

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS THAT SUPERINTENDENTS  
IN KANSAS' SECOND CLASS SCHOOL SYSTEMS  
INCLUDE IN ANNUAL REPORTS

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose of Study . . . . .	1
Definition of Terms . . . . .	2
Procedure Used in the Study . . . . .	2
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	3
Summary of the Review of Literature . . . . .	19
III. THE STUDY . . . . .	21
Summary of Superintendents' Comments . . . . .	33
Summary of Study . . . . .	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	38
APPENDIX . . . . .	41

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Length of Service of Superintendent . . . . .	21
II. Length of Service in Present Position . . . . .	22
III. Number of Superintendents Reporting by Size of School Enrollment . . . . .	23
IV. Administrators' Opinions on Relative Importance of Annual Report . . . . .	25
V. Superintendents' Reasons for Making an Annual Report . . . . .	26
VI. Does the Annual Report Accomplish its Intended Purpose? . . . . .	27
VII. Means Reported to Accomplish the Same Purpose as the Annual Report . . . . .	28
VIII. Those People Assisting in the Collection and Development of the Annual Report . . . . .	29
IX. The Different Aspects of School Finance Included in the Annual Report . . . . .	30
X. Subject Matter Included in the Annual Report . .	31
XI. Time of Year that the Annual Report is Distributed . . . . .	32

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Comparative Size of Pupil Enrollment to Felt Need for the Annual Report . . . . .	24

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The annual report has been used by school superintendents for more than a hundred years and is a requirement in many states today. The state requirement has not always been stringently enforced and, in many cases, the exact content of the report is not spelled out for the superintendent. This tends to allow the annual report to vary in content between different school systems. The problems and disagreements encountered by superintendents in their attempt to overcome these variances and, in certain instances, their reasons for compiling such a report was the justification for this study.

#### I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to (1) identify how many superintendents of Kansas second class school districts published an annual report and (2) collect and analyze data concerning the annual report in regard to (A) how tenure of the superintendent affected the annual report (B) how size of school enrollment affected the annual report (C) the felt need for the annual report (D) whether the report was accomplishing the purpose for which it was designed (E) the general content of the annual report and (F) the construction of the annual report.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Annual report. The annual report is that report made by the superintendent to the Board of Education at the end of the school year, summarizing all aspects of that school district's operations for the given year.

Superintendent. The superintendent is that official responsible for all schools in a system, and who reports directly to the Board of Education.

## III. PROCEDURE USED IN THE STUDY

In order to obtain the needed information from the many and varied localities in Kansas, a questionnaire consisting of twenty-three questions was formulated and mailed to all superintendents of second class city schools then existing in the State of Kansas. The superintendents were not asked to sign the returns, and it was also stated in the cover letter that their names, or the name of the school which they represented, would not be used in this report. The answers given to the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed, and this information was used to formulate this report.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is the purpose of this Review of Literature to report writings directly related to the annual report. This Review cannot cover the entire field but pertains mainly to those topics listed under the Purpose of Study. The Review of Literature was used as the background for setting up the criteria which served to guide this study.

Legal requirements for reporting to the public vary from state to state but in general, state laws require only that Boards of Education report annually on the district revenue and expenditures.<sup>1</sup> Gordon McCloskey makes this explanation, "The intent of such regulations is to guard against misuse of school funds."<sup>2</sup>

Annual reports should be legal; "they also should, and can, be meaningful."<sup>3</sup> During the first years of the use of the annual report, the superintendent was very likely to go before a Board and orally give his ideas about the school's progress and its needs. When, and if, the Board of Education gave this information to the public, its own ideas and inter-

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<sup>1</sup>Lee O. Garber, "Keeping School Board Records," The Nations Schools, 57:71, April, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959, p. 493.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



pretations often found their way into the report. When the public objected to this form of reporting, the superintendents began to make a highly statistical type of report. Although such a report was very factual and concise, the lay people could not understand the statistics even if they had the desire to read the mass of figures presented. This situation was stated very aptly by Charles O. Rechter, who said, "The laws (in Massachusetts) say there shall be an annual report. Nothing in the law says that people must read it. Yet, without readers, a school report is a waste of administrators' energy and public funds."<sup>1</sup>

The problem, then, that faces the superintendent seems to be how he can present the material important to an annual report in a manner that lay people not only can understand it but will also develop a sufficient degree of interest to encourage them to read it. Most authors on this subject feel that the annual report, if well-planned and strategically distributed, can play a very important part in community relations. The trouble with most annual reports seems to be in conveying their real purpose to the public. Paul H. Hanus says:

It is not always possible to ascertain from the superintendent's report itself, as published, just what its purpose is beyond the obvious general purpose of giving a mass of more or less well-organized information about the schools to anyone into whose hands the report may

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<sup>1</sup>Charles O. Rechter, "Annual School Reports," The Nations Schools, McGraw-Hill/Dodge, 47:41-43, May, 1951.

fall. This information ranges all the way from trivial commonplaces or from technical details of school policies, procedures, and results, to abstract discussions of educational questions with much of little, and sometimes no direct or special application of such discussions to local conditions.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that there are specific details which should be included in an annual school report. The exact items included in the annual report vary in different school systems and even from year to year within the same system. These will be discussed later in the review.

