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Signature Laurence E. Relford
Date May 17, 1971

THE EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
PERSONNEL IN MONTANA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

by

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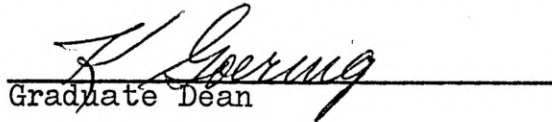
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L. E. R.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE PROPOSAL- - - - -	1
The Problem- - - - -	2
The Need - - - - -	2
Questions to be Answered - - - - -	4
General Procedures - - - - -	4
Limitations- - - - -	6
Definition of Terms- - - - -	7
Professional School Personnel- - - - -	8
Size of School District- - - - -	8
Validity - - - - -	9
Total Learning Situation - - - - -	10
Worthwhile Conclusions - - - - -	10
Summary- - - - -	10
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE- - - - -	12
History of Marriage Regulations in Montana - - - - -	12
Written and Unwritten Policy - - - - -	14
The Effects of Tenure- - - - -	15
The N.E.A. Platform- - - - -	15
The Effects on Teacher Morale- - - - -	16
Nepotism - - - - -	16
III. ANALYSIS OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES - - - - -	19
Analysis of Data for Group A - - - - -	20
Written vs. Unwritten Policies - - - - -	20
Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses- - - - -	21
Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities - - - - -	22
Reasons for Not Having Restrictive Policy-- - - - -	23
Reasons for Having Restrictive Policy- - -	24

Chapter	Page
Analysis of Data for Group B- - - - -	25
Written vs. Unwritten Policies - - - - -	25
Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses- - - - -	26
Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities - - - - -	28
Reasons for Not Having Restrictive Policies - - - - -	29
Reasons for Having Restrictive Policies- -	30
Analysis of Data for Group C- - - - -	31
Written vs. Unwritten Policies - - - - -	31
Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses- - - - -	31
Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities - - - - -	33
Reasons for Not Having Restrictive Policy - - - - -	34
Reasons for Having Restrictive Policy- - -	34
Summary - - - - -	35
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS- - - - -	38
Summary - - - - -	38
Conclusions - - - - -	41
V. REFERENCES CITED - - - - -	44
APPENDIX - - - - -	45
Cover Letter for Questionnaire - - - - -	46
Questionnaire- - - - -	47

ABSTRACT

The basic problem of this study was to examine Montana school board policies related to the employment and/or placement of married couples in professional educating capacities.

The information was acquired by sending a questionnaire to district superintendents of schools. Only school districts containing at least one public high school and one public elementary school were sampled. The sample was further limited by separating the school districts into three groups based on the district enrollments in grades 9-12. Twenty districts were selected randomly from each group to be studied.

The data was presented in the form of percentages of the total number of school districts sampled from each group. The study of these percentages revealed that the majority of school districts in all three groups had no restrictions pertaining to the employment of husband and wife in professional educating capacities. Most of the policies that school districts did have were not in writing. It was found that more large districts had policies regulating the employment and/or placement of married couples in professional educating capacities than small districts. The reasons given by the superintendents for either having or not having restrictions varied only slightly among the groups.

It was concluded that the restrictions that were in force were designed to promote a better total learning situation. It was also concluded that married educators should be aware that their opportunities may be limited if both husband and wife want to sign contracts in the same district. Finally, it was concluded that the lack of these restrictive policies was generally a favorable step toward a better total learning situation.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL

School districts in the state of Montana have varied views with regard to the employment of married couples to work in professional capacities within the school district. Local school board rulings concerning this area of employment can be found in many areas in the country. Examples of possible policies concerning the employment of married personnel in professional capacities are suggested in the following paragraphs.

There are school districts in the state of Montana that have school board regulations preventing the district from employing a man and his wife to both work in professional capacities in the school district. There are also school districts in Montana which have school board rulings that a husband and wife combination can be employed to work in professional capacities, but the members of the combination must be assigned to work in different buildings within the school district. Finally, there are those school districts in Montana which will employ a man and his wife in a professional capacity, but not if one member holds a position

which is subordinate to the other member of the combination.

The Problem

The problem of this study was to determine what rules and regulations Montana public school districts had restricting the assignment and employment of married personnel to fill professional assignments in the district's schools. This problem was broadened by the desire of the researcher to compare the rules and regulations among three sizes of school districts that exist in Montana. This comparison was not only concerned with the kind of rules each size of school had, but also with the prevalence of school board rules restricting the employment of professional school personnel. Finally, the reasons for adopting restrictive marriage rules had to be examined for each school group, and conclusions were drawn as to whether or not such rules would help or hinder the entire learning situation in schools of that school group's size.

The Need

This study is needed by both the administrative segment of school districts in Montana and the professional staff of these school districts.

As the supply of professional school personnel gains

equilibrium with the demand for professional school personnel, the competition for employment becomes keener. It is imperative in this situation that all certified applicants be aware of various school district's regulations. In reference to this fact, it is not uncommon that people of a mutual interest in the education of youth should marry. Neither is it unlikely that they should both want to pursue the professional field for which they have prepared themselves. In this ever-present situation it is important that they be aware that certain school districts are more likely to have marriage restrictions than others. It is equally important that these married professional educators know why school districts have these rules and what the value of the rules is to the total learning situation in the school district.

