's Gulch, Montana

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed please find a questionnaire concerning school board policies in the Livingston Elementary Schools. As you know, many policies formulated by school boards over the state are the result of policies already formulated by other boards.

We hope to evaluate our policies on the basis of what is being done in representative school boards throughout the state.

You will find a self-addressed envelope for the purpose of returning the questionnaire.

I hope that you will aid us in completing the questionnaire as soon as it is convenient for you to do so.

Very truly yours,

K. W. Haines
Superintendent