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The Meaning of Controversial Policy to School Superintendents

Barbara Jean Nicoletti
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THE MEANING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY TO
SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

by

BARBARA JEAN NICOLETTI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:
ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION


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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

The members of the Committee approve the dissertation
of Barbara Jean Nicoletti presented July 24, 1991.


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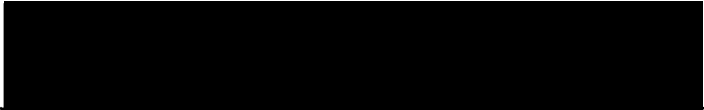

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF Barbara Jean Nicoletti
for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership:
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Title: The Meaning of Controversial Policy to School
Superintendents

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:


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The focus of this research was on the subjective
meaning for the school superintendent of policy experienced
as controversial, and the associated implications for the
policy process in school districts. The study examines
controversial policy of a particular type, social regulatory

(Tatalovich and Daynes, 1984). Such policy tends to have the effect of turning: "...political issues into moral polarities, claims into rights, legislation into litigation, grays into black and white, and campaigns into causes and crusades" (Lowi, 1988).

The primary goals were to (1) identify examples of controversial policy in education, (2) assess the usefulness of the Tatalovich and Daynes framework in the educational policy arena, (3) provide definition and description of controversial policy in education, (4) begin to describe the implementation process associated with controversial policy of a social regulatory nature, and (5) develop propositions about the meaning of controversial policy for school superintendents and the associated implementation processes.

Information included in the study was gathered from a pilot study which involved a review of the prescriptive and empirical literature in the field of education and political science, six interviews with district and building level administrators, open-ended surveys of twenty superintendents throughout the state, and a set of final interviews with eight superintendents from Oregon school districts of varying size and wealth.

The researcher worked within the phenomenological research tradition using symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework for data collection. Information that identifies, defines, describes, and suggests is based on

experiences and beliefs from the field, from the day to day experiences of a key actor in the policy process- the district superintendent. The symbolic interactionist values the individuals point of view and attempts to see things from that persons perspective (Blumer, 1967).

Based on the experiences and beliefs of school superintendents, the results include examples of policy perceived as controversial, detailed definition and description of controversial policy in the educational policy arena, suggested influences on the implementation process and outcomes, a summary of strategies considered effective for the implementation of controversial policy, and implications for policy, administrative practice, and research.

In brief detail, Tatalovich and Daynes describe controversial policy of a social regulatory nature as characterized by ideological warfare, the involvement of single issue groups, and an activist judiciary. This study affirms these characteristics and expands description of the phenomenon in the field of education. Controversial policy is complex, unpredictable, dynamic, and challenging. Policy can be controversial in content or become controversial at anytime in the policy process, even after the policy or resulting program or curriculum has been in place for some time.

Policy perceived as controversial is described as

having two dimensions: factual and emotional. Constituents assign a perceived risk to the policy, a hazard component, and respond emotionally, an outrage component. The data confirm Sandman's (1988) assertion that both the hazard and the outrage component must be addressed with the outrage taking priority. Several factors which lead to the emotional response are identified. Strategies perceived to be effective for addressing both dimensions are summarized and discussed. A theoretical framework and several propositions organizing knowledge about controversial policy and its implementation are proposed.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to educational policymakers, administrators, teachers, and other educational leaders. May we continue to work in the interest of what is meaningful to the health, happiness, and success of youth.

I also dedicate this work to my Nonna who inspired in her family the interest in being the best they can be at what they love and what they must do. She instilled in us the values that matter more than anything- to be kind, considerate, encouraging, generous with what we have to offer others, and to work hard and honestly for what we believe in.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
Background.....	1
Problem Statement.....	4
Rationale for the Study.....	7
Chapter Summary.....	10
II RELATED LITERATURE.....	11
Social Regulatory Policy.....	11
Study of Social Regulatory Policy in Education.....	16
Literature of the Study of Policy, Policy Implementation, and Administration.....	20
Chapter Summary.....	24
III PROCEDURES.....	26
Introduction.....	26
The Research Problem and Questions.....	26
Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Interactionist Perspective.....	27
Data Collection.....	32
The Pilot Study Stage.....	33
The Interview Stage.....	38

Interview Protocol.....	42
Analysis of the Interview Data.....	44
Reporting of the Results.....	48
Assumptions, Strengths, and Limitations.....	49
Participant Confidentiality.....	54
IV NARRATIVES BASED ON THE SUPERINTENDENTS' ACCOUNTS OF THEIR DISTRICTS' RESPONSES TO THE OREGON STATE AIDS EDUCATION MANDATE.....	55
Preface.....	55
Narrative One.....	56
Narrative Two.....	62
Narrative Three.....	66
Narrative Four.....	70
Narrative Five.....	74
Narrative Six.....	78
Narrative Seven.....	81
Narrative Eight.....	85
V PRESENTATION OF THE DATA.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Reflections on the Narratives.....	91
Additional Data on Controversial Policy in Education and its Meaning for School Superintendents.....	104
Examples of Controversial Policy in Education.....	106
Definition and Description of Controversial Policy in Education.....	108
Influences on the Implementation Process, Effective Strategies, Goals and Criterion Used to Judge the Implementation Process and Outcomes.....	113

Meaning of Controversial Policy for School Superintendents.....	124
Chapter Summary.....	126
VI THEORETICAL ABSTRACTIONS.....	128
Propositions about Controversial Policy and its Implementation in the Educational Policy Arena.....	128
Heuristic Framework on Controversial Policy.....	138
Controversial Policy as Moral Controversy.....	139
The Two Dimensions of Controversial Policy: The Factual and the Emotional.....	145
Chapter Summary.....	149
VII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	150
Introduction.....	150
Meaning of the Results.....	151
Toward a Theory About Controversial Policy in Education.....	154
Recommendations.....	157
Chapter Summary.....	174
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	175
APPENDICES	
A BACKGROUND ON THE OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULE ON AIDS EDUCATION.....	190
B CODEBOOK FOR ETHNOGRAPH.....	193
C EXAMPLES OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY PROVIDED BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.....	196
D DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY AS PROVIDED BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.....	201

E	THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTROVERSIAL POLICY: PRIMARY AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES, AND GOALS AND OUTCOMES AS PERCEIVED BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.....	224
F	QUOTES FROM THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS REFLECTIVE OF THE MEANING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.....	238

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I Heuristic Framework: Controversial Policy on a Continuum.....	140

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

BACKGROUND

Controversial issues prominent in society are impacting the education arena- communicable diseases including AIDS and their prevention, reproductive and sexual health issues, drug testing, religious rights, and desegregation are a few examples. How school administrators, school boards, and teachers respond to these issues has a fundamental impact on youth and education. The decisions they make during policy development and implementation can influence the teaching and learning that takes place at the classroom level. The curriculum reaching the classroom level as a result of the implementation process may or may not be effective and meaningful to youth.

Building and district level administrators are key political actors at all stages of the policy process, especially the implementation stage (Boyd, 1983; Bennis, 1984; Layton, 1988). Through their behavior they can directly impact the processes and outcomes of the implementation stage (Larson, 1988). Their role requires them to respond to the implementation situation in one

capacity or another. They can maximize change and minimize resistance or minimize change and maximize resistance.

There always has been controversial policy and programs affecting schools and their communities, but in the last decade especially there has been an increase in controversial policies that invoke primarily an emotional response for those involved. Such policy areas tend to have the effect of turning: "...political issues into moral polarities, claims into rights, legislation into litigation, grays into black and white, and campaigns into causes and crusades" (Lowi, 1988, p. xii).

In a report on school-based health clinics, Dryfoos (1985) notes that an increasing number of communities are offering comprehensive health services in or near public junior high and high schools (p. 70). Three years later, the same author reports that school-based health clinics have proliferated over the past three years with there currently being 138 clinics in 30 states, with at least 65 more in the planning stage (Dryfoos, 1988, p. 193). Dispensing birth control methods and advice in the schools remains a salient issue frequently associated with school-based health services.

With regard to sexuality and AIDS education, in "A Review of State Sexuality and AIDS Education Curricula", de Mauro (1990) reports that there has been a significant increase in the number of states mandating sexuality and

AIDS education. She points out that less than three years prior to her study only three states had mandated some form of sexuality education. Now, the numbers reveal quite a different picture:

As of November 1, 1989, 23 states now require sexuality education and 33 states require AIDS education; 23 have recommendations for sexuality education and 17 have recommendations for AIDS education. (p. 1)

Along with the significant increase in the number of mandates it is significant to note that the mandates and recommendations have "...caveats and restrictions that seriously call into question the usefulness of the program" (de Mauro, 1990, p. 1). Curriculum content is often "diluted" in certain controversial areas like family planning and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Also, there is little enforcement of the mandate (de Mauro, 1990, p. 1). Therefore, though the number of mandates is already significantly high in the area of AIDS and sex education, the field of education will continue to be confronted with controversy around these issues. An example would be districts deciding to what extent they will emphasize abstinence over or instead of other prevention methods.

Prior to the mid-1980's, few school boards and communities, including those in Oregon, had thought through the issues associated with AIDS and its prevention. Those who were addressing the issues had just begun. From the

mid-eighties on, significant changes have taken place in school's efforts to address this policy area because of the issue of children with AIDS attending school (Kirp & Epstein, 1989; Strouse, 1990). According to Kirp and Epstein (1989): "Schools have become the key American institutions in which the meaning of AIDS has been debated and deciphered" (p. 586).