This study can also be of service to the administrative aspect of a district's schools. This study should be valuable to neighboring school districts that are trying to develop more uniform personnel requirements and regulations. Uniformity of personnel requirements and regulations can lead to more harmony among districts and a higher professional employee moral. This will automatically result in a better total learning situation.

Questions to be Answered

There were several questions that had to be answered in order for this researcher to draw any worthwhile conclusions. In the course of this study, it had to be determined what size school district was most likely to have marriage restrictions in employment qualifications. It was important to make note of what these regulations were and if they were uniform only in districts of comparable size or for other sizes of school districts also. Once it was determined what regulations were most common among Montana school districts it was necessary to find the reasons that school boards had for adopting these marriage restrictions for employing professional school personnel. The final question which needed answering was, were the reasons for adopting marriage restrictions for professional employees valid for the sizes of school districts that had adopted them.

General Procedures

The following paragraphs explain the procedures that were used in conducting this study. The basic source of the data that was analyzed was a questionnaire that was sent to school district superintendents. They were asked to relate written and/or unwritten regulations that their school boards

may have passed pertaining to employment of husband and wife combinations to serve in professional capacities in the district's schools.

The questionnaire was sent to a random sample of school district superintendents in the state of Montana. The district had to contain at least one elementary school and one high school to become part of the sample. These districts were separated into three groups depending on the size of the school district. The size of the school district and the detailed description of each group is explained completely in the Definition of Terms. Twenty districts from each group were selected randomly to receive questionnaires. In order that the sample number of school districts from each group contained the same number of responses, the data analysis was based on the number of questionnaires returned from the group with the poorest response. The groups with more returns than this were made equal to the group with the poorest response by randomly omitting districts until all three groups contained the same number of responses.

When the questionnaires were returned, they were separated into the pre-determined groups of school districts. The first group to be dealt with was "group C." The second group was "group B," while the third group to be analyzed was

"group A." The use of these separate groupings allowed this researcher to compare the school district regulations more easily and with more indicative results. Within the categories, the frequency of specific regulations was noted and reasons for various regulations were examined. These notations were expressed through the use of percentages. Once the data was applied to the three groupings individually, a brief summary was constructed to show the relationships between the categories.

The researcher's personal conclusion and recommendations were then formulated, based on the results of this study.

Limitations

This study had some limitations. For example, the major source of pertinent data came through the use of a questionnaire. As even the most carefully worded questionnaires can be misunderstood, the ultimate results of this study were limited in proportion to the degree of ambiguity present in the questionnaire. The conclusions that were drawn from the questionnaire were obviously devaluated to some degree with each questionnaire that went unreturned. This study was limited further because only a random selection of school districts was sampled. The total picture of

the situation was inferred from the results of this random sample.

This study was also limited in the evaluation of the validity of a school district's rules restricting the employment of married professional personnel. This evaluation rested solely with the researcher, based on a comparison of the rules of the districts that responded to the questionnaire.

The researcher's own criterion for the validity of district rules was used. This too tended to limit the worth of the conclusions that were drawn from this study. The criterion for validity is examined later in this study.

Another limiting factor in this research was the fact that only public schools were used for the study. Although the involvement of private schools would present a more complete picture, it would also further limit the ability to draw worthwhile conclusions as it would broaden the field of research beyond workable limits. In the researcher's judgment it was more important that the study be concise, than all inclusive.

Definition of Terms

In order that the reader understand more fully the researcher's intents, explanations and conclusions, the

following list of definitions of terms used is provided:

Professional School Personnel:

Those people who have prepared themselves through education to perform the duties of educating the nation's youth were considered "professional school personnel." They were certified "administrative and supervisory officials and teachers employed in a school system in order to carry on the educational program."¹

Size of School District:

When the size of a district was discussed, it referred to the district's enrollment in grades 9-12 for the 1970-71 school year. The enrollment for grades 9-12 in districts having recognized junior high schools was approximated by adding 1/3 of the junior high school enrollment to the high school enrollment (grades 10, 11, and 12). The term "size" had nothing to do with the number of square miles in the district.

The three groups of school districts that were referred

¹Carter V. Good, ed., Dictionary of Education (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945), p. 294.

to are as follows, and indicate the approximate enrollment of the district.

GROUP A: Indicated that there were fewer than 150 pupils enrolled in grades 9-12 in the district's public schools.

GROUP B: Indicated between 150 and 450 pupils were enrolled in grades 9-12 in the district's public schools.

GROUP C: Indicated more than 450 pupils were enrolled in grades 9-12 in the district's public schools.

Validity:

This term was used in reference to the researcher's conclusions on the worth of a school district's reasons and regulations for restricting the employment of married professional personnel. The degree of validity was determined by the researcher in light of his most logical reasoning and good judgement as developed by this study.² A valid regulation and reason was one that was beneficial to the total learning situation in the school district. An invalid regulation and reason was one which did not benefit the total

²Ibid., 442.

learning situation.