The main objective is to fit the report to the educational needs and objectives of the community in which the report is made. The superintendent may want to stress specific areas in different years. He may want to emphasize the health program one year and consolidation the next. It is not good practice, however, to confine the report to the portrayal of one specific issue and exclude others that may be of importance. R. V. Hunkins says that, "in the past, the superintendent's annual report has sometimes been used for general publicity."<sup>2</sup> One author devoted his entire report to recommendations.<sup>3</sup> Snedden and Allen state the situation this way, "In general, it may be said that there is need in each

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<sup>1</sup>Paul H. Hanus, School Administrator and School Reports, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>R. V. Hunkins, The Superintendent at Work in Smaller Schools, New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1936, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup>George D. Strayer and N. L. Enghardt, Problems in Educational Administration, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1925, p. 82.

city system for a careful study of the conditions under which educational data should be collected and published."<sup>1</sup> Cubberley feels the need could be stated a bit stronger and says, "Probably no greater mistake can be made by the superintendent of schools or by a school board than to omit entirely the publication of an annual report."<sup>2</sup> There are several reasons why most authors feel there is a genuine need for an annual report. One of the main objectives of the report is to better acquaint the superintendent with the school system. Some superintendents become lax with years and with the addition of assistants and clerical help. They tend to forget some of the more elementary facts of the school system because one of their assistants takes care of the details.

When it is necessary to prepare an annual report, it is also usually necessary for the superintendent to do some of the groundwork as well as work out a considerable portion of the details in the assembly of materials, in the actual writing and in making the presentation effectively. After the superintendent has presented this report to the Board of Education, possibly to an assembly of teachers, and perhaps to a meeting of community leaders and has answered their questions about it, all should have a much better understanding of the

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<sup>1</sup>David S. Snedden and William H. Allen, School Reports and School Efficiency, New York: Macmillan, 1908, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Elwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, Houghton Mifflin Company, p. 426.

school system. In turn, this understanding will help the superintendent to be better informed. This theory of improvement cannot by any means stop with the superintendent. Jacobson, in his study of the annual reports, says, "Superintendents' reports, when they include narrative matter, usually quote liberally from the school principal's annual report."<sup>1</sup> When a superintendent asks a principal to give him a full written account of all phases of work of his particular school, it should, at the very least, be a good review of the workings of that school.

Neither can the improvement stop with the principal but it must also include the teachers. The author once read an article that made an observation like this. The annual report is written by the persons in the trenches, the persons who know firsthand what is happening where the educational program touches the child; namely, the teachers. In the final analysis, it is usually the teachers who have contributed most of the material that is later compiled, categorized, and edited by their principal. All reports then go to the superintendent's office where they join similar reports from other schools within the system.

Another reason for the publication of an annual report is to help bring about better public relations. It is unne-

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<sup>1</sup>Paul B. Jacobson, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, The Effective School Principal, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954, p. 710.

essary to describe the need for a school system to have good rapport with the school community. It is not, however, always easy to find the means by which this can be established and maintained. One cause of bad rapport in the school community has often been found to be a lack of communication between the school and the community. In many cases, dissension has been traced to the community's not understanding what the school was trying to accomplish. The annual report is one means of communication with the interested public. If this report is to be constructed to catch the attention of the general public, it must be of superior quality.

The annual report, however, has some advantages which should be capitalized on. One is the cost of running the school system. Most people are interested in how their tax dollar is being used. If the annual report is constructed in a way that the reader can easily interpret the receipts and disbursements, he will be more inclined to use the report. Another advantage is that the report pertains directly to the people of the community, their children, and their neighbors. In general, people like to read anything that pertains to them.

"Present day reports are far removed from the painfully monotonous presentation of statistics so typical of earlier reports. Comprehensive statistical tables, important as they are, are generally relegated to a statistical supple-

ment or to the appendix."<sup>1</sup> If we have had such an improvement, why does Reeder say, "School reports are infrequently read even by school employees, and laymen who read them are almost as scarce as dodos"?<sup>2</sup>

What can be done to give the annual report an appeal to the readers? The first thing necessary to make an outstanding report is a desire by the superintendent to do so. Without this desire, all is probably lost before a start has been made. Assuming the superintendent has this desire and a genuine enthusiasm for the project, the next thing that must be accomplished is to inspire the principals under his jurisdiction with the same desire and enthusiasm. At this point, the principal should call a meeting of the teaching staff and school personnel and explain what is being undertaken, why it is important, and the procedure to be followed. George C. Kyte writes, "A fundamental, professional interest must be aroused in each teacher attending the meeting."<sup>3</sup> If any teacher in the system lacks this interest, the quality of the report will be lowered. Because the teachers are actually at the grass roots of the system and will turn in most of the

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond E. McCoy, American School Administration, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup>Ward G. Reeder, School Boards and Superintendents, New York: Macmillan, 1946, p. 712.

<sup>3</sup>George C. Kyte, The Principal at Work, Boston: Gannonit Co., 1951, p. 293.

material composing the report, it can be seen that they, above all people, must be inspired to reach their maximum capabilities in order to attain the high standards needed. A principal's job, then, is a tough one. Not only must he retain his enthusiasm throughout the writing of the report but he must also keep the teachers inspired to give their best efforts.

The next problem is how to present the material in a manner that the public will want to read it. In a survey of school principals concerning the annual report, Rechter in The Nations Schools reported that "it was agreed that the report should be informal, that it attempt to capture the cooperative spirit of the school, and that it offer many glimpses of the child as he receives his education."<sup>1</sup>

What could be more important to interested persons than to see, in picture form as well as in print, what the children are doing in a school situation? This objective can be accomplished by photographs or by sketches or cartoon drawings. These drawings are always eye-catchers and often will provoke someone to first read the captions and then the written material pertaining to them. There are always students within the school system who would be glad to lend their talents to such a venture. A cartoon is also a very effective way of showing where and how the school expenditures

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<sup>1</sup>Charles O. Rechter, "Annual School Reports," The Nations Schools, 47, pp. 41-43.

are being used and where there is need for additional funds. It is usually easier for the public to see, understand and accept a report when material is presented in this manner rather than in the usual statistical form.