When states and school districts confront substantive policy areas such as AIDS, sex education, and school-based health clinics they usually attract intense attention and reaction from various groups. All stages of the policy process can be complicated by the reactions of various community groups. Powerful social and political obstacles can block the implementation of effective policies and programs. Yet, despite these points and the fact that the controversial policies discussed have been on the agenda of public education and health for the past two decades, we do not have a theoretical perspective on the implementation of such controversial educational policy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In an effort to understand the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation, and the meaning of this phenomenon for such important actors in the implementation process as superintendents, this research focused on local implementation of a specific controversial

policy and the meaning the specific policy had for the superintendents involved with its implementation. With the increasing number of mandates for AIDS education and the likelihood of certain curriculum content issues repeatedly surfacing, AIDS education appeared to be one of the most widespread of policies perceived by school districts as controversial or potentially controversial. In addition, Oregon had mandated AIDS education. For this reason, this study used the substantive area of AIDS education and its implementation as perceived by superintendents as an example of the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation. Appendix A contains background information of the Oregon AIDS Education Mandate.

The long held belief that education systems are apolitical is no longer appropriate (Wirt & Kirst, 1989; Lutz, 1977; Scribner, 1977; Eliot, 1959). Schools have open boundaries and are forced to respond to various forces from outside as well as from within the organization. They negotiate with various interest groups and translate these demands into policy and programs. They are highly politicized organizations which have the responsibility for the allocation of values and scarce resources (Wirt & Kirst, 1989). Additionally, people in education are motivated by "...self-interest, educational ideals, and beliefs about correct educational practice" (Spring, 1988, p. 20).

While controversial policy has not been a focus in the past, the policy literature in general shows increased attention towards policy of a social regulatory nature; that is, policy with a moral controversy at its root versus an economic focus; a concern about moral issues versus money matters. Increasingly perceived as a unique phenomenon, its place within traditional policy classification schemes is being reconsidered (Lowi, 1988; Tatalovich & Daynes, 1988; Spitzer, 1987; Tatalovich & Daynes, 1984). However, the literature on educational policy still lacks specific recognition and discussion of controversial policy.

The literature on policy implementation has traditionally focused on the evaluation of policy outcomes- on the effects of various federal and state policies that have been implemented in the public sector- or has examined relationships and variables that influence implementation outcomes. Relatively little study has been done at the level of micro-implementation, the local level of policy implementation. The literature is very limited in its discussion of orientations, practices, and strategies of administrators during implementation, and their effects on policy outcomes (Palumbo, 1987); although there is some discussion of the importance of the administrator's use of discretion in decision making and policy implementation (Shumavon & Hibbeln, 1986).

The research reported here is not a study of the implementation process per se, but rather is an effort to understand the meaning of controversial policy and its implementation from the perspective of school superintendents, key actors in the policy process. How a superintendent experiences controversial policy is assumed to have a major influence upon the superintendent's behaviors and responses relative to policy implementation. Thus, a fundamental interest to the researcher was to understand the meaning of controversial policy and its implementation for the school superintendent in a phenomenological sense. The research interests and the literature reviewed pointed to the following research problem:

What is the subjective meaning for the superintendent of policy experienced as controversial, and what are the associated implications for the policy process in school districts?

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

From the literature consulted, it is apparent that there is a need in the educational policy arena for more descriptive research. There is a need for data reflective of the experiences and beliefs of participants, "thick description" in their language, which will contribute to the development of "grounded theory."

The literature on the study of policy outside of the educational policy arena reflects the usefulness of more description of the "bottom-up" or local perspective on policy implementation. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) point out there are two implementation processes: "One is the initially perceived, formally defined...; the other is the unexpected nexus of causality that actually evolves during implementation" (p. 217).

Berman (1978) also stresses the value of studying micro-implementation. Berman says "...implementation problems stem mostly from the interaction of a policy with its institutional setting" (p. 157). He believes the bottom line is that implementation will always be full of uncertainties, never fully predictable or context free, but implementation analysis can contribute "...to more effective policy by developing institutionally grounded heuristics to help policy-makers adapt their decisions as implementation problems arise" (p. 180). This requires looking at the local delivery system, a look at micro-implementation and its volatile environment.

As superintendents are key actors in implementation, and there are an increasing number of state mandates in these controversial areas, there is good reason to focus on the relationship between state intentions and local intentions and outcomes. "Victory in the legislative halls may be short lived if the program goes to the wrong place in

the bureaucracy" (Ripley, 1985, p. 176). Through understanding the variety of possible local dynamics, of which the superintendent's perspective is a significant element, policymakers and educational leaders will be better able to ask questions relevant to informing the policy process. Knowledge of how key actors perceive and experience the policy implementation process will provide insight and direction, in this case from the superintendent's perspective, for optimizing policy outcomes by revealing what happens during the process to change, help or hinder the initial policy intentions. For example: have the implementors changed the original goals and intentions of the policy; have implementors used effective methods in implementation? Policy outcomes depend on how "skillfully", "cunningly", and "vigorously" key actors played their implementation games (Bardach, 1977).

Providing a systematic account of school superintendents' experiences with the implementation of controversial policy, brings the phenomena of implementing controversial policy out into the open for more unified and focused consideration and discussion by policymakers and those directly associated with implementation. Though the entire policy implementation process and the educational leader's role is never fully predictable, it is possible to gain insight on the implementation of controversial policy and educational leadership from studying the meaning for

superintendents of policy perceived by them as controversial. Larson (1988) emphasized that "...the process of change is a personal one involving feelings, values, attitudes, needs, and perceptions. From these reactions concerns emerge...that can become powerful aides or impediments to the process" (p. 55).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Superintendents have a significant role in the implementation of controversial policy. Understanding their perception of the controversy, and their perspectives on the strategies they use for implementation can contribute to a more empirically informed practice, and the development of grounded theory about superintendents' perspectives on the implementation of controversial policy in education. These are the broad aims of the study reported here and described in detail in the chapters to follow. What is reported here is not a study of the implementation process per se but rather a glimpse of the manner in which superintendents experience, understand, and respond to such policy in their roles as school administrators.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

SOCIAL REGULATORY POLICY

This study examined a particular type of policy in the field of education- controversial policy as social policy with an underlying values warfare versus policy with an economic orientation. What follows is review of the research on social regulatory policy.

Tatalovich and Daynes (1984, 1988), Smith (1975), Lowi (1988), and Spitzer (1987) suggest that Lowi's model for classification of policy types (Ripley, 1986) into distributive, regulatory and redistributive does not sufficiently consider policy which has at its root more of a "moral controversy" or social regulatory nature. They believe that society is increasingly faced with a new type of policy, policy in which "...the values sought are essentially non-economic" (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1984, p.207). Social regulatory policy generates emotional support for deeply held values, ideals that arouse emotional response in the community versus something of monetary value. The conflict is over non-economic, moral values. The result is moral debate (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1988; Tatalovich & Daynes, 1984; Lowi, 1988).

Three attributes characterize social regulatory policy-intense ideological warfare, extensive involvement of single issue groups, and an activist judiciary (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1984). Ideology is used to draw people into the debate; they are attracted for compelling moral reasons not tangible benefits (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1988, p. 211). The debate surrounding the policy is long lasting because the antagonists view the issue as non-negotiable. Final resolution usually only comes about through a gradual change in public opinion, or a constitutional amendment or organizational equivalent (Lowi, 1988). Earlier Lowi (1988) described social regulatory policy as involving politics that turn "...political issues into moral polarities, claims into rights, legislation into litigation, grays into black and whites, campaigns into causes and crusades....", and mainstream politics into radical politics (p. xii-xiv); the political behavior observed is more polarized, and less prone to compromise (p. xii).

Lowi (1970, 1972, 1988) has held that policy types determine the politics rather than politics determining policy, and that the implementation process will vary depending on the nature of the policy. Spitzer (1987) confirmed the first point, and added degree or intensity of the policy characteristics as a factor, moving policy closer to or further from the original given classifications of distributive, redistributive, and regulatory. Rather than

calling for new or more precise categories to add to the scheme this suggests keeping in mind the possibility of policy types conceptualized on a continuum rather than solely in categories, and using intensity of the controversy as a determining variable for placement on this continuum. This means it would be useful to develop an increased understanding about the intensity of the controversy associated with particular policy types.

Tatalovich and Daynes call for recognizing the new policies and the new politics with a new policy analysis. They encourage that attention be given to the following: "...how these moral controversies become politicized, why they impact the policy making process in different ways than economic regulations, and what factors underlie the problem of achieving a political consensus on such questions" (Tatalovich & Daynes, 1984, p. 209). They contend that "democratic politics" is threatened by policies which generate conflict over moral issues.

Stone (1985) describes implementation as a process that is not totally based on rationality, productivity, and efficiency. In fact, he contends that this is far from the citizen experience. Administrators are decision-makers, and, according to Lindblom (1959) and his concept of "muddling through", decision making is a political activity as well as rational and intellectual. Policy implementation is not purely rational, but based on the interplay of

political power as well (MacLennan, 1981). Thus, an incentive for studying local implementation of policy of this type is also a concern for how to involve citizens constructively in the policy process. There is also the implication within these points that decision-making in the policy arena can be a complex moral process that surrounds a moral debate.

Hottois & Milner (1975), in The Sex Education Controversy: A Study of Politics, Education, and Morality, began their study of implementing controversial policy with an initial interest in community conflict. After initial investigation they were compelled to focus more on the "techniques that school officials used to mitigate conflict and to limit the success of opponents" (p. xviii).