Total Learning Situation:

This was the atmosphere that was present when all of the factors that could affect student learning were taken into consideration. This study was basically concerned with one factor in this atmosphere--the school board's rulings affecting the employment of married professional personnel in the district.

Worthwhile Conclusions:

These were conclusions that were drawn by the researcher based on the evidence which was accumulated in this study.

Summary

There was a discrepancy in school board regulations concerning the employment of married professional school personnel in the state of Montana. This paper was based on a survey of the marriage regulations of a random sample of school boards having jurisdiction over at least one elementary school and one high school in Montana. From this survey, conclusions were drawn as to the need for these regulations in different sizes of school districts and the effect they had, if any, on the total learning situation in the district. In reviewing the related literature, it was

evident that there was little published material that dealt with school board regulations concerning the employment and placement of married couples in the district's public schools. It is hoped that this study will help to fill that void.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As there had apparently been very little research conducted on the subject of the employment of married professional school personnel in school districts in the United States, there was almost no written material on the employment of married professional school personnel in school districts in Montana. Consequently, the literature that was reviewed for this study served more as an orienting device than as a contributor of factual information. There was some literature which contained data that was directly pertinent to the study, but it was often devaluated by the early date of its origin. The majority of information obtained from the literature then served this study in a relative capacity only.

History of Marriage Regulations in Montana:

The occurrence of restrictive regulations concerning the employment of professional school personnel as adopted by school boards seemed to have been very common during the depression of the 1930's. School boards were reluctant to hire two people from one family when the unemployment rates of the period were so high. As late as the 1940's, such

regulations were still continued in some Montana school districts. This was the case of the Helena, Montana school district while Mr. Earl Fellbaum was the superintendent of schools there.³ In some cases, these old regulations restricting the employment of married personnel remained in effect into the 1960's. Again using the Helena school district for example, its regulations restricting marriage and employment were not abandoned until the early 60's as related by Mr. G. V. Erickson.⁴ Mr. Erickson was a junior high school principal in Helena during and after Mr. Fellbaum's tenure there and consequently was quite familiar with the Helena schools.

There were fewer restrictions concerning the employing of married professional school personnel in rural Montana school districts than in urban Montana school districts. This was probably because of frequent housing shortages in rural areas. The situation occurred even though the marriage factor would probably have had a greater affect on the operation of the rural school than the urban school, because of

³Earl Fellbaum, private interview held at Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, July, 1970.

⁴G. V. Erickson, private interview held at Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, July, 1970.

the closeness of working conditions of the married couple.⁵

Written and Unwritten Policy:

Harold E. Moore, in his book, related the role that written and unwritten policies played in the selection of candidates for employment. Traditionally, school districts had many written requirements concerning professional appointments. Included in these written requirements were such things as local residence, marital status and religious and racial discriminations. Through experience and professional organization's attempts to eliminate them, they were gradually being abandoned, because they hindered the school board's ability to employ the best person for the job. However, many boards still kept some of these formerly written restrictions in their unwritten general policy.⁶ Consequently, these unwritten policy regulations could have had a great impact on the married professional school candidate for employment.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Harold E. Moore, The Administration of Public School Personnel (New York: The center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966), p. 44.

The Effects of Tenure:

The existence of the tenure probably had a very large effect on the legal aspect of the employment of married professional school personnel. The role of tenure in this instance was best described by Mr. R. R. Hamilton. ". . . Marriage of female teachers is not by the better view, legal grounds for dismissal of such teachers on permanent tenure. Teachers not on permanent tenure, may be dismissed for any reason including marriage, or for no reason."⁷ Although this material did not pertain directly to this study, the researcher felt that it should be relative to and indicative of the way courts would look upon school board restrictions on couples employed in a professional capacity by the school district.

The N. E. A. Platform:

The National Education Association's platform concerning the eligibility of married school personnel to serve in a professional capacity was a rather clear cut one. "Teachers should not be discriminated against because of race, color, belief, residence, or economic or marital status. . .

⁷R. R. Hamilton, "May a Female Teacher Be Legally Discharged Because of Her Marriage," The Bi-Weekly School Law Letter, III, No. 4 (1953), 24.

Marital status, in particular, is a basis for discrimination in the great majority of the city school systems of the United States."⁸

The Effects on Teacher Morale:

Yeager proposed that the morale of all teachers was strengthened by the removal of school board restrictions prohibiting the employment of married women as teachers.⁹ If Yeager's proposal was a valid one, then it could seem that the removal of restrictions on the employment of married couples in a professional capacity would have had the same relative effect.

Nepotism:

When dealing with the possible employment of married professional school personnel, it became obvious that there were both advantages and disadvantages for school boards having restrictive regulations. One important factor that was considered was nepotism. According to Lewis, "the employment of married women sometimes involves the problem of

⁸National Education Association, "Teacher Personnel Procedures: Selection and Appointment," Research Bulletin, XX, No. 2 (1942), 60.