Another point brought out in the survey discussed in The Nations Schools' study reported by Rechter was, "the necessity of using common words of few syllables"<sup>1</sup> and making certain that "the sentences were to be kept short and simple."<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that the general public does not understand many of the terms commonly employed by professional educators concerning education. Such professional terminology should be used sparingly, if not omitted entirely. It must also be realized that the lay public is not as used to reading technical material as is the professional educator. This means that the subject must be on a level with that read daily by the public. If it is too complicated, the lay person is apt to lay it down and go back to his daily paper which takes very little effort to read and understand. The teachers could well take a lesson from such competitive sources when preparing material for public readership. This is not to say that it should be written so simply as to convey the idea that those reading it are simple, but merely that hard-to-understand sentence structure and terminology should be kept

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.



to a minimum.

The annual report is not always printed in quantities sufficient to distribute at random but, for special publicity purposes, it might well be produced in such quantities. If sent to the public, illustrations and other extra features should be added for palatability, attractiveness and informativeness. These extras might include short compositions by people in the community or pictures depicting the close tie between school and community.

Another consideration is the length of the annual report. The question is how much information should the public be given and how much will they be willing to read? The voluminous size of some reports is enough to discourage those of low interest before they turn the first page and even those who are vitally interested might wonder when they will find time to read it. Knezevich says that a report should be held to one hundred pages.<sup>1</sup>

To whom should the annual report be distributed? This is largely a matter of preference. According to McCoy, "the report is sent to influential members of the community."<sup>2</sup> It may or may not be practical to distribute a copy to any great number of people. In many cases, this question will be

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen J. Knezevich and John Guy Fowlkes, Business Management of Local School Systems, New York: Harper Bros., 1960, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>Raymond D. McCoy, American School Administration, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961, p. 366.

dictated by the funds available for publication of the report.

An important factor in getting the public to read the report is the time of distribution. ". . . ideally the report should be distributed by the students to the homes."<sup>1</sup> If this were done, the report would have to be presented before school closes and the last month's business estimated. Even if it could be estimated fairly accurately, people generally would rather see facts than guesses. The last days of school are always filled with activities that probably would have to be left out of the report and, during the rush of school closing, its distribution would throw an added strain on both principal and teachers. One writer feels that "the annual report should appear as soon after school is out as possible."<sup>2</sup> Even though the cost of distribution would go up, the advantages of an after school distribution may be worthwhile.

One of the most important means of getting the public to read the annual report is its cover. In this day of brightly colored magazine covers displaying varied eye-catching themes, it would seem virtually impossible for a school report to compete. It is also hard for a school report to compete in readability with the daily paper, bills, and magazines. Gordon McCloskey writes that, "Book publishers and

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<sup>1</sup>Fredrick Elmer Bolton, Thomas Raymond Cole, and John Hunnicut Jessup, The Beginning Superintendent, New York: Macmillan Co., 1937, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Ward G. Reeder, School Boards and Superintendents, New York: Macmillan Co., 1946, p. 212.

news headline writers have long known that title and covers are important communication devices."<sup>1</sup> The covers should be attractive. Pictures of children, athletic events or proposed building plans make good covers. The title should be imaginative and personal and should play on a centered theme. It is usually best to keep the title short and affirmative.

C. D. Redding comments that, "The average superintendent of schools in a small town probably has a twinge of envy when he thumbs through a report the superintendent of schools in a large city has made to his Board of Education."<sup>2</sup> "Small schools have not used the annual report as much as they should for public relations."<sup>3</sup> According to Jacobson, Reavis, and Logsdon, there are three reasons for this: (A) young superintendents have not yet realized the importance, (B) they have not been trained in assembly of such data, and (C) the apparent prohibitive cost.<sup>4</sup> Even when young superintendents realize the potential of the annual report and have the ability to compose one, the problem of financing it looms large. Exact costs cannot be stated here because the length

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding, New York: Harper Bros., 1959, p. 498.

<sup>2</sup>C. D. Redding, "Annual Report for Small Schools," The Nations Schools, McGraw-Hill/Dodge, 1942, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Paul B. Jacobson, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, The Effective School Principal, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954, p. 259.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

of reports vary. If the superintendent has the report printed, the cost will be higher than if it is mimeographed. The type of pictures and illustrations will also have an effect on the cost. Another cost factor would be the use of student labor or clerical assistance. The number of copies produced, too, will make a difference in total cost. The main cost, however, is the initial typing. Hunkins suggests that, "If there is a public labrary, a typed or mimeographed copy of the report, or several copies, may well be placed there and attention called to the matter in the local paper. Not many will utilize the opportunity, probably, but no one can say he did not have the chance and those really concerned will respond."<sup>1</sup> The local paper can be of great assistance in bringing this report before the people. Parts of the report can be carried by the paper and, at times, the entire report can be carried in serial form.

It has been stated before that the content of the annual report will depend largely upon the educational philosophy of the school system. For this reason, a discussion of the actual content has been left until last. Lists of items proposed by several authors, considered to be authorities on the subject, have been identified. These lists were to be used as guides in the construction of an annual report

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<sup>1</sup>R. V. Hunkins, The Superintendent at Work in Smaller Schools, New York: D. C. Heath and Company, 1936, p. 184.

that would fit the needs of the individual community. According to McCloskey, the five ways of making the annual report meaningful are:

1. Focus the report on pupils. People finance schools to educate pupils. They interpret school costs in terms of benefit to pupils.
2. Show the services that schools provide for pupils. It is information about services that constitutes accurate and meaningful reporting of what people are getting for their money. Without such facts, reports can be misleading.
3. Provide understandable statements of pupils' unmet educational needs and plan for meeting them. Without this information, people are unable to judge the reasonableness of requests for additional funds.
4. Present statistics of receipts and expenditures in terms patrons can understand. Relatively few people understand technical reading or budget terminology.
5. Show progress and give the public credit for its past efforts to improve the school. The report itself usually follows one of two general approaches: the highlights of the year's work are presented attractively with appropriate pictures, charts and sketches so as to inform the public of the year's significant developments; or one important and timely aspect of the school program is selected for intensive treatment as one of a series of yearly reports, each devoted to a separate phase.<sup>1</sup>

If the step-by-step procedure of Douglas E. Lawson is used, a large number of the above needs will be met. These procedures are:

1. Begin preferably with a card file, at the beginning of the school year, to record vital data for the coming year.
2. Arrange to file data covering all of the following areas and the sub areas or topic as indicated:
  - A. Financial - indebtedness, taxation, total receipts and expenditures within each budgetary classification.