They express concern over administrative handling of competing values in the implementation process, believing that important issues were avoided or underestimated by the proponents of sex education and educational administrators. Their basic question remains-

Who should have the authority to develop sexual values and how tolerant should such authorities be of opposing values? One usually assumes that this is the kind of question that gets asked of opponents of sex education, who are typically accused of attempting to impose their values unilaterally on a socially pluralist society. But in fairness the question should apply to both sides? To what degree can or should those advocating or offering school sex education consider the views of those who less willing to except this pluralism? (p. xix)

In addition to Hottois & Milner's work, a review of major educational journals confirms that sex education in schools has proven itself to be an example of an issue in the field of education that prompts individuals to reexamine their values, and to reconsider the importance of participation and tolerance. An element of the controversy aroused by such policy involves the handling of intensely competing and fundamentally different values in a pluralistic society. The broader thought Hottois and Milner (1985) pose is the "...tolerance of, and empathy toward, intense minorities...." by those who are involved (p. xx).

Complimenting this thought is a point made by Lutz (1977) who points out that "...because interests and values differ in a society, because resources are always limited, and because political decisions benefit one group's values and interests, those decisions must also disadvantage others" (p. 32). The various stakeholders in the implementation process may benefit or be at a disadvantage throughout the process depending on many factors. This suggests a concept of moral winners, moral losers, and a moral resolution.

Summary

Easton (1979) defines politics as "...the set of interactions that influence and shape the authoritative allocation of values." Scribner (1977) describes the study of educational politics as "...concerned with interactions

surrounding the authoritative allocation of values in education, especially insofar as the concepts of government, power, conflict, and policy are concerned" (p. 28). The study of education is the study of politics. This is a study of the meaning, process, and politics resulting from a particular policy type, policy with more of a moral controversy at its root versus concern over an economic interest, and involving specific key actors in the educational policy arena.

Because of the politically volatile environment of education, its open boundaries, and its pluralistic constituency, it can be expected that controversial policy of this type, social regulatory policy, will be prevalent, and the experiences and consequences associated with it will be felt significantly by those involved. Administrators especially will continue to be faced with its intensity, uniqueness, and demands.

STUDY OF SOCIAL REGULATORY POLICY IN EDUCATION

Systematic review of the literature on educational policy by Mitchell (1984) revealed five central issues typically studied in educational policy research. Briefly, these are equity research topics, school government topics, governance, teaching and learning, and economics of education topics. Judging by Mitchell's review and further searching in the literature, educational policy research

thus far has not included the study of social regulatory policy and its implementation. It has ignored the phenomenon of controversy in education, particularly non-economic controversy or moral controversy as defined by Tatalovich and Daynes. No one in educational policy research has discussed the existence of the phenomenon of social regulatory policy and its implementation as a dimension in the educational policy arena.

To ignore this aspect of policy is to continue to deny its existence in the field of education when the field of educational practice tells us otherwise. A review of the prescriptive literature in educational policy and administration reveals a lot of discussion about the existence of and experiences with policies such as school prayer, AIDS and sex education, school-based health clinics, and no smoking policies. All of these are examples of the phenomenon of social regulatory policy. Yet, in the educational arena, social regulatory policy and the processes associated with their implementation have not been empirically studied.

In the interest of the theory and practice of educational policy analysis, Mitchell (1984) expresses a need for a "...stable, empirically grounded, and theoretically sophisticated taxonomy of educational policies" (p. 154). He contends that a way to approach the constructing of this taxonomy would be to study and

distinguish the different mechanisms available to policymakers to shape the performance of educational organizations and its members. According to this researcher, the development of any taxonomy of educational policies should include as one of its categories policy of a social regulatory nature. Policy with "moral" controversy attached to it has not been specifically considered within educational policy research. As a starting point we can draw from the political science literature and the initial work of Lowi, Tatalovich and Daynes, and Spitzer.

Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt (1989) are also concerned with how to understand the policy process in a systematic way. They originally tried to develop a taxonomy of policy variables, but realized during their efforts to study what affected policy that they were in fact studying culture, very unique dynamics of the local setting. Through their work it is clear that describing the local cultural response to policy is a key step in identifying and describing policy types.

Berman (1978) asserts that "...the emerging field of implementation analysis lacks a conceptual framework for conducting generalizable research on what goes wrong with social policy and...on how to improve policy performance" (p. 157). He offers a framework, explores micro-implementation, and local "adaption" of a policy. The framework he offers for implementation analysis is shaped

around the belief that most problems with implementation are a result of the interaction of a particular policy with the institutional setting. He introduces the concept of "mutual adaption" during micro-implementation, the local policy interacting with the local organizational characteristics. This phenomenon of mutual adaption is complex and creates uncertainty with regard to how a particular policy will actually be implemented. However, he also suggests that "...the uncertainty cannot be eliminated without removing the local flexibility that is necessary if the policy is to work" (p. 157).

Berman and McLaughlin (1974) hypothesize that mutual adaption between the program or policy and the organizational setting is the key to effective micro-implementation. One step in unveiling the process of mutual adaption "...is to characterize the nature and the sources of difficulty and uncertainty that arise during implementation" (Berman, 1978, p.160). If we are going to improve policy performance then we have to know what goes on during implementation to impact outcomes.

In line with Berman (1978) and Berman and McLaughlin (1974), Williams and Elmore (1976) assert that there should be greater concern for understanding the means for converting policy on paper into realistic and working field operations. Their primary belief is that implementation problems are the "hurdles" to better future programs:

"...lack of concern for implementation is currently the crucial impediment to improving complex operating systems, policy analysis, and experimentation in social policy outcomes" (p. 267).

Summary

In sum, a review of policy study in the educational policy arena shows the need for further study of specific policy types, and the micro-implementation experiences associated with them. We need a taxonomy of policy types grounded in the experiences of school districts, the micro-level of educational policy study, and a conceptual framework for studying policy which takes into consideration mutual adaption between policy types and the local setting, and the factors influencing outcomes. Additionally, social regulatory policy specifically and the dimension of "moral" controversy within the educational policy arena has not been empirically identified and described. Social regulatory policy as a "type" may have special significance for school administrators given the complex policy milieu within which schools function.

LITERATURE ON THE STUDY OF POLICY, POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, AND ADMINISTRATION

The literature on the study of policy and the policy process reveals that there are many approaches to breaking down and framing the policy process to study it. Jones

(1977) encourages those studying the policy process to pay attention to issues: "...how they are perceived and acted on and how they change over time" (p. 23). Researchers should focus on problems and how they are acted on in government.

Jones also suggests participants in the policy process will have different perspectives. They will vary in how they view the process. One or more of these perspectives may be more dominant at different times in the process, and roles of the participants may vary.

He describes the implementation process in some detail, proposing three primary activities that comprise this stage: organization, how actors get organized to get the job done; interpretation, implementors considering what to do next; and application, actually doing the job. He points out that adjustments in organization and interpretation will usually take place during application, and that this is necessary (pp. 164-195). This point is similar to Berman's (1978) discussion of "mutual adaption."

In summary so far, policy and programs are "...multifaceted, subject to varying interpretations, competitive with other programs at various levels of government, administered by a labyrinth of organizational units throughout government, and, therefore, the subject of considerable negotiation" (Jones, 1977, p. 192). It is clear that any study of policy is a complex, demanding, and

probably elusive task. It can be effectively approached by identifying key actors and stages, and examining issues across situations.

In respect to the identification of key actors, Shumavon and Hibbeln (1986) point out that administrative discretion at all stages of the policy process is a phenomenon that has not been investigated. It is not known how it varies in different situations, in response to different policies, or what the consequences of it are for public policy. They view the consideration of administrative discretion as "...a fundamental component of any attempt to explain behavior and the formulation and the implementation of public policy" (p. 2).

VanMeter and VanHorn (1975) point out that an unsuccessful program could be blamed on inadequate planning or on the inadequacy of the program itself when in fact the observed consequences could be due to administrative behavior during implementation, and difficulties confronted during this phase. In fact, implementation can fail because the associated policies violate implementor's self-interest or personal values (Kaufman, 1973). Administrators could be serving their own self-interest rather than the public interest.

VanMeter and VanHorn contend implementation analysis should offer explanations for observed outcomes. They identify six clusters of variables effecting the

implementation process. Those relevant to this study are the disposition of implementors, the policy standards and objectives, interorganizational communication and enforcement activities, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, and the social and political environment. These areas are applicable to this study of the phenomenon of controversial policy and its meaning for school superintendents.

Berman (1978) says "...implementation problems stem mostly from the interaction of a policy with its institutional setting" (p. 157). Berman believes the bottom line is that implementation will always be full of uncertainties, never fully predictable, or context free, but implementation analysis can contribute "...to more effective policy by developing institutionally grounded heuristics to help policy-makers adapt their decisions as implementation problems arise" (p. 180).

Montjoy and O'Toole (1979) stress that some of the problems during implementation could be predicted from the nature of the policies themselves. They encourage analysis of prospective policies in terms of their "implementability." Their studies revealed that the surest way to avoid problems with implementation is to establish a specific mandate and to provide sufficient resources. The conditions of difficulty or ease in implementation of particular policy types is not clear.

Summary

The literature on policy studies, policy implementation and administration confirms the importance and usefulness of research on policy implementation at the micro-level of specific policy types across situations. Though policy implementation is complex and never fully predictable there is value in identifying and describing the implementation processes and key actors, their roles in and impact on the implementation process. This knowledge helps with prediction on how policy and a given environment will interact and why, and what that interaction looks like. It can suggest guidelines on effective and ineffective behavior of key actors. Finally, it can provide some insight on why policy decisions do not always lead to expected results.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Research involves developing understanding on three primary levels- descriptive, causal or correlation relationships, and theoretical. Systematic study of the experiences and beliefs of local educational administrators and other key actors in the policy implementation process is a necessary component of meaningful policy study. It can inform the many stages of the policy making process- especially formulation, implementation, and evaluation.