⁹William A. Yeager, Administration and the Teacher (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954), p. 373.

nepotism or favoritism to relatives, as when both the husband and wife teach."¹⁰ The cry of nepotism became even more prevalent if the man was an administrator and his wife was a teacher in the school system. This researcher recognized that "nepotism" was strictly a legal term and that it could only have lead to court action for those people legally responsible to the public for running the public schools (the school board). Technically, the board employs the staff, and they cannot legally employ anyone related closely to any board member. It was doubtful then, that there would have been any legal backing for the accusation of nepotism because a superintendent's or principal's wife taught in the school system under him. They were not legally responsible for employment. A Montana statute defined nepotism as "the bestowal of political patronage by reason of relationship rather than merit."¹¹ However, the claim of nepotism, even though legally unsound, would have proven embarrassing and disadvantageous to the school district.

¹⁰Ervin Eugene Lewis, Personnel Problems of the Teaching Staff (New York & London: The Century Co., 1925), p. 183.

¹¹State Department of Public Instruction, ch. 52, sec. 456.1, School Laws of the State of Montana (Great Falls, Montana: Tribune Printing and Supply Company, 1949), p. 12.

Summary:

This review of related literature indicated that there was very little published material concerning the employment of both a husband and wife in professional capacities within a school district. The bulk of previous research concerning marriage as a criterion for employment served only in a relative capacity. These factors lent heavily to the importance of providing evidence concerning Montana school boards' policies restricting the employment of married professional school personnel. The following chapter provides some of that evidence.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES

A total of 60 questionnaires was distributed to the three groups of Montana school districts that have previously been identified. Each sample group consisted of 20 school districts. Fifty-two of those questionnaires or 86.7% of the total sample population were completed and returned to the researcher. There were 15 questionnaires returned from "group A" (under 150 enrolled in grades 9-12). This amounted to 75% of that sample group. "Group B" (150-450 enrolled in grades 9-12) school districts returned the largest percentage of any sample group. All 20 (100%) of the "group B" school districts returned the questionnaire. Finally, "group C" (over 450 enrolled in 9-12) school districts returned 17 of the 20 questionnaires sent to that sample group. This amounted to an 85% return from "group C." As the poorest return from any group was 75%, it was decided that a follow up on unreturned questionnaires was unnecessary. The number of questionnaires used from each group in this study was then adjusted in the manner previously described. Consequently the working sample from each group totaled 15 or an over all total of 45 Montana school districts.

Analysis of Data For Group A

Written vs. Unwritten Policies:

Before examining the regulations that existed pertaining to the employment of married professional school personnel in schools that the author had classified as "group A," the author had to determine the form in which these regulations were found. That is, were there existing regulations, and if so, were they found in written form or were they more of an informal guideline that was adhered to but not part of an officially stated board policy?

An examination of the returns on the questionnaires that had been sent to a random sample of "group A" school districts revealed a consistent lack of written policy in the area in question. Eighty percent of the schools sampled in "group A" had no written regulations whatsoever pertaining to the employment of married professional school personnel. Of the remaining 20% that had written regulations in this area of concern, 13.4% had written regulations that did not apply specifically to this study. Consequently, only 6.17% of those school districts randomly sampled from "group A" had written regulations to serve as

guidelines for the employment and placement of married professional school personnel.

Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses:

The majority of "group A" districts sampled reported that they had no policy concerning the employment of the superintendent's spouse. In fact, 86.7% of the districts sampled indicated that they had no policy written or unwritten in this regard. Of the remaining 13.4% that indicated that they had such policies, all of them reported that their policies were unwritten.

With regard to the employment and placement of the spouses of principals, there seemed to be no differences in the policies pertaining to elementary principals or secondary principals. In both cases, 86.7% of the responding "group A" school districts said that they had no policies restricting the placement of elementary teachers in the same building under the direction of their spouse who was the elementary principal. The same percentage was indicated concerning the placement of a secondary principal's spouse in the same building under his direction. In both cases, there were 13.4% that did have restrictive policies in effect. Of this remaining 13.4%, 6.7% had a written restrictive policy, while

the other 6.7% of the samples in "group A" indicated that such a policy was not in writing. Ninety-three and three-tenths percent of the school districts sampled from "group A" indicated that no policy existed restricting the employment and placement of the spouses of elementary principals in secondary schools. The same figure is applicable to the placement of the spouse of secondary principals in elementary schools. In both instances the remaining 6.7% of "group A" school districts that had such restricting policies, had them in an unwritten form.

Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities:

The results of the questionnaire indicated that school districts in "group A" did not discriminate between elementary and secondary teachers. Eighty-six and seven-tenths percent of those school districts sampled from "group A" stated that they had no policy restricting either the employment or the placement of married couples in the school district. Of the 13.4% that had policies in this regard, all indicated that they would not place both a husband and a wife in the same school, elementary or secondary. Six and seven-tenths percent of the responding "group A" school districts stated that their policy was in writing, while the

other 6.7% said that the policy was unwritten. An example of a written policy in this regard is as follows:

- A. Married teacher's applications will be accepted.
- B. Husbands and wives shall be assigned to different buildings within the school system whenever possible.¹¹

Only 6.7% of the "group A" school districts responding indicated that they would not employ married couples regardless of placement. All of these districts indicated that this policy was not in writing.