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding, New York: Harper Brothers, 1959, p. 493.

B. Pupil accounting - (enrollment, promotion, retention, clinical data, educational achievement, graduation, attendance).

C. Teacher accounting - (employment, retirement, resignation, special individual achievements, changes in rank, duties and salaries, leaves of absence, substitution, in-service training).

D. Other employee accounting - (data similar to that in teacher accounting).

E. Plant and facilities - (construction and other major changes, significant additions to equipment, proposed major changes, plant evaluation).

F. Special activities - (group educational activities of staff, extracurricular events and achievements, cooperative school-community activities, special student or teacher organizations).

G. Administration - (curriculum reorganization or expansion, administration reorganization, school policies, projection of future needs and plans, educational interpretation of plans, aims, and policies).

3. Acquaint all staff members with needs of the annual report, types of data to be furnished and responsibilities of members for the reporting or filing of data. In doing this, it is well to hold a staff meeting to discuss the previous report and the needs for the next report. (Each teacher should be supplied with a copy or a summary of the previous report.)

4. Well before the closing day of the school year, ask each staff member to submit a brief summary of reportable data. If the budget proposal for the ensuing year is to be presented with this report, the persons responsible for budgetary requests will be supplied with necessary forms for this purpose.

5. Prepare the final report. Print or mimeograph sufficient additional copies or summaries of the report for distribution to teachers, newspapers and other persons and organizations to whom it should be given.

6. Present a report to the Board of Education, seeing that each member has a copy. Take time before the Board to summarize or emphasize points of major importance.

7. Prepare publicity relative to the report, with supplementary statements necessary for educational interpretation of the school, the Board's policies and the plans and needs for the future.

8. Find good avenues to good educational publicity (newspapers, radio, television, reports to parents, etc.).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas E. Lawson, School Administration, New York: Odyssey Press, 1953, pp. 273-280.

Jacobson, Reavis, and Logsdon include 19 items in their list, which is:

1. Summary of attendance
2. Summary of enrollment
3. Records regarding the faculty
4. Financial reports on activities
5. Housing problems
6. Number of graduates
7. Organization and administrative control
8. Recommendations for the next year
9. Records for supervision
10. Results of the teaching program
11. Statement of tuition pupils
12. Progressive attitude of faculty
13. Description of the guidance system
14. Activities of the extra curriculum
15. Awards
16. Statement about failure
17. Study of graduates in more advanced educational units
18. Assembly program
19. Parent-Teacher organizations<sup>1</sup>

Gordon McCloskey's idea is different from the other two authors. He says that both lay and professional terminology should be used. His list shows:

1. Enrollment trends
  - A. Each year more boys and girls come to Livingston's schools.
2. Recent improvement
  - A. Livingston has been improving its schools.
3. Additional services, facilities and funds are needed.
  - A. Our children's present and near future school needs
4. Effect of price trends on unit cost and total cost
  - A. Rising prices are increasing school cost.
5. Work of individual laymen and citizens' committees
  - A. Livingston's citizens are helping to provide good schools.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul B. Jacobson, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, The Effective School Principal, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954, pp. 64-65.

6. Community services rendered by pupils and staff
  - A. Pupils and teachers serve our community.
7. Honors awarded pupils and staff members
  - A. Livingstown pupils and teachers win honors.
8. Official financial report
  - A. How Livingstown gets and spends school funds.<sup>1</sup>

#### I. SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Throughout this review, several points have been given special consideration by the authors cited. The authors cited in this review considered the annual report as an excellent means of communication with the public, providing that the material was presented in such a manner that the public would read it. They discussed at some length, ways of making the annual report more acceptable to the public, mentioning the type of cover used on the report, the use of charts, graphs, pictures, and the time of year in which the report was published.

These authors felt that there were special categories of material which should always be included in the annual report. They did not always agree on the categories, but in general they included school finance, pupil accounting, teacher accounting, plant and facilities, special school activities and administration.

There was special consideration given to the problem of financing the annual report. There was also an elaboration of

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Understanding, New York: Harper Bros., 1959, pp. 493-499.



why superintendents did, or did not make an annual report, and if they did make such a report, who did the work of constructing it. Special consideration was given to the primary purpose served by the annual report, and if a report was not made, how the superintendents accomplished the same thing.

Those things given special consideration in the Review of Literature were also given special consideration in the following study.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STUDY

This section describes the annual report in relation to the criteria developed from the Review of Literature. It is based on the data obtained from a questionnaire sent to eighty-two superintendents of Kansas second class city school districts. At the time of the study, this was all the school districts in this category, as reported by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Returns were received from sixty-eight superintendents or eighty-two per cent.

For the purpose of this study, the total length of service as a superintendent was broken into five divisions. Table I shows the responses given for each division.

TABLE I  
LENGTH OF SERVICE OF SUPERINTENDENT

Years as superintendent	Number reporting
0 to 3	9
4 to 6	10
7 to 10	6
11 to 15	17
16 and over	26

The largest number of superintendents responding to the

questionnaire had sixteen or more years of experience. Over one-half of those responding had more than eleven years of experience.