Through its descriptive and explanatory nature, research of this kind informs theory, the policy process,

and practice and tightens the relationship between the three. Data based on observation of practice and theory arrived at inductively rather than superimposed onto the local scene helps tighten the relationship between theory and practice. A solid foundation of descriptive research and a tighter link between theory and practice leads to more meaningful research and understanding about relationships (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Coladarci & Getzel, 1955; Hall & Loucks, 1982; Lieberman, 1982).

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter restates the research problem, and poses eight specific research questions to be studied, and outlines the theoretical framework and procedures for data collection and analysis. The interview method and protocol, the Ethnograph software for computerization and organization of the data, and matters of confidentiality for study participants are also described.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

What is the subjective meaning for the superintendent of policy experienced as controversial, and what are the associated implications for the policy process in school districts?

1. What are the meanings, definitions, descriptions, and other attributes attached by superintendents to policy identified by them as controversial?
2. What are the patterns and regularities in the perspectives, experiences, and observations of school superintendents regarding the implementation of controversial policy?
3. What are the strategies they associate with the effective implementation of such policy?

4. How are these similar to and different from the strategies they associate with effectively implementing non-controversial policy?

5. What are the criteria superintendents use to judge the outcomes of the policy implementation process?

6. What are the criteria superintendents use to assess the effectiveness of the implementation process itself?

7. What are the manifest and latent goals to which superintendents are responsive as they pursue implementation?

8. Do goals change during implementation? If so, how? What influences the change?

9. What is the superintendent's role in the implementation of controversial policy?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

THE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In education, there is no systematic identification of key actors, variables, or processes associated with social regulatory policy or even controversial policy in general to reference. There is a lack of empirical description and analysis of the phenomenon itself.

Considering these facts, it follows logically that identification, definition, and description based on experiences from the field is a meaningful and useful initial step. The research paradigm believed by the researcher to be most compatible with this task is symbolic interactionism. It allows the research questions, data

collection, and analysis procedures to focus on the meaning of the phenomenon and the experiences with the phenomenon in the day to day experiences of key actors.

Symbolic Interactionism: A Definition of the Concept

The theoretical framework and methodological orientation for this study is symbolic interactionism. The symbolic interactionist values the individual's point of view and attempts to see things from that person's perspective (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). According to Herbert Blumer (1969), one of the main contributors to symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, researchers should "...respect the nature of the empirical world and organize a methodological stance to reflect that respect" (p. 60). Symbolic interactionism is most simply defined as follows: "A perspective within sociology that stresses the meaning phenomenon have for individuals and groups, the interaction that takes place between the individuals, and the ways in which people interpret things in the world" (Goode, 1984, p. 548). Symbolic interactionists focus on "the nuances of everyday life", and the nature of interpersonal relationships (Rose, Glazer & Glazer, 1982). The individuals most often associated with this approach and attributed with its intellectual foundation are George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, and Herbert Blumer.

Symbolic interactionism is compatible with the phenomenological tradition, a dominant force in sociology.

Basically, the phenomenologists view human behavior as a product of how people interpret their world (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Bates (1980) cites Greenfield (1975) who espouses the phenomenological tradition which "...begins with the individual and seeks to understand his interpretations of the world around him...the aim of scientific investigation is to understand how construction of reality goes on at one time and place and compare it with what goes on in different times and places." It emphasizes the subjective aspects of people's behavior (Bogden & Biklen, 1982). The task of the researcher is to respectfully and as accurately in reflection of practice as possible capture this process of interpretation. The methodological orientation of symbolic interactionism relies heavily upon qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, case studies, and participant observation (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

As discussed by Bogden and Biklen (1982), the goals, procedures, tools, and analysis of qualitative research differ from those of quantitative research. Briefly, a major goal of qualitative research methods in education is to develop understanding and sensitizing concepts, to get at a definition of a situation, to understand social processes, and to describe the subjective and multiple realities experienced by participants in schools and other educational settings. Its procedure is evolving and flexible, sometimes

based on hunches. Given the nature and goals of research grounded in the symbolic interactionist perspective, the methods for observation of the phenomenon are drawn from the qualitative research realm- participant observation, in depth interviews, case studies, and focus groups. The primary goal is to acquire description from the field to better understand the experiences, perceptions, and processes that comprise the reality of the subject.

The value of the symbolic interactionist perspective is in developing an understanding of the meaning of experience for individuals, to provide insight on why people act the way they do. The symbolic interactionist will observe a social event, what precedes and what follows it, and gain explanation of its meanings by participants and spectators. In this study the social event is social regulatory policy and its implementation in education and its meaning for superintendents.

Summary

Broadly, this study is concerned with the meaning of the phenomenon of controversial policy as understood by school superintendents. During implementation, a time when the policy and its believed consequences become more of an intense reality, there is a maze of human interaction (Lieberman, 1982). Within the framework of the symbolic interactionist perspective each of the actors in the implementation process will assign their own meaning to the

phenomenon. This meaning is arrived at through interaction with others, and is constantly being re-evaluated, adjusted, or confirmed.

As discussed in the literature review, to not pay attention to the meanings of the things toward which people act is to not be true to the natural environment, to real people, to the empirical world (Blumer, 1969). Meanings, not just initiating factors and resulting behaviors, are central to understanding a phenomenon. Meanings arise out of interaction between people; they are not inherent in the object itself (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism values the ideas people consider to be important (Rose, Glazer & Glazer, 1982). To understand behavior we have to understand definitions of situations, experiences, the phenomenon, and the process by which these definitions are manufactured (Bogden & Biklen, 1982). The "self" is a social construction. Individuals create the self based on interactions with others. Individuals are products of the kinds of relationships and culture in which they participate (Coleman & Cressey, 1984).

For the purposes of this study, the meaning of the phenomenon of controversial policy for the superintendent is what the researcher seeks to understand. Due to their role within the organization- their interaction with both the school board, building administrators, teachers, parents, various interest groups, and others in the community-

superintendents have a broad awareness of the phenomenon. They are also powerful and influential actors that can determine the shape and progress of implementation.

Again, it is recognized that the final product from acquiring an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon of policy perceived by the superintendent as controversial is not the total picture of district response to the implementation of controversial policy. The superintendent's perspective is only one small piece of the larger implementation puzzle.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection occurred in two stages- (1) the pilot study to the dissertation research, and (2) the interview stage. The emphasis was on gaining understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon of controversial policy in education from one identified group, district superintendents.

Logic of the Study's Design

The first stage of data collection was primarily intended to acquire initial description, detail, and awareness of experience and perception from the field of practice. It was a chance to separate the important aspects from the unimportant aspects of policy and practice. This information, as reported later in this chapter, provided

insight and direction for further data collection, primarily serving as a guideline for the second stage, the interviews.

Data collection at the second stage focused on systematically gathering more descriptive information on controversial policy and its meaning for school superintendents as well as on beginning to get a sense of what kind of propositions could be posed about the relationship between the superintendent's experience of the phenomenon of controversial policy, and the strategies they associate with effectively implementing controversial policy. By examining the specific substantive area of AIDS education and its implementation across districts, and through more general discussion about controversial policy in the educational policy arena, this research was intended to acquire more examples of controversial policy and what characterizes it in education based on the meaning the phenomenon has for school superintendents. The superintendents' stories about their experiences with the AIDS education mandate and general interviews provided the data for comparative analysis across districts.

THE PILOT STUDY STAGE

Brief Description of Purpose, Procedures, and Sample

The initial pilot study stage, completed in the summer of 1990, had three steps. The goal was to acquire some examples and description of what characterizes policy perceived as

controversial in the field of education, to list the strategies used or suggested for implementation as well as those strategies found to be most effective in practice, and to begin to describe how controversial policy compares to and is different from non-controversial policy. It was also a chance to identify the most informative actors in the implementation process across districts that would be able to provide the most detailed description of the phenomenon based on their personal observations.

The first part involved a review of the literature on the implementation of policy in general and in the substantive areas of typically talked about controversial policy in the educational policy arena like sexuality education or family life education, AIDS education, desegregation policies, and school-based health clinics.

The second part of the pilot study involved six interviews with superintendents, directors of instruction, and building level administrators. The interviews were primarily open-ended, allowing the subject to talk in the general area of their experiences with policy perceived by them as controversial. The interviews were taped and transcribed in a manner which assured the subject's confidentiality. The following questions were used as a guide.

1. Can you give me an example(s) of a controversial policy you have implemented in your district/school?

2. What made this policy controversial? What characterized the controversy?
3. What were the strategies used for effective implementation of the policy? Which two did you find most effective?
4. Can you give me an example of a non-controversial policy you have had to implement in your district/school?
5. What characterizes a non-controversial policy?
6. What strategies do you use for effective implementation of such policy?
7. What makes implementing controversial policy difficult?
8. What would make implementing controversial policy easier?
9. Would you find legislative mandates or supportive policies helpful?
10. Based on your opinion and experience is there anything else that would help me understand controversial policy in education and its implementation.

After the initial interview, and each interview thereafter I chose to pursue interesting and relevant points brought up in previous interviews. For example, can controversy be anticipated? Does the superintendent's reputation influence the implementation of controversial policy? These interviews allowed for exploring the topic area of interest while preserving the respondents' opportunity to respond freely and share their experiences and thoughts.