Reasons For Not Having Restrictive Policy:

Several reasons were given for not having a policy restricting the employment and placement of married couples in professional capacities. Most "group A" school districts cited "difficulty in attracting teachers" as the reason for not having a restrictive policy. Twenty-six and seven-tenths percent of the "group A" school districts sampled registered the preceding explanation. Other reasons were expressed for omitting such marriage regulations. "Housing shortages,"

¹¹An exact quotation from the school board policy of one of the "group A" school districts. The district's identity is not known as all questionnaires were anonymous.

"difficulty in holding teachers," and "the desire to employ personnel on the basis of the individual's ability," were expressed by an equal number of "group A" districts. Each of these reasons was given by 13.4% of the sampled "group A" school districts. Six and seven-tenths percent of these districts felt that they could obtain teachers for lower salaries by employing married couples as teachers. And finally, 6.7% felt that they should hire teachers according to the "needs" of the district without regard for marital status and professional placement.

Reasons For Having a Restrictive Policy:

Only one reason was expressed by the few "group A" school districts maintaining a restrictive policy. Six and seven-tenths percent of all those "group A" school districts sampled felt that "personal problems were likely to cause conflicts in the couple's performance of professional duties. Relative to this was a personal comment expressed by the superintendent of a "group A" school district:

I personally feel that I'll try to avoid hiring 2 within a family. The problems of one become a problem of spouse and husband. No thanks to that as we can find adequate instructors without [sic] a husband and

wife duo and duo problems.¹²

Analysis of Data For Group B

Written vs. Unwritten Policies:

As the degree to which written and unwritten policies existed in "group A" was discussed, so is it necessary that these factors be discussed as they relate to the study of "group B." The results of questionnaires received from a random sample of the school districts previously described as "group B" indicated that 20% of the sample had written regulations pertaining to the employment and placement of married professional school personnel. A slightly larger percentage of "group B" schools indicated that they had some unwritten policies in this regard. In fact, 26.7% of this group reported that they had some unwritten policies concerning the employment and placement of married professional school personnel. In addition to these reports, it must be mentioned that 60% of the "group B" school districts sampled indicated that they had no policy (written or unwritten) of any kind related to the employment of married couples in

¹²Ibid.

professional capacities in the school district. Obviously then, some 40% of the "group B" school districts sampled had pertinent policies of some kind.

Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses:

The majority of the "group B" school districts sampled reported that they had no set policies concerning the employment of the spouse of the superintendent of schools in a professional capacity. To be more precise, 66.7% of the responding districts from "group B" had no such regulations pertaining to the superintendent's spouse. Of the 33.3% of the "group B" districts responding and reporting some form of policy restricting the employment of the superintendent's spouse, 83.3% indicated that their policies were unwritten. The remaining 16.7% of the "group B" school districts which had restricting policies in this regard reported that their policies were in written form.

Eighty percent of the "group B" school districts sampled said that they had no policies restricting the spouse of the elementary principal from working in a professional capacity in an elementary school. Twenty percent, then, had policies restricting such a practice. Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the total number of "group B" schools

responding indicated their policy was not written, while 6.7% said that they had a written policy to that effect. More policies were found restricting the employment of the spouse of a secondary school principal in secondary school, than in the equivalent situation at the elementary level. For example, only 73.3% of the "group B" school districts responding said that they had no policy in that regard. That leaves 26.7% of the involved districts having restrictive policies of some kind or another. Twenty percent of this 26.7% have unwritten policies while the remaining 6.7% had their policies in written form. School districts in the "group B" category seemed to prefer fewer restrictions pertaining to the employment of the spouse of a secondary principal in an elementary school than to the employment of the spouse of an elementary principal in a secondary school. This was evidenced by the fact that 80% of the "group B" school districts sampled had no policy restricting the latter situation, whereas 86.7% of the "group B" school districts had no policy restrictions for the former situation. In addition, all policies restricting the spouse of the secondary principal from being employed in the elementary school were of an unwritten nature. Not only did 6.7% of the "group B" districts have policies restricting the employment of the

spouse of the elementary principal at the secondary level, but they were written policies. In addition, 13.4% of the "group B" districts had unwritten policies in this regard.

Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities:

Eighty percent of the "group B" school districts sampled indicated that they had no policy, "written or unwritten" restricting the placement of couples as teachers in the district's schools. Twenty percent of the districts sampled indicated that they would not place the spouse of an elementary teacher in the same elementary school. Only, 6.7% of the "group B" sample related that the regulations in this regard were in writing. This resulted in 93.3% of the "group B" school districts stating that they either had no regulations of any kind pertaining to the placement of a husband and wife in an elementary school in teaching capacities, or that any policies they had in this regard were unwritten. The results were similar for regulations restricting the placement of a husband and wife combination as teachers in a secondary school. Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the school districts said that they had such restrictive policies, but in all cases they were unwritten. The remaining 6.7% expressed no policy or lack of it.