The number of years that the superintendents had served in their present positions was also separated into five divisions. Table II shows the number reporting in each division.

TABLE II  
LENGTH OF SERVICE IN PRESENT POSITION

Years in present position	Number reporting
0 to 3	25
4 to 6	11
7 to 10	9
11 to 15	14
16 and over	9

One-third of those superintendents reporting had retained their present position for eleven or more years. More than one-half of those reporting had six or less years experience in their present position.

Question three of the survey was divided into six parts according to student enrollment. The number reporting in each of these divisions is shown in Table III, page 23. More than one-half of the respondents came from schools with enrollments between 500 and 3,000. The superintendents

responding in each category the greater number of times had been in that position sixteen or more years. An analysis of the statistics compiled from the questionnaire indicated that little relationship could be identified between the size of school enrollment and the answers given on the survey.

TABLE III  
NUMBER OF SUPERINTENDENTS REPORTING BY SIZE  
OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

School enrollment	Number reporting
100 to 500	5
500 to 1,000	27
1,000 to 2,000	18
2,000 to 3,000	8
3,000 to 4,000	4
4,000 and over	5

There was an indication that those superintendents serving schools with an enrollment of between 2,000 and 3,000 showed the greatest preference for the annual report, with 88 per cent of those reporting considering the annual report as very necessary or serving a good purpose. See Figure 1, page 24.

In considering the superintendents felt need for the annual report it was found that those superintendents indicating that they made an annual report gave more favorable

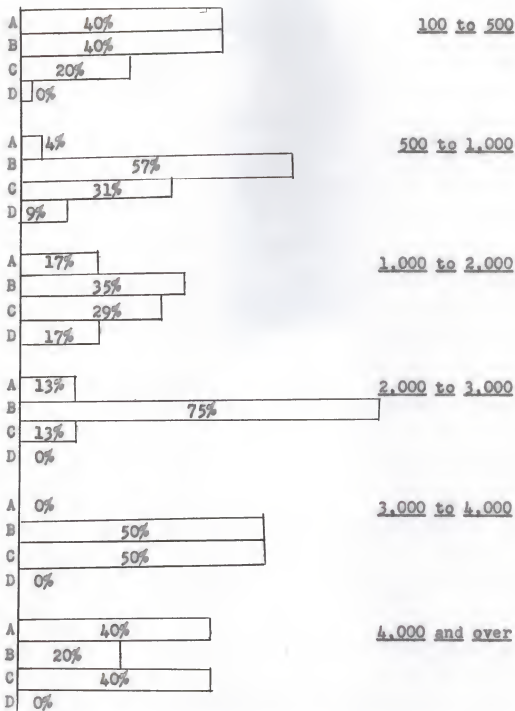


Figure 1. Comparative size of pupil enrollment to felt need for the annual report.

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Very necessary        | C. Not too important    |
| B. Serves a good purpose | D. Not at all important |

responses than those who indicated that they did not make an annual report.

As indicated in Table IV, of those thirty-eight superintendents making the annual report, thirty favored it while eight considered it to be relatively unimportant. One-half of those superintendents who did not make an annual report indicated that they did not favor the annual report as shown in the Table. The survey also indicated that over half of the total respondents felt that the annual report was either very necessary or that it served a good purpose.

TABLE IV  
ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS ON RELATIVE IMPORTANCE  
OF ANNUAL REPORT

	Very necessary	Serves a good purpose	Not too important	Not at all important
Those making an annual report	10	20	7	1
Those not making an annual report	0	13	10	4

A few respondents favored the annual report but did not prepare one. There was no reason given why they did not; however, one author in the review of literature suggested that a lack of funds might be the deterrent factor in such cases. The survey showed that of all the superintendents responding,

only nine received more than one hundred dollars for the cost of constructing an annual report. Only one of those received more than three hundred, and he did not actually compile a formal annual report but instead compiled several reports covering the material normally contained in the annual report. These reports were then presented at regularly scheduled Board meetings.

In his writings on the annual report, Charles O. Rechter states, "It is not always possible to ascertain from the superintendent's report itself, as published, just what its purpose is." This survey revealed that the reason for the publication of the annual report did vary among the superintendents reporting. The primary purposes for making an annual report as indicated by those responding to the survey are shown in Table V. The majority of those reporting indicated that their primary purpose for making an annual report was for the information of the Board. A number of those reporting did indicate a combination of several factors as being important reasons for the construction of an annual report.

TABLE V

## SUPERINTENDENTS' REASONS FOR MAKING AN ANNUAL REPORT

Reasons given for making the annual report	Number reporting in each category
Fulfill requirements set by school board	11
Public relations	19
Administration and teacher stimulation	10
Information for Board of Education	37
Others	4

When asked if the annual report was accomplishing its intended purpose, most superintendents felt that it was at least partially fulfilling it. Only five superintendents reported that the annual report did not fulfill its purpose. This is shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI  
DOES THE ANNUAL REPORT ACCOMPLISH ITS INTENDED PURPOSE?

Is purpose accomplished?	Number reporting
Yes	16
Partially	36
No	5

Of those five who felt that the annual report did not accomplish its purpose, two did not make an annual report and three made it only because it was a requirement of the Board of Education. Many superintendents listed several of the factors shown in Table VII, page 28, as their justification. One superintendent indicated that, in the ten years that he had served as superintendent, he had never been asked for the annual report. A number of others indicated that they did not have any way to justify it.

Those superintendents not making the annual report were asked to identify the means which they used to accomplish the purposes for which the annual report was designed. The



greater number indicated that they used special reports relating to specific problems. A combination of the three principal factors listed in Table VII were indicated about an equal number of times.