The third part of the pilot study involved administering an open-ended survey to 75 educational

leaders- superintendents, secondary principals, and district coordinators. However, probably due to when they were sent, only 14 responses were returned. The following five open-ended questions were posed for response.

1. Please describe two controversial educational policies you have had the experience of implementing in the past five years.
2. Briefly, based on the examples you provided in question number one, describe or explain what makes each policy controversial.
3. Describe the specific strategies you use to implement a controversial policy.
4. What determines which strategies are most effective?
5. What other insights can you offer to help me understand the issues for school administrators regarding controversial policy?

Brief Summary of the Pilot Study

Based on the prescriptive literature in educational journals, the six interviews, and the open-ended survey examples of social regulatory policy as defined by Tatalovich and Daynes (1984) emerged. The examples from the field included AIDS and sex education, curriculum issues involving the teaching of decision making and the use of values clarification, school-based health clinics, no smoking policies, and mandatory drug testing.

An example of a social regulatory policy experienced by all districts due to a state-level mandate was mentioned frequently throughout this pilot stage and thus was singled out, the state AIDS education mandate. This was the policy

chosen for the comparative analysis across districts discussed in the following component of the procedures section.

In addition, both the open-ended surveys and the interviews confirmed that though there were expected similarities in the characteristics of controversial policy and non-controversial policy, they also differed significantly. There was some initial evidence to suggest that what characterizes controversial policy and associated implementation processes does look different from non-controversial policy. Controversial policy as presented by the six pilot study interviewees has identifiable factors that cause it to be uniquely distinguishable from non-controversial policy. For example, nominated policies frequently reflected the element of values warfare described most extensively by Tatalovich and Daynes; they also tended to have intense single issue interest groups; they took more time to implement; and the school board's role as exercising judgement was usually expanded beyond their routine involvement.

There was also a difference in the strategies used for implementation. Some measures taken were typical of standard policy implementation procedures and were only employed more carefully and extensively with anticipation and prevention of controversy in mind. Other measures were not always characteristic of standard policy implementation

procedures, and were in direct reaction to the controversy or potential controversy associated with the policy-extensive community involvement and input through public hearings and broad-based committees, a primary district goal to reflect community values, and taking time necessary to filter the policy through their local process to develop local acceptance and understanding.

In summary, this pilot study identified a number of controversial policies, key actors in the implementation process, a tentative and limited description of what characterizes controversial policy, and some description of the strategies used by districts for the implementation of controversial policy. This information was used as the basis for decision making about the next stage of data collection and then as a guide for the development of the interview protocol.

THE INTERVIEW STAGE

Based on the initial observations made in the pilot study, interviews were chosen as the dominant strategy for data collection. Given the state of the literature, descriptive stories told by superintendents were determined to be the most meaningful and useful form of data.

Purpose of Interviews

The interviews had a dual purpose. First, they were intended to acquire a picture from the superintendent's

perspective of that district's response to a specific social regulatory policy, the Oregon state AIDS education mandate. The second purpose of the interviews was more general: (1) to explore superintendent's perceptions and understandings of social regulatory policy and the controversy that characterizes it in general; and (2) to identify strategies used for implementation of controversial policy.

The first interview objective was to obtain comparable data across sites about the facts and experiences of each district. The second objective was to compliment the superintendents' district case stories in the following ways: (1) by getting additional examples of policy perceived as controversial; (2) by getting more detailed descriptions of what characterizes policy perceived as controversial; (3) by identifying the strategies associated with its implementation; and (4) by describing how controversial policy is similar to or different from non-controversial policy and its implementation.

In general, the interview approach encouraged open-ended responses, and exploratory dialogue around the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation. Unexpected dimensions that came up in the interviews were noted and pursued for greater clarity. Within the practice of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) questions were asked of the data during the collection phase, categories were formed, and the process of data

analysis was integrated with data collection. Data collection and analysis proceeded concurrently.

Study Participants

The study participants included superintendents of eight unified Oregon school districts (districts with one governance structure for both elementary and secondary levels)- two large and wealthy districts, two large and poor districts, two small and wealthy, and two small and poor. The purpose in this selection was to maximize contextual differences between the districts in an effort to increase the possible range of the phenomenon being studied. Size and wealth were chosen as criteria because they are strongly associated with educational outcomes, represent very different administrative contexts, and would be expected to influence the policy process in general, in terms of district complexity (size) and resources available to the policy process (wealth).

The following delineations for size and wealth were derived from the 1990 publication by the Oregon Department of Education Division of School Improvement Estimated 1989-1990 Per Student Current Expenditures:

Large- 3,000 plus students for the average daily membership

Small- Between 500 and 999 students for the average daily membership

Wealthy- Higher than the average assessed value per average daily membership for the district size.

Poor- Lower than the average assessed value per average daily membership.

* The large districts' average value was \$210,159. The small districts' average value was \$160,522.

School districts in the state of Oregon are primarily suburban and rural. The study participants chosen were intended to be a representation of the extremes within the majority of districts in the state: Twenty-eight of Oregon's 104 unified school districts are within the "large" category. Thirty-one of Oregon's 104 unified school districts are within the "small" category. Forty-five of the 104 are in between with an average daily membership of 1,000 to 2,999. Portland, Salem, Beaverton, and Eugene school districts were not included in the selection of study participants because the larger size of these districts, an average daily membership of 16,000 plus, causes them to look very different from the majority of districts in Oregon. Though all superintendents must contend with controversial policy at some point superintendents of districts this large do not typically observe the dynamics of implementation of social regulatory policy. Given that this study in large part focuses on the implementation of the Oregon AIDS Education Mandate the superintendents in these larger districts would not be able to provide as much description of their district response to the mandate because the responsibility for implementation was largely delegated to a Director of Curriculum or Assistant Superintendent.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Preface to the Interview

The following statement was made prior to each interview.

There are two parts to our interview. One of my interests is to get a better understanding of superintendents and their perspective on controversial policy. The way I hope to do this is through talking to several district superintendents throughout the state specifically about the AIDS Education Mandate and their experiences with it. Additionally, I would also like to address more generally the subject of controversial policy in schools. I'm hoping you can provide me with more examples of controversial policies in schools, and explore with us- based on your work experience and opinion- how controversial policy is similar to and different from non-controversial policy. What characterizes it? And, how do you go about implementing it?

Basic Questions for First Component of the Interviews

Please describe what it has been like for you, as superintendent, to be involved in the implementation of a policy like the Oregon state AIDS education mandate. We want to know the "who, what, how, why, when, and where" details of how you responded. What were the issues? What were the problems? What did you do? Why? Most importantly, what was your role and perspective in all of this?

The following are some of the "probes" used during the first part of the interview:

What steps did you take in response to the state AIDS education mandate?

What did you see as your goals in implementing this policy?

How did you approach implementation? Why?

Were some of your actions more effective than others? If so which ones and why?

What factors do you consider when choosing your approach to implementation?

Who were the individuals and groups actively responding to the mandate? What were their goals, or stance on the issue?

How did these individuals or groups try to influence the implementation of AIDS education in your district?

Had your school district or school community taken any steps prior to the mandate to address the AIDS issue? If so, please describe the efforts and the outcome.

How would you describe the outcome(s) of your district's implementation efforts?

As policies go, would you say the Oregon AIDS Education Mandate was controversial? If so, please describe the nature of the controversy. If not, why?

How was any controversy resolved?

Basic Questions for the Second Component of the Interviews

These questions were not asked in any strict order. They served primarily as a guide for probing during the dialogue about controversial policy in the educational policy arena and its implementation.

Can you give me an example(s) of other controversial policies you have implemented in your school district?

What made this policy controversial? What characterized the controversy?

What did you see as your goals in implementing the policy?

Describe the strategies used for effective implementation of the policy? Which do you consider most effective? Why?

Can you give me an example of a non-controversial policy you have had to implement in your district/school?

What characterizes a non-controversial policy?

What did you see as your goals in implementing the policy?

What strategies do you associate with the effective implementation of non-controversial policy?

From your perspective, what makes implementing controversial policy difficult?

From your perspective, what would make implementing controversial policy easier?

In your opinion and experience, how does district size and wealth impact controversial policy?

How is controversy in schools handled?

In twenty words or so how would you summarize what controversial policy means to you?

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA

The Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method was applied throughout the data collection process in an attempt to validate that the study was adequately capturing the perspective of the superintendent, and to generate "grounded" theory. The value of the observations was determined by how compelling they were to the researcher given the consistency of the data across cases- watching for systematic similarities and differences across the cases.

As defined and described in the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), comparative analysis is a method that approaches theory development as a process, "...as an ever-developing entity, not a perfected product" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32), a look at the complexities of a phenomenon to arrive at some emerging order. It is a method for generating theory "grounded" in information gathered from the field. The outcome of comparative analysis is theory which identifies and describes a phenomenon based on the reality of experience as retrieved from the field.

The following paraphrases the purpose of comparative analysis as stated by Glaser and Strauss (1967): to get accurate evidence from which conceptual categories will emerge; to make empirical generalizations which will later help establish the generalizability of fact, to what extent any theoretical implications based on the data are applicable; for "specifying a concept"- bringing out the distinctive elements or nature of the case studied; to use the evidence gathered to test any hypotheses; and finally to generate theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 22-31).