Results of the questionnaire indicated that 13.4% of the "group B" districts sampled restricted the employment and placement of married couples in teaching capacities even if they were placed in different schools at different levels of instruction. None of these policies were written. Again, 6.7% expressed no policy, or lack of it in this regard. In effect then, 13.4% of the "group B" school districts would not hire both husband and wife in teaching capacities under any circumstances of placement. These policies, however, were unwritten.

Reasons For Not Having Restrictive Policies:

Several reasons were expressed by "group B" districts for not having restrictive policies. The "difficulty in attracting teachers" was the reason most often given. Thirty-three and three-tenths percent of the "group B" sample stated this as a reason for not being restrictive. Twenty percent of the sample felt that marriage restrictions would also restrict the quality of staff available to the district. "Housing shortages" and "difficulty in holding teachers" were reasons that were each expressed by 13.4% of the sample from "broup B."

One district went on to state that they were encouraged to hire married couples in professional capacities. The

district stated, "our experience with such cases has been positive. We presently have two husband and wife teams teaching in our elementary school."¹³

Reasons For Having Restrictive Policies:

The most frequently cited reason for restrictive policies was that the "board felt that personal problems were likely to cause conflicts in the couples' performance of professional duties." This reason was expressed by 20% of the sample. Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the "group B" sample committed themselves to each of the following reasons: "The board objected to paying a double salary to one family from public funds" and "the board felt that difficulty may result in determining salaries for the individuals rather than the couple." One district stated that by not hiring couples, they could attract more people to the town which was in need of more citizens.¹⁴ Another district said that although they had restrictions for permanent employment of married personnel, they did hire spouses as

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

substitues with some regularity.¹⁵

Analysis of Data For Group C

Written Vs. Unwritten Policies:

In looking at the amount of written policy by "group C" school districts sampled as compared to unwritten policy, it was discovered that a very marked distinction occurred. One hundred percent of the "group C" school district sampled reported that they had no written policies pertaining to the employment and placement of married professional school personnel. On the other hand, 46.7% of the "group C" sample said that they had unwritten policies that they adhered to in this regard. This, of course, left 53.3% of the "group C" sample with no policy formulated in this area.

Policies Related to Employment and/or Placement of Administrators and Their Spouses:

The majority of school districts sampled from "group C" indicated that they had no restrictions regulating the placement of the superintendent of schools' spouse in a professional educating capacity in the school district. Seventy-three and three-tenths percent of those "group C" districts sampled conformed to this position. Of the 26.7% that had policies

¹⁵Ibid.

restricting such placement of the superintendent's spouse, not one of them had a written policy to that effect.

Eighty percent of the "group C" districts sampled said that they had no policies restricting the employment and placement of the spouse of an elementary principal in an elementary school. The same figure was also indicated concerning the employment and placement of the spouse of a secondary principal in a secondary school. Of the 20% that stated they had policies restricting the employment and placement of the elementary principal's spouse, 66.7% said that the restriction only prohibited placement in the same building. The restrictions on the secondary principal's spouse were similar to the elementary. Of the 20% who stated that they had such restrictions, all of them limited the restrictions to the placement of the principal's spouse to the same building as the principal.

Ninety-three and three-tenths percent of the "group C" respondents said that they had no policies restricting the employment and placement of the spouse of an elementary principal in a secondary school. The same figure was applicable to the placement of the spouse of a secondary principal in an elementary school. In both cases, the 6.7% that had regulations were concerned only with prohibiting a princi-

pal's spouse from working under him in the same building. As was mentioned earlier in this section, none of the sampled "group C" school districts that had restrictive policies in this regard had them in writing.

Policies Related to the Employment and Placement of Married Couples in Teaching Capacities:

Sixty-six and seven-tenths percent of the "group C" school districts sampled reported that they had no policy restricting the placement of the spouse of an elementary teacher in an elementary school. All 33.3% of the "group C" school districts that indicated that they had restrictive policies, limited their restrictions to placement of the couple in the same building. That is, they would not place both parties of a marriage in the same building. The same basic information was also found for the employment and placement of the spouse of a secondary teacher in a secondary school, only to a greater degree. That is only 60% of the "group C" districts sampled said they had no policies in this regard. This meant, of course, that 40% did have restrictive policies. Again, however, the restriction only prevented placement of husband and wife in the same building. In accordance with the previous figures, 100% of the sampled school districts in "group C" declared that they had no policy

of any kind restricting the employment and placement of the spouse of a secondary school teacher in an elementary school, or visa versa.

Reasons For Not Having Restrictive Policy:

The reason most often mentioned for not adopting a policy restricting the employment of married professional school personnel was that the district felt "that individual staff members should be hired for the individual qualities," not to be determined by marital situations and status. Twenty-six and seven-tenths percent of the "group C" districts in question expressed this feeling. Some districts felt that such policies might prohibit the district from filling vacancies in areas of need. Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the "group C" sample expressed this feeling; and another 13.4% said that "housing shortages" discouraged the district from adopting restrictive policies pertaining to hiring married couples in professional capacities.

Reasons For Having Restrictive Policy:

The only reason that was listed by the "group C" sample was that "the board felt that personal problems were likely to cause conflicts in the couple's performance of professional duties. This reason was given by 13.4% of the

respondents in "group C."