TABLE VII  
MEANS REPORTED TO ACCOMPLISH THE SAME PURPOSE AS  
THE ANNUAL REPORT

Means	Number reporting
Scheduled oral reports to the Board	25
Letters and materials as a part of each month's agenda	28
Special reports related to specific problems	29
Others	7

Several superintendents said that they used all these means as well as others not listed in the questionnaire.

When an annual report is to be made, one of the considerations is who will assist in collecting and developing material for the report. Jacobson indicated that the superintendent's report will quote liberally from the principal's report, and Kyte says that teachers will need a fundamental interest in this report. Superintendents of Kansas second class city schools also indicate collection and development of materials for the annual report is carried on mainly by the administration, teachers, and staff. As shown in

Table VIII, most of the work is carried on by the administration.

TABLE VIII  
THOSE PEOPLE ASSISTING IN THE COLLECTION  
AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

Those assisting	Number reporting
Administration	42
Teachers	28
Staff	24
Students	5
Lay public	4

A large number of those superintendents reporting said that even though the administration did most of the work in compiling this report a number of other people might be involved to a greater or lesser extent. Several respondents replied that the secretary was the only staff member who helped, and that her duty was mainly the typing and assembling of the finished product. Students and the lay public were used in a very small per cent of the cases.

In considering the contents of the annual report, Lawson's lists, cited in the Review of Literature, were followed in this survey. It was found that the different aspects of the school's finances were used about the same number of times by all categories of superintendents as shown in

Table IX.

TABLE IX  
THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF SCHOOL FINANCE INCLUDED  
IN THE ANNUAL REPORT

Aspects of finance	Number reporting
Indebtedness	39
Tax collections and levies including special funds	40
Total receipts and expenditures	41
Budget proposal for the next year	34
Others	9

Some superintendents used just one of the aspects listed while others used all of those listed, as well as others not listed in the questionnaire. While very little difference was indicated in the number of times that any particular category of superintendent used a particular item of finance in his annual report, the survey indicated that the financial aspect of the school was discussed in the annual report more than any other subject by all categories of superintendents, as shown in Table X, page 31.

Pupil accounting and teacher accounting were used in the annual reports about an equal number of times, while special activities and administration were listed as less important. No great change could be seen in these figures from

year to year, because thirty-one superintendents reported very little change in the content of their annual report, and only ten indicated a considerable change. Of those superintendents reporting, less than half used the annual report as a means of making recommendations to the Board of Education concerning the operation of the school for the following year, except in the case of the proposed budget.

TABLE X  
SUBJECT MATTER INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL REPORT

Subject matter	Number reporting
Financial	163
Pupil accounting	141
Teacher accounting	147
Plant and facilities	105
Administration	73
Change in material content from year to year	31
Recommendations for the following school term	31

One of the problems discussed in the Review of Literature was how to get the public to read the annual report once it was written. One suggested means was to use pictures, cartoons, graphs, etc. This survey found that most superintendents of Kansas second class city schools believe such

things should not receive primary consideration. Since the greater number of these superintendents were interested in using the annual report only for the information of the Board, they gave more attention to those items which they felt would be of interest to the Board of Education. Only eight of those reporting felt the type of cover should receive any consideration while twenty-one liked the use of charts and graphs. Paper quality, pictures and cartoons were mentioned twelve and eight times, respectively.

Knezevich and Fowlkes state that ideally the completed report should be distributed to the homes by the students. Over half of those superintendents reporting indicated a mid-summer publication was what they preferred. These figures are reported in Table XI.

TABLE XI  
TIME OF YEAR THAT THE ANNUAL REPORT IS DISTRIBUTED

Time of distribution	Number reporting
April and May	1
Just after school is out	10
During midsummer	29
Just before school starts	2
During the first month of the term	1
Others	4

## I. SUMMARY OF SUPERINTENDENTS' COMMENTS

Question twenty-three of the survey asked the respondents to list any additional comments that they might have concerning the worth of the annual report.

Commenting on the importance of the annual report, many superintendents qualified their statements by indicating that the need for the formal report was dependent on other types of reporting done during the school year. It was indicated that if only one report was used during the school year, then there was a need for a comprehensive annual report. If monthly or weekly reports were made to both the Board of Education and to news media, then the need became less important.

The greatest criticism of the annual report was in the time consumed in its preparation, and in the amount of time necessary to read it. One superintendent replied that if an annual report were used, it would take several meetings of the Board to review it. If short reports were made at meetings throughout the school year, the Board of Education would be as well informed with less time involved. These reports could be published in the newspaper, when it was warranted, and could also be bound to form a type of annual report for the information of future superintendents, Board members, and other interested parties.

There was also evidence among those superintendents not making the annual report that the expense of preparing

an annual report for the lay public could not be justified, and that few people would take time to read it if they did receive it. It seemed to be a consensus among this group that the news media carried a greater potential for communication than did the annual report. It was also felt that it would be much easier to stimulate teachers and other interested parties if they were involved in making the special reports, than if their work was just to be part of a mass accumulation of a variety of subjects.

Several superintendents stated that one problem is that the annual report tends to be repetitious. When it contains the same type of material year after year, it becomes stale and discourages readers. Several superintendents said that they have quit using the formal annual report. They now use monthly reports and prefer this system. It was suggested that special newspaper editions, as opposed to distribution of an annual report might be an excellent way of communicating with the public. One superintendent stated it in this way, "For a number of years now I have not used a formal annual report, but have had a series of reports throughout the year that will touch upon finances, pupil accounting, teacher accounting, special activities of the staff and reports from principals and other administrative officers in the school. I came to the conclusion years ago that a Board of Education will not take the time to read through a formal annual report, but if brief reports concerning certain categories are sent

to Board members at stated times during the year, they will take time to read these and file them for future reference." This statement fairly well sums up the feelings of those superintendents who are opposed to the publication of a formal annual report.