Glaser and Strauss note that grounded theory can be presented "...as a set of codified propositions or in a running theoretical discussion using conceptual categories and their properties" (1967: p. 31). They further describe the theory that is generated as follows:

...the elements of a theory that are generated by comparative analysis are, first, conceptual

categories and their properties, and second, hypotheses or generalized relations among the categories and their properties. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.35)

The focus is on a substantive area for comparative analysis between or among groups. The researcher chooses groups that will help generate as many properties of the categories as possible, and that will help relate categories to each other and to their properties. Glaser and Strauss stress that the emphasis is on carefully selecting cases versus knowing the whole field. The method involves four stages: "...comparing incidents applicable to each category; integrating categories and their properties; delimiting the theory; and writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105). They also stress that the primary intent of comparative analysis is to gain description; a secondary intention is the development of theory.

Ethnograph

The audio-tape recorded interviews were transcribed into an appropriate format for process by Ethnograph. This software allows the researcher to number the transcripts by line and to assign identified codes representing categories based on the research questions and the comparative analysis process. As the data were collected and analyzed the categories were modified to more adequately reflect the key concepts and categorical areas as presented by the superintendents. Briefly, the final code set represented

areas of text that indicated what characterized controversial policy, examples of controversial and non-controversial policy, implicated meaning for superintendents, strategies for implementation, superintendent role, any reference to the school board and their role, any reference to size and wealth, any mention of goals and outcomes, time as a variable, the role of the media, and any comment about mandates. The complete codebook can be found in Appendix B.

After "coding" in Ethnograph, single codes or combinations of codes can then be "searched" as desired from any single case, combination of cases, or all of the cases. For example, the combination of "size" and "strategy" could be searched. This would pull out lines of text that the researcher had identified as relating to both size of the district and the strategy used. Additionally, the cases were catalogued according to district size and wealth. All the large districts are in one catalogue, and the small are in another. The wealthy districts are in one catalogue, and the poor in another. Codes were searched from these catalogues allowing for easy comparison between large and small districts, and wealthy and poor districts.

In sum, Ethnograph allows for flexible, quick, and neat manipulation of a large amount of written qualitative data. Again, this software is only a means of organizing the data. It helps to free the researcher from dealing with typically

cumbersome and consuming data, allowing much more time to be spent with analysis and interpretation.

REPORTING OF THE RESULTS

The results of the data are reported as follows. First, both components of the interview were systematically compared and contrasted across cases to identify patterns, similarities, and differences. Primary and secondary propositions were made about the meaning of controversial policy for district superintendents and the implementation of such policy in education. Key influences on the implementation process and relationships between administrative perceptions, policy type, the appearance of the controversy, and strategies used were identified. Examples of other policies perceived as controversial, strategies considered effective for their implementation, a description of what characterizes policy perceived as controversial, and a discussion of how controversial policy is similar to or different from non-controversial policy were also included.

Second, for each district participating in the study there is a brief narrative of the district's response to the AIDS Education Mandate as told by the superintendent. These narratives reflect the content and language of the superintendent. Events and people they identified as significant were included.

Third, there are concluding observations about the nature of controversial policy and superintendents' experiences and perceptions of it.

Fourth, recommendations are offered on: (1) the directions needed for further research to contribute to the knowledge and practice of educational administration and the educational policy process, and (2) the immediate implications of the research for the current practice of educational administration and the educational policy process.

Finally, there is discussion of the relevance and applicability of Tatalovich and Daynes' theoretical framework to the field of education.

ASSUMPTIONS, STRENGTHS, AND LIMITATIONS

The intention of this study was to identify, define, and describe the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation from the perspective of school superintendents. This researcher believes this intention was satisfied. The result was plentiful, thoughtful, and detailed consideration and discussion of the phenomenon based on the experiences and beliefs of superintendents. The information from the study participants was relevant, meaningful, and useful enough to be shaped into an initial theoretical framework conceptualizing some of the elements associated with controversial policy in education. It also

succeeded in raising further questions for future dialogue and systematic study of the phenomenon.

This research and the resulting document could be judged by a reader as limited given the small number of study participants, and that these participants were only from Oregon. The researcher acknowledges that the study participants are limited by their experiences and their experiences are somewhat determined by the issues Oregon as a state and educational system face. However, the extensive literature review of both the prescriptive and empirical works in education and the political science literature, the pilot study interviews and open-ended surveys sent throughout the state, and the final interviews combine to form a more detailed and truthful indication of the phenomenon and its meaning. The themes and patterns that emerged throughout these stages were very similar and cohesive. Issues like AIDS education and the controversy associated with it cut across state lines, class, creed, and race.

This study was meant to be descriptive, thought provoking, and direction establishing above being generalizable. Eight study participants were able to provide meaningful and consistent insight on the phenomenon. In this sense, this study was a collaborative effort, "...a mutually construed story created out of the lives of both researcher and participant" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990,

p. 12). What mattered more than generalizability of the study is its proximity to truth, and its usefulness as perceived by the study participants and the researcher.

Beyond reliability, validity, and generalizability the researcher believes the information gained from this pursuit has transferability, apparency, and verisimilitude (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7; VanMaanen, 1988), the criteria determined by the researcher from the literature on qualitative research and this research and its intentions to be important. It can be applied from one place to another. It is easily perceived and understood. It has, with good intentions, some semblance to truth. There was an effort to have continuity, closure, and a sense of conviction as portrayed by the study participants and passed through the researcher to the reader (Spence, 1982; Clandinin, 1990, p. 8).

The following are additional assumptions and limitations:

1. Observations of the phenomena were made primarily through a "political lens" versus a human resource lens, or a structural lens. Elmore (1978) encourages those studying implementation to be aware of assumptions they make about organizations. The organizational and conceptual lens the researcher uses affects what will be observed. The "conflict and bargaining model" is one of the organizational lenses he proposes. This encompasses how people with

"...divergent interests coalesce around a common task" (Elmore, 1978, p.185-228). Another relevant conceptual lens for the purpose of this study was Bolman and Deal's political framework (1988). The study of policy implementation through either of these lenses focuses on conflict among actors, the bargaining process, and actors' responses to others' strategies (Elmore, 1978, p. 222).

2. This study limits itself to the superintendent's perspective. Broadly, this study is concerned with the meaning of the phenomenon of controversial policy in the educational policy arena and, more specifically, is concerned with the meaning and experience a superintendent associates with controversial policy.

The researcher recognizes that perspectives of other actors in the implementation process are also significant pieces of the puzzle. All of the meanings assigned to the phenomenon by the various stakeholders combine to form a larger picture of district response to policy perceived as controversial. Multiple perspectives potentially could be combined to yield a more complete description and understanding of the phenomenon of policy perceived as controversial. However, in the interest of manageability of the task and of doing justice to the study of the broader phenomenon of district response to policy perceived as controversial, this study was committed only to

investigating and describing the meaning of the phenomenon for the superintendent.

3. Another limitation to the study is that there were only eight cases, and all the cases were school districts in Oregon. It was the intention of the researcher to only begin comparative analysis and make some initial propositions about the meaning for superintendents of policy perceived by them as controversial. It will be an opportunity to acquire some thick initial description, and identify key variables for further study. There is no intention of making empirical generalizations beyond these cases, although it is anticipated that the theoretical propositions yielded by the study will be useful to other researchers in their investigations of similar phenomena.

4. A final limitation is that all eight study participants are male. Because women are socialized differently from men it is reasonable to assume that women may describe and respond to controversy differently. Gaining the female perspective on controversial policy and its implementation in education would expand understanding of the phenomenon. Consideration of gender is a necessary dimension of any research intended to be an accurate depiction of educational practice within the symbolic interactionist perspective. Women will assign a different meaning to their experiences.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

The following confidentiality procedures were approved by the Portland State University Human Subjects Review Committee.

Throughout the study, the confidentiality of all the study participants was preserved. Individuals were assured of this during solicitation of the subjects. At the time of the interview, they were reminded not to mention their name or the name of their district. If either was accidentally identified it was not included in the transcript. There was careful attention given to the important detail of confidentiality during transcription of the recorded interviews. Nothing precisely revealing is in any form of the data. The cassettes, the disks, and the data files are identified by case names based on numbers assigned to the district interviewed, size, and wealth. For example, "DIST1.LW" would stand for the first district superintendent interviewed, and the district is large and wealthy. Additionally, the full transcripts were only read by the transcriber, the researcher, and the dissertation advisor. The study participants were asked to sign a written consent form explaining these details. Their verbal consent was also recorded on the tape.

CHAPTER IV

NARRATIVES BASED ON THE SUPERINTENDENTS' ACCOUNTS OF THEIR DISTRICTS' RESPONSES TO THE OREGON STATE AIDS EDUCATION MANDATE

PREFACE

The following narratives sketch the experiences of eight districts with the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate. The districts vary in size and wealth. According to the superintendents interviewed the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate was controversial to some degree for some districts and not at all in others. However all eight study participants considered it a potentially controversial issue. Whether it was controversial or not the experiences reported are examples of social regulatory policy in education.

In content they readily demonstrate membership in the theoretical framework proposed by Tatalovich and Daynes. First, it is policy characterized by ideological versus monetary dispute or otherwise expressed as conflict about moral values over economic values (Lowi, 1988; Tatalovich & Daynes, 1988). Second, single issue interest groups were actively involved with implementation. Third, there was an "activist judiciary" in that a district's school board often

was more extensively involved in the review and approval of the policy and curriculum than was routinely the case with non-controversial policy.

The content and language of the narratives are reflective of the superintendent's account. As a researcher within the phenomenological perspective, an effort was made to tell the story to the reader as the researcher was told. The events and people significant to the superintendent, and their beliefs and opinions about what happened are presented. The researcher did add the heading labels in an effort to categorize and organize elements of their experience for clarity for the reader and presentation of the research observations and conclusions.