In some cases, reasons were not given because it was felt that none were needed. An attitude such as this was expressed as follows: "with teacher supply on the increase, I find it unnecessary to consider married couples for the school system."¹⁵

Summary

The data received from the questionnaire indicated that there was a higher percentage of large (group C) school districts with restrictive policy on the subject in question, than there was in smaller districts (groups A and B). However, the smaller districts reported a greater preference for written policy than did the larger school districts.

A slight trend developed with regard to the employment of administrator's spouses in the district's schools. The trend indicated that the larger the school district was, the more likely it was that the district had restrictive policy pertaining to the employment and placement of school administrator's spouses in professional educating capacities.

Another slight trend in the occurrence of restrictive

¹⁵Ibid.

policy developed. Larger districts more frequently had policy restricting the placement of husband and wife as teachers at the same level of education. These restrictions were confined basically to the placement of couples in the same building. The smaller the district, the fewer regulations that existed. The "group B" districts sampled most frequently had policies restricting the placement of husband and wife in the system regardless of where they were placed. "Group A" schools had some restrictions to this effect, while "group C" showed no objection to the employment of couples as long as they were placed in different buildings.

"Group A and B" school districts gave similar reasons for not having restrictive policies. "Difficulty in attracting teachers" was the reason most often cited by these groups. This reason was followed by "housing shortages," "difficulty in holding teachers," and the "desire to employ teachers based upon the professional abilities of that teacher." "Group C" districts referred to the "desire to employ high quality personnel" most often, and also mentioned "housing shortages," and "filling those areas of need."

The reason most frequently referred to for having restrictions was the same in all sizes of districts. Most boards "felt that personal problems were likely to cause

- 37 -

conflicts in the couple's performance of professional duties."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary:

This study took a look at school board regulations that pertained to the employment and placement of married couples in Montana school districts. The data that was used in this study was acquired through the use of a questionnaire. This questionnaire was sent to school district superintendents as the official representatives of their respective school boards. This study was designed to look, not only at the regulations that existed, but also to examine the reasons that districts had for adopting or failing to adopt such regulations. The school districts were grouped according to their pupil enrollment in grades 9-12. One group (group "A") consisted of districts with a grade 9-12 enrollment of under 150 students. The second group (group "B") consisted of school districts with between 150 and 450 students enrolled in grades 9-12. The third group (group "C") was composed of school districts with over 450 students in grades 9-12. Questionnaires were distributed to 20 school districts from each group. The districts making up each sample were picked in a random fashion.

The questionnaires revealed that school district size was an important factor when studying school board regulations concerning the employment and placement of married professional school personnel. For example, "groups A and B" indicated that 20% of their respective categories had some written regulations in this regard. Another 6.7% of each of the A and B samples said that they at least had unwritten regulations of some kind. A total, then, of 26.7% of the districts responding from each of the "group A" and "group B" samples reported that they had some regulations of some kind restricting the employment and/or placement of married couples in professional capacities. The larger school districts more frequently expressed such regulations. Although none of the "group C" districts had written regulations, 46.7% of that sample said that they did have some unwritten policies.

Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the "group A" sample had restrictions pertaining to the employment of administrator's (superintendents and principals) spouses. This percentage from "group B" was identical to "group A," while 26.7% of the "group C" districts sampled expressed regulations. This was nearly twice as many districts expressing regulations from "group C" as there were from either "group

A or B."

Thirteen and four-tenths percent of the "group A" districts sampled had some regulations pertaining to employment and/or placement of husband and wife as teachers. Twenty percent of the districts from "group B" had regulations of some kind restricting employment and/or placement of a married couple in teaching capacities. Finally, 33.3% of the sample from "group C" sample indicated that their regulations dealt almost exclusively with placement, not employment. They would not place a husband and wife in the same building.

The reasons given most often for not having any restrictions was the same for "groups A and B." They cited "the difficulty in attracting teachers" as the major reason for not having any restrictions. The "group C" sample felt that teachers should be hired according to their ability, not their marital status.

All three groups cited the same reason for having regulations restricting the employment and/or placement of married professional school personnel in professional educating capacities. They felt that "personal problems were likely to cause conflicts in the couple's performance of professional duties.

Conclusions:

This study did not reveal that large numbers of school districts had policies regulating the employment and/or placement of married professional school personnel. However, it did bring to this author's attention several rather significant factors.

One of the objectives of this study was to examine school board regulations that were in existence at the time this study was conducted. This author has concluded that the regulations that were in existence concerning the employment of married couples to serve in professional educating capacities were basically valid policies. Upon considering the regulations as they existed and the peculiar problems of the different sizes of school districts, this author felt that the regulations were carefully adopted to solve district problems and in turn enhance the total learning situations of the school districts involved.

Another factor lending to the validity of the regulations that existed was that the regulations were nearly always unwritten. This allowed the school boards to alter their attitudes without taking formal action. Unwritten regulations made it easier for the school boards to adjust to fluctuating situations. The ability to adjust helped

provide for a better total learning situation in the respective school districts.