There are those, however, who favor the annual report. One superintendent said, "It is a good way to summarize the year." Another commented, "It helps the Board of Education to understand the expenditures." The greatest number of returns favoring the report suggested that it helped people to see the load that the school carries in the community. It was summed up by one superintendent in this way, "It should serve as a means of communication and record so that the Board of Education may refer to it as a method of achievement as well as the overall cost of the educational program. This report may be read and re-read by the Board members as well as by administrators. Probably one of the most important purposes it can serve is that it is a record for any new administrative personnel as well as for members of the Board of Education who have not had experience in this capacity."

## II. SUMMARY OF STUDY

A study of the formal annual report as presented to the Board of Education by the school superintendent of second class cities in Kansas indicated that more than one-half of those superintendents responding made an annual report. More



of those reporting had served sixteen years or more than any other length of time. The survey indicated that the number of years the superintendent had served, the size of the school under his jurisdiction, or his tenure in that district had much bearing on the feelings he has for the type of materials included in the annual report. Some of those reporting who had previously made an annual report and then changed to a monthly report stated that they felt the monthly report was far superior. Others, in about equal number, indicated that it was a superior device for communication.

It was found that most superintendents viewed the annual report as a means of reporting to the Board and for future reference, and not as a means of reporting to the public. They also reported that they felt it was doing the job that it was meant to do. Those superintendents not using the annual report indicated that the shorter monthly reports were what they used to accomplish that which the annual report is supposed to accomplish.

The content of the annual report did not change very much from one year to the next. Of the different types of material possible for an annual report to contain, the financial aspect was used most often. Very few of those reporting indicated that they received any extra budget allotment for the construction of an annual report, and that money spent to embellish such a report was unjustifiable.

Most superintendents found that a midsummer publication

was the most convenient for them. A number of those reporting indicated that they published their report right after the close of school.

The point brought out most often by those opposed to the annual report was that the Board of Education would not take time to read it. Those who favored it suggested that it was good for the superintendent to make such a report to keep himself cognizant of the total aspect of the school system, and to give the public a better idea of the load that the school carries in the community. In most cases, the administration did the most work on the preparation of the annual report. Less than half of those reporting used the annual report to make recommendations to their Boards of Education for the following school year.

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APPENDIX

January 28, 1965

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent of Schools  
\_\_\_\_\_, Kansas

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Throughout the years school superintendents have been making an annual report to their Boards of Education. These annual reports have contained a wide variety of material and information. Such reports have also been published in many forms. Some have been highly colorful and explanatory, while others have been purely statistical.

In an attempt to analyze the content of annual reports, the writer is conducting a survey among superintendents already experienced in the formulation of such a document. The greatest value of this survey will probably be to new superintendents just entering the field who wish to make changes in the annual reports.

Your name or the name of your school will not be used in this report.

This survey is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters Degree and should be completed by July 31, 1965. If at this time you would like to have a copy of the abstract of this study, will you please indicate by returning the enclosed post card.

Whether or not you use the formal annual report would you please answer items 1, 2, 3, 4, 19, 20 and 24 on the questionnaire.

This survey is being conducted under the direction and with the encouragement of Dr. Kenneth O'Fallon, Professor in the School of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

Your opinions and early return of this questionnaire in the addressed envelope will be sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Max E. Turner  
Instructor  
Box 228  
Jetmore, Kansas

A SURVEY OF THE USE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT  
IN KANSAS SECOND CLASS CITY SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

Please send me one of the 1963-1964 annual reports made to the school system which you serve as administrator, so that I can identify information which Kansas Superintendents feel is important enough to be included in an annual report.

1. How many years have you been a superintendent?

	Years
A. _____	0 to 3
B. _____	4 to 6
C. _____	7 to 10
D. _____	11 to 15
E. _____	16 or over

2. How many years have you been in your present position?

	Years
A. _____	0 to 3
B. _____	4 to 6
C. _____	7 to 10
D. _____	11 to 15
E. _____	16 or over

3. How many students are there under your administrative jurisdiction?

	Students
A. _____	100 to 500
B. _____	500 to 1,000
C. _____	1,000 to 2,000
D. _____	2,000 to 3,000
E. _____	3,000 to 4,000
F. _____	4,000 or over

4. How important is the formal annual report to the school district?

A. _____	Very necessary
B. _____	Serves a good purpose
C. _____	Not too important
D. _____	Not important at all



5. For how many years has the superintendent prepared and presented a written annual report to the Board of Education in the school district which you serve as superintendent?

	Years
A. _____	0 to 3
B. _____	4 to 6
C. _____	7 to 10
D. _____	11 to 15
E. _____	16 or over

6. At what time of year is the annual report presented?

A. _____	During the months of April or May
B. _____	Just after the school year is completed
C. _____	During the midsummer
D. _____	Just before school begins
E. _____	During the first three months of the term
F. _____	Others _____

(Please specify)

7. If you use an annual report, how much money is budgeted for it?

A. _____	\$ 0 to \$99
B. _____	100 to 299
C. _____	300 to 500
D. _____	500 or over

Please check all items identified in questions 9 through 17 which your school system incorporates into the annual report.