The narratives highlight the primary goals, strategy, and outcome of the district's efforts. They briefly characterize the superintendent and school board role. Finally, they are intended to describe the extent and appearance of the controversy the district experienced.

NARRATIVE ONE

District Description

This is a small, wealthy district.

Goals

The district's primary goals were to meet the mandate while reflecting community beliefs, make it age-appropriate and relevant to kids, and make it easy for teachers to

implement. The superintendent also wanted to gain the trust of teachers so that the curriculum could be implemented at the classroom level given the current demands on teacher's time.

Strategy

The primary emphasis was on community involvement and education, providing people with plenty of opportunity for comfortable expression of their viewpoint, input, and to gain factual information on which to base their decisions and feedback. The superintendent established a committee representative of the community at large. He believed they genuinely started with no preconceived ideas about what would be, but worked through issues from the start to finish together. They listened very carefully, and seriously considered all suggestions: "We were open. We were honest. We were saying we want help and we'll listen...we all explored it together." They took the time necessary to let it develop within their community.

Outcome

The superintendent believes they achieved and exceeded their goals as indicated by community, parent, teacher, and school board support for the curriculum. They were able to integrate the curriculum in a way that was meaningful to youth despite all the other demands on teacher's time. They were able to include information in the curriculum on

abstinence and prevention. In addition to these achievements, there is continued interest in keeping the curriculum updated and staying knowledgeable about available new materials and approaches to AIDS education.

Controversy

They experienced little to no controversy during the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate. The superintendent and committee were surprised the issue didn't become more intense and credits that to involving everyone openly and honestly throughout as well as to a general acceptance within the community that information on AIDS is critically needed: "...it took a long time, but it was easy to accomplish. In looking back over it...it was because the information is so needed, so critical that we all have it. That gave me a tremendous advantage, and involving community and staff." At most there were only a few voices of concern about the prevention education element of the curriculum. These voices of concern moved from opposing what they perceived as sex education to supporting informing youth about something that is deadly. They never developed into an obstacle to implementation. The superintendent also believes they had an advantage in that they began their implementation efforts before the media made it a sensational issue.

Overview of District Experience with
the AIDS Education Mandate

The superintendent began his story by noting that Oregon school districts had just received many mandates from the state at once- TAG, Essential Learning Skills, Drug and Alcohol Education, and AIDS Education. In response to these demanding circumstances the four administrators in the district divided the responsibilities for implementation of the various mandates by each taking an area that they would feel comfortable and effective with. Somewhat by default the superintendent took on the AIDS Education Mandate as his responsibility.

His next step involved going to the County Health Department for insight and direction. Here he received the suggestion that he contact a certain individual at the state health department. Upon doing so he learned that the Oregon State Health Department was putting together a suggested curriculum for the Oregon Department of Education and consequently they were very interested in assisting him. The superintendent invited the Health Department representative down to address a committee of community representatives on the facts and realities of AIDS the illness and AIDS education.

The committee he put together included elementary and secondary teachers, health teachers, school board members, health department representatives, and community members. It is their district policy to get as many people as

possible involved. "We're a small community and it takes all of us together to make it work and we all feel that way." The committee members were very committed, showed a lot of comradery, and worked as a team. They spent a lot of time together working through curriculum issues and attending continuing education workshops on AIDS throughout the state.

As a result of the presentation, and after the initial shock of hearing and talking about sex and condoms, the committee became "serious" about their work ahead. Though they were not quite ready to "go pick up the flag and wave it around the community yet" they felt "committed" and aware and wanted to know more. They were ready to work it through with the community.

The committee then went to the school board to bring them up to date. They mentioned that they would take their time and consider curriculum development with the involvement of the community very carefully and thoroughly. They wanted it to develop from within the community.

As each section of the curriculum came out from the state health department the committee took it and reviewed it. When they felt comfortable with it they would take it to the school board to see what they thought of it. Then the committee called parent meetings at each school where they then delivered that curriculum as if to students, and would have open discussion about it and the teaching

materials. They also met with various community groups, civic organizations, and the Ministerial Association.

Through this process they began to have "local ownership of the curriculum". In the superintendent's opinion there were only a few minor changes from the state curriculum, but these would probably be described as major by those concerned. It took about a year to actually develop.

Superintendent Role

The superintendent took a very active and direct role in the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate. He assumed primary responsibility for ensuring its implementation, put together the committee, and was elected chair. It took a great deal of time and special effort on his part. He organized and made formal presentations to various community organizations. He worked with the committee and school board every step of the way. He is still regarded by the teachers as the person to contact for help, requests, or suggestions.

School Board Role

There were school board members actively involved with the committee's work. The entire school board provided input and approval throughout the process.

NARRATIVE TWO

District Description

This is a large, wealthy district.

Goals

The district's primary goal was to meet the requirements of the mandate and have a lot of community involvement in the process. They also hoped their approach would abate any opposition they might encounter.

Strategy

There was a great deal of effort put into ensuring community participation in the process to meet the mandate. A committee of broad based community representation was formed. This committee and the administration made a special effort to reach out to the Ministerial Association to get their viewpoint, and intentionally involved parents that had a clearly religious-based opposition to AIDS education. The district did not involve the state in their process as there was clear opposition to the state curriculum. The committee considered a variety of curriculum and looked into what other districts were doing and considered effective.

Outcome

The superintendent believed they satisfied their goals. However, one outcome that they had not expected was the

school board having to respond to some religious based controversy which eventually prompted them to make a compromise by changing the opt out procedures and by providing a classroom rent free for an alternative program.

Controversy

The controversy over AIDS education in this district did not reach an unmanageable or threatening level of intensity. However a small, but organized religious based opposition was able to gain concessions through very specific tactics. They made statements against the state curriculum in the coalition meetings but never brought in their own then. The superintendent contends that they may have believed any alternative curriculum offer would have been defeated in the coalition anyway so chose to bide their time until they could criticize instruction. The superintendent described this strategy as very difficult to counter because an organized group had now gained specific leverage against individuals and it required a great deal of time and effort to call support for the district's efforts together again and reassure these supporters that in fact implementation was going well and as planned. At this point the media was making it out as a controversy as well and chose to prolong what controversy there was. Other than these factors it was not a topic that received much attention. There were other things going on in the district

at the time due to rapid district growth like building new schools, bond issues, and tax base measures.

Overview of the District Experience
with the AIDS Education Mandate

When the mandate first came out it was assigned to the assistant superintendent who is responsible for policy and regulation development. He then organized two committees, a personnel committee that would clarify how the district would deal with an AIDS infected employee or student. The other was an instruction committee which would review various curriculum, and make decisions about what would be taught and how. The superintendent in this district was put in a position where he could react to recommendations instead of being in a role where he was viewed as having some ownership in the recommendations. He typically is only kept informed throughout the process, and makes sure that the school board is fully informed and comfortable come approval time. He becomes more directly involved only as any controversy intensifies.

The instruction committee, referred to as the Health Coalition Committee was first put together about ten years ago to deal with expansion of the district sex education curriculum. It includes broad based representation- the ministerial association, parent-student organization representatives, local school representation, teachers, health teachers, administrators, professional specialists,

and at large citizens who had expressed an interest in participating. The committee intentionally included a number of parents who had a clearly religious based, value based opposition to AIDS education and the state curriculum. They believed it dictated certain values they were opposed to.

Along the way there was fairly unanimous concern about the way the state curriculum dealt with the primary grades. They made some adjustments there, choosing to emphasize more of the prevention aspect versus the approach the state had taken of teaching about disease symptoms. However, throughout the community process the opposition group never opposed the direction that the committee was going.

It wasn't until the curriculum was adopted and the first instruction completed that the group opposing the district's efforts subsequently organized and approached the school district with the contention that parental notification procedures were not adequate, and that teachers were promoting their own values as well as secular humanism. They wanted a particular church developed curriculum offered which involved "...lots of values clarification and clearly religious values." The school board responded to the controversy and did allow some changes in the opt out procedures and offered a classroom rent free to support the desired alternative curriculum. They felt this did not compromise their originally approved program.

The development and implementation stage took about a semester. What the district put in place was a curriculum that looked very much like the state's curriculum with some local adaption in the primary grades.

Superintendent Role

The superintendent kept informed throughout the process, but was not very directly involved. His only role was to double check that the proper people and groups were notified and included in the process. The controversy intensified some, but the issues were dealt with primarily through the assistant superintendent.

School Board Role

The school board followed their routine procedures in making sure that before they passed on the committee recommendation that groups had a chance to respond. They arranged some special hearings before they adopted the recommendations. They were very committed to community based recommendations. Finally, in addition to approving the committee's recommendations they made the compromise decisions based on proposals offered by the opposition group.

NARRATIVE THREE

District Description

This is a small, poor district.

Goals

The primary goals of this district were to meet the requirements of the mandate. They believed they had a moral obligation to do so. In addition, the superintendent hoped to educate the community about the facts and realities AIDS as a social problem.

Strategy

The primary strategy of the district was to be open, honest, and to regard all viewpoints as legitimate and valuable. They wanted to listen, and to take the necessary time to work through it carefully while considering all their options. They were also very committed to having teacher involvement as teachers have the primary responsibility for implementation of policy and programs at the classroom level, and are known and trusted by the community.

Outcome

The superintendent believed the district achieved these goals. As a district they met the requirements of the mandate by putting in place a locally adapted version of the state curriculum. The superintendent believed they were offering age appropriate instruction that was understood and supported by the community as a whole. The curriculum was "...filtered through our own people and basically fits this district."