From the point of view of married couples applying for educating positions in school districts, any regulations of this type may have seemed prejudicial. This study has made available some facts of which such couples should be aware. Married applicants for educating positions should realize that job opportunities for them, in Montana school districts, will generally increase as the size of the school district becomes smaller. Opportunities existed in larger schools, but more of these schools had restrictions of some kind. Couples applying for positions in larger school districts should not expect to be placed in the same building. Married couples should also be aware that restrictive regulations were fewer in number when the husband and wife were certified to perform at different levels of education. Based on the comments of some of the responding superintendents, this author has concluded that more school districts will adopt restrictive policies as they encounter less difficulty in acquiring needed personnel. As the supply of professional educators in Montana was growing more rapidly than the demand for professional educators at the time of this study, the author concluded that the number of school districts in

Montana having policies restricting the employment and/or placement of married professional school personnel will increase.

Even though the regulations that existed were felt to be valid ones, the author has concluded that the most significant information that this study produced was that comparatively few school districts in Montana had restrictive policies concerning the employment and/or placement of married couples to serve in professional educating capacities. This allows the school districts to employ their educators on the basis of their personal and professional qualities rather than their marital status. Quality to this author should be highest on the list of priorities considered when employing personnel. If quality is affected because of the marital situation, then the decision concerning employment should be based on that quality, not whether or not the person is married to another educator.

The author felt that these conclusions had been borne out by the statistics drawn from the study.

CHAPTER V

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APPENDIX

January 22, 1971

Dear Superintendent of Schools:

Montana State University in Bozeman is sponsoring a study of some of the employment regulations that exist in Montana school districts. The enclosed questionnaire is designed to provide information that will prove very valuable to this research. This study has been restricted to those employment regulations that your district may have pertaining to employment of married professional school personnel. That is, does your district have any specific policies regarding the employment of both man and wife in professional educating capacities (superintendent, principals, and teachers; not custodians, secretaries, or bus drivers, etc.).

I cannot express enough how important it is that you complete the questionnaire at your earliest convenience and return it in the enclosed return envelope. I would like very much to have all questionnaires returned by February 10, 1971.

The questionnaire should take from 15 to 20 minutes to complete. All of the data received will be kept confidential to the point that specific schools will not be related to specific policies in the results of the study. Results of this study will be made available to you if you so desire.

Again, I would like to emphasize the importance of your cooperation to the success of this study. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

Laurence E. Redfield
Master's degree candidate
Montana State University

QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES
CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED
PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL

INSTRUCTIONS: For questions 1 and 2, check "yes" or "no"
as it applies to your situation.

1. Does your school district have written policies concerning the employment of married professional school personnel?

_____ A. No

_____ B. Yes

2. Does your school district have unwritten policies concerning the employment of married professional school personnel?

_____ A. No

_____ B. Yes

INSTRUCTIONS: There are several possible answers to questions 3 through 11. If more than one answer applies to each question, mark all that will help answer the questions more completely, as they pertain to your situation.

3. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of the superintendent of schools in a professional capacity?

_____ A. No

_____ B. Yes

_____ C. Written

_____ D. Unwritten

4. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of elementary principals in an elementary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

5. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of elementary principals in a secondary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

6. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of a secondary school principal in an elementary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

7. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of a secondary school principal in a secondary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

8. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of an elementary teacher in an elementary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

9. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of an elementary teacher in a secondary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

10. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of a secondary teacher in an elementary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

11. Does your district have policies restricting the employment of the spouse of a secondary teacher in a secondary school?

☐ A. No
☐ B. Yes
☐ C. Written
☐ D. Unwritten
☐ E. In the district
☐ F. In the same plant

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer either 12 or 13-----whichever one applies to your school district.

12. If your district has policies permitting the employment of married professional school personnel, for what reasons were these policies adopted?

_____ A. Housing shortages
_____ B. Difficulty in attracting teachers
_____ C. Difficulty in holding teachers
_____ D. Other _____

13. If your district has policies restricting the employment of married professional school persons, for what reasons were these policies adopted?

_____ A. The board objects to paying a double salary to one family from public funds.
_____ B. The board feels that personal problems are likely to cause conflicts in the couples performance of professional duties.
_____ C. The board feels that difficulty may result in determining salaries for the individuals rather than the couple.
_____ D. Other _____

14. If your district has written policies concerning the employment of married professional school personnel, a copy of them would be very helpful for a more complete understanding of your districts policies. If you can conveniently send one in the return envelope, it would be greatly appreciated.

15. If you have any comments concerning this questionnaire or its content, please feel free to express them.

16. If you would like to have a copy of the results of this state-wide study, please indicate by checking one of the following and sign your name and address.

- _____ A. Yes-----I would like a copy of the results.
_____ B. No-----I would not care to have a copy of the results.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND EFFORT IN AIDING THIS STUDY.

CODE A: Districts with a high school enrollment (9-12) of less than 150.

CODE B. Districts with a high school enrollment (9-12) of between 150 and 450.

CODE C. Districts with a high school enrollment (9-12) of over 450.