8. Financial

A. _____	Indebtedness
B. _____	Tax collections and levies including special funds
C. _____	Total receipts and expenditures
D. _____	Budget proposal for the next year
E. _____	Others _____

(Please specify)

9. Pupil accounting

A. _____	Enrollment
B. _____	Attendance
C. _____	Promotion and graduation
D. _____	Retention
E. _____	Educational achievements
F. _____	Others _____

(Please specify)

10. Teacher accounting
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of new employees
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Number retirements
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ Number resignations
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Special individual achievements
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Promotion and changes in assignment
  - F. \_\_\_\_\_ Leaves of absence
  - G. \_\_\_\_\_ Use of substitute teachers
  - H. \_\_\_\_\_ Inservice training programs
  - I. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- (Please specify)
11. Plant and facilities
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Construction and other major changes
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Significant additions to equipment
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed major changes
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Plant evaluation
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- (Please specify)
12. Special activities
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Educational activities of staff
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Extracurricular events and achievements
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperative school and community activities
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Special teacher or student organizations
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
13. Administration
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Curricular reorganization or expansion
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Changes in school policy
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ School system's objectives and/or philosophy
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Administrative reorganization and personnel assignment
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- (Please specify)
14. Who assembles the annual report?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Administration
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Student
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
- (Please specify)
15. Who assists in collecting and developing material for the annual report?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Administration
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ Students
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ Staff
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ Lay public

16. Please check the items which you feel should receive primary consideration in the preparation of the annual report.
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Type of cover  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Paper quality  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ Pictures and cartoons  
 D. \_\_\_\_\_ Charts, graphs, diagrams  
 E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please specify)
17. What is the primary purpose served by the annual report for which you have been responsible as a superintendent?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Fulfill requirements set by school board  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Public relations  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ Administration and teacher stimulation  
 D. \_\_\_\_\_ Information for Board of Education  
 E. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please specify)
18. If an annual report is not used, indicate below means used to accomplish that which the report is designed to accomplish.
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Scheduled oral reports to the board  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Letters and material as a part of each month's agenda  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ Special reports related to specific problems  
 D. \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please specify)
19. Do you believe the annual report accomplishes that for which it is designed?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Partially  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ No
20. Does your annual report vary in material content from year to year?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Very little  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Considerably  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ To a great extent
21. What indications do you have that the annual report is fulfilling its purpose?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Requests  
 B. \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers and board members refer to report  
 C. \_\_\_\_\_ Local news media use it as a base from which to develop articles, etc.  
 D. \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please specify)

22. Do you make recommendations concerning the following year in your annual report?
- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ No
23. Please list any additional comments you have concerning the preparation, use and worth of the superintendent's annual report.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIALS THAT SUPERINTENDENTS  
IN KANSAS' SECOND CLASS SCHOOL SYSTEMS  
INCLUDE IN ANNUAL REPORTS

by

MAX EDWIN TURNER

B. S., Kansas State University, 1961

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1965

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to (1) identify how many superintendents of Kansas second class school districts published an annual report and (2) collect and analyze data concerning the annual report in regard to (A) how tenure of the superintendent affected the annual report (B) how size of school enrollment affected the annual report (C) the felt need for the annual report (D) whether the report was accomplishing the purpose for which it was designed (E) the general content of the annual report and (F) the construction of the annual report.

## PROCEDURE USED IN THE STUDY

In order to obtain the needed information from the many and varied localities in Kansas, a questionnaire consisting of twenty-three questions was formulated and mailed to all superintendents of second class city schools then existing in the State of Kansas. The superintendents were not asked to sign the returns and it was also stated in the cover letter that their names, or the name of the school which they represented would not be used in this report. The answers given to the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed, and this information was used to formulate this report.

## SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study describes the annual report in relation to

the criteria developed from a review of literature pertaining to the annual report. It is based on the data obtained from a questionnaire sent to eighty-two superintendents of Kansas second class city school districts. Returns were received from sixty-eight superintendents or eighty-two per cent of those contacted. Of those superintendents responding, twenty-six had sixteen or more years of experience, and over one-half had eleven or more years experience. One-third of those reporting had retained their present position for eleven or more years. Over one-half of all respondents came from schools with enrollments between 500 and 3,000.

It was found that very little relationship could be identified between the respondent's years of experience as superintendent, his length of tenure, or the size of school enrollment and the type of answers received on the rest of the questionnaire.

Of the thirty-eight superintendents making the annual report, thirty favored it while eight considered it to be relatively unimportant.

The survey indicated that only nine of the respondents received over one hundred dollars for the cost of constructing an annual report, and only one of those received more than three hundred.

Information for the Board of Education was given by the majority of the respondents as the primary purpose for making an annual report, and public relations was given as

the purpose of the report by about one-third of those responding. Of those reporting, ninety per cent felt that the annual report was at least partially fulfilling its purpose. Those superintendents who did not make an annual report indicated that they used scheduled oral reports, letters, and materials as part of each month's agenda, and special reports related to specific problems instead of the annual report.

Over one-half of the superintendents indicated that the administration did the major portion of the work in collecting and developing the annual report. The teachers and staff members were also indicated as being important in this area. Students and the general public were used a very small per cent of the time.

The contents of the annual report differed with the schools reporting, but in general the content varied only slightly. The financial aspect of the school was mentioned the most frequently, with tax collections and levies being the most mentioned specific factors.

Pupil accounting and teacher accounting were mentioned about an equal number of times, with enrollment and new teachers being the most mentioned single factor. Extra curricular activities and changes in school policy was also included in the annual report by the majority of the superintendents.

Thirty-one superintendents indicated that they changed the content of the annual report from year to year, but in



most cases it was a minor change.

One-third of those superintendents reporting used the annual report to make recommendations for the following year.

It was found that very few superintendents felt that the type of cover on the annual report, or pictures and cartoons were of significant importance, but twenty-one superintendents thought charts and graphs were important.

Most superintendents found that a midsummer publication was the most convenient for them. A number of those reporting indicated that they published their report right after the close of school.

Question twenty-three of the questionnaire asked for comments on the annual report by the superintendents. The most common comment made favored the annual report and indicated that the report was a good means of communication with the public; and it helped the public to understand the load that the school carried in the community. The superintendent also stated that the report was a good reference source for new administrators, board members, and other interested parties.