Controversy

This district experienced little controversy with the AIDS education mandate. There were only a few minor concerns about accuracy of drawings in the curriculum. The superintendent credited the lack of controversy to their policy of openness, honesty, community involvement, and taking their time to carefully get the mandate in place. Additionally the district was also implementing a school based health clinic at the time and this issue was receiving the greater amount of attention and concern. There was no public outcry, no staff opposition, and no organized groups opposing AIDS education or the district's efforts on the part of AIDS education.

Overview of the District Experience with the AIDS Education Mandate

This district collaborated with a number of other districts for the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate. They are a small poor district and often work together with other districts for policy and curriculum development.

The collaborative organization, known as a consortium, worked with teachers from the various districts to develop the AIDS curriculum K-12. This group would periodically offer their drafts to the entire teaching staff in the districts for review and input. They would then put the feedback from the staff back through the developmental

process and make adjustments. The curriculum cycled through this process about four times. In this district it was very important to have the understanding, support, and input of the teachers as they were responsible for making it work at the classroom level in a way that was meaningful for kids.

The recommended curriculum was then brought to the school board and put up for thirty day review. The curriculum, books, and pamphlets were put into the city library, and each school office. Notification was put in the newspaper for the four consecutive weeks that those materials were available for public review.

When the school board met again in another thirty days there was only one minor concern expressed about the names of figures in a drawing. They decided to change the names so it would be clearer that it was a homosexual relationship. The school board then approved the curriculum.

It took about one year to develop and implement the AIDS education curriculum. What they adopted was a local adaption of the state curriculum. It had been filtered through their collaborative organization and their own community, and was described by the superintendent as "fitting the district."

Superintendent Role

This superintendent was very involved with the implementation of the AIDS education mandate. He was an

active member on the committee responsible for the development of the curriculum. He made certain that individuals had the opportunity to voice their concerns comfortably and made himself available to listen to those concerns.

School Board Role

For this district, the school board's only role in the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate was to review the recommendations throughout the process and give the approval on the final curriculum proposed.

NARRATIVE FOUR

District Description

This is a large, poor district.

Goals

The primary goal of the district was to meet the requirements of the mandate with representative involvement from the community, and to provide age-appropriate instruction on AIDS integrated with the already existing family living/sex education curriculum.

Strategy

The most effective strategy for this district was community involvement at the district and building level. They listened to anyone that wanted to express their viewpoint. Their philosophy has always been to take the time

to listen and talk with people on both sides of an issue. Whenever they change policy their policy procedure has been to get a sampling of the public regardless of what the issue is. They routinely enlist the support of the media. "I think that by involving people we find that does away with most controversy." For this particular issue, they also emphasized that the focus of the implementation stage would be about "how" they would implement the mandate, not would they implement AIDS education.

Outcome

According to the superintendent, the district met the mandate and has integrated into their family living curriculum what he considers to be age-appropriate AIDS instruction K-12 for their district. The superintendent and the working committee believed they adopted a policy and program that was in the best interest of the health, education, and safety of their staff and students.

Controversy

This district experienced little controversy while implementing this mandate. A few parents called and asked questions about it, but that was all. Only one large religious organization in town opposed the education, but were satisfied with their youth being able to opt out of the program. The district reportedly has never had to determine policy based on the viewpoints and values of this particular

group. The superintendent believed that AIDS education did have the potential of becoming a controversial issue in their district, but credited the lack of controversy to community involvement and education.

Overview of the District Experience
with the AIDS Education Mandate

Upon receiving the mandate the administration and a long standing family living/sex education committee went to work updating and clarifying what policy the district already had in place as they had actually started addressing the issue of AIDS education and AIDS infected staff or students when AIDS as a health issue first became known. Over the last five years or so they had reviewed and discussed their policy as a community three or four times. They had tried to keep the AIDS policy reflective of the most knowledgeable thinking at the time.

The Director of Curriculum actually did most of the work with their Family Living Committee, a committee established some time ago to deal with the sex education curriculum in the district. The committee had parents, teachers, union representatives, administrators, specialists, and community members at large that were believed to represent both sides of the issue. An aspect of this district's policy development procedures is to involve members of their community that have an association with a particular policy in its development. This is has been

standard operating procedure for them. The superintendent noted that they routinely take the time to "...involve as many of the people on both sides of an issue as we can in helping develop a policy."

What the mandate did for this district was give them incentive to review again what they had in place and change it to reflect current knowledge and thinking on AIDS infected personnel and AIDS education. It took about a semester to go through the review process.

Superintendent Role

This superintendent was the assistant superintendent in charge of policy development in the district at the time, a position which has the primary responsibility for implementation of mandates. As assistant superintendent he was very closely involved with the process. He was the "facilitator" and "organizer." The superintendent in the district was not involved with the details of development and implementation. Superintendent participation increased only as a policy or policy issue became more controversial. As superintendent now, he considers himself to be more available for listening and offering factual information to people opposing their efforts, helping them to respond on an informed level. He still perceives his role as one where it is necessary to work very hard and carefully to involve others, to be available, to listen, and to maintain

respectful working relationships with all members of the community everyday.

School Board Role

The school board in this district was not very involved in the development process. Their role was primarily to approve the recommendations of the family living/sex education committee. They did have one school board member very knowledgeable about AIDS and supportive of AIDS education. She "carried a lot of weight."

NARRATIVE FIVE

District Description

This is a large, wealthy district.

Goals

In meeting the mandate this district wanted to integrate AIDS education into their already existing human sexuality program. The administration wanted to do so with community involvement in the process so that the outcome would reflect community values. They did not want to compromise on what they believed was important, comprehensive information on prevention education to provide youth in their community.

Strategy

The superintendent and assistant superintendent filtered the policy through the standard operating

procedures. They do this with all policy whether it is controversial or not. They involved people they perceived to be on both sides of the issue, establishing a natural disagreement within a working committee. The committee had community hearings for public testimony. Also, acknowledging that the ministerial leadership in the community would have a strong opinion on the issue, the assistant superintendent made contact with the Ministerial Association.

Outcome

The superintendent believed the district had appropriately and meaningfully integrated AIDS education as required by the mandate into the already existing human sexuality curriculum. Considering it had the potential for absolute disagreement, he thought that the district responded well to concerns and succeeded in damage controlling it as much as possible. The community understood and supported the program that was adopted.

Controversy

This district experienced very little controversy over this issue. What little concern was expressed focused more on the "how" of implementation versus the "why". The most intense issue was over the details of a drawing in the curriculum and whether the drawing promoted homosexuality. This surprised the superintendent somewhat as he saw the

potential in this issue for what he described as "pure conflict", a no-win situation where no mutually agreed upon consensus can be reached, somebody loses. He credited the lack of controversy to the way the district went about implementation, the fact that the district already had a human sexuality program in place, and that the community in general was in agreement about the importance and appropriateness of AIDS education.

Overview of the District Experience
with the AIDS Education Mandate

The district filtered their AIDS policy through the routine policy process. This process includes community, school board, and staff involvement. Specific to each policy they also invite people from their professional and business community to participate that may have expertise on the subject at hand.

The assistant superintendent had primary responsibility for its implementation. She worked in conjunction with teacher leadership positions, and Central Office people.

The community believed that AIDS education was needed. Consequently, the implementation process focused entirely on how it should be done. The issue that required the most discussion was to what extent should abstinence be stressed. The superintendent believed they took a moral stance in line with the community, but did not take a dogmatic or religious perspective. They did not want to make it devoid of the

morality of sexuality, yet they wanted youth to have information on prevention in addition to abstinence education.

The media covered the issue very factually. They did not sensationalize the issue at all. The process of curriculum development and implementation took from the Spring to October. After extensive community input through the committee, school board meetings, and public hearings the school board made a smooth approval of the committee recommendations.

Superintendent Role

The superintendent was the delegator of work responsibility. He was available to listen to community concerns, but his primary role was to make sure the appropriate processes were followed by the assistant superintendent and the committee, and all efforts were made to have thorough community involvement. He also wanted to make sure that the school board was fully informed and comfortable making decisions on the recommendations. He attended the public hearings and some of the committee sessions.

School Board Role

The school board had representation on the committee. At least one school board member sat in on the committee sessions from the beginning of the process to the end. The

others dropped in and out of the community meetings. All the school board heard public testimony. Finally, they reviewed and approved the recommendations the committee offered.

NARRATIVE SIX

District Description

This is a small, poor district.

Goals

The basic goals of this district were to meet the requirements of the mandate, and to provide AIDS education which acknowledged that a high percent of youth are sexually active and deserved education on prevention of AIDS in addition to abstinence education.

Strategy

The primary strategy was to keep the public informed about the district's efforts, and to invite and listen to public concern and input.

Outcome

Though they met the minimum requirements of the mandate, the superintendent is disappointed with the curriculum in place, referring to it as "watered down" in that it doesn't deal with a lot of information that students, especially those that are sexually active, need to know. The school is only allowed to talk about abstinence

and not other prevention methods. In addition, the process was very tension filled, demanding, and time consuming for everyone involved. This resulted in bitterness and exhaustion for some.

Controversy

The controversy this district experienced over the AIDS Education Mandate was very intense as reflected by very vocal opposition, large numbers of people at public meetings and school board meetings, representation from formally organized religious groups in the community, and the fact that it took two and a half years to implement. There was vocal opposition to AIDS education in general. They would have preferred not to have it at all. There was specific dislike of the state curriculum. The issue was associated with promoting homosexuality and sexual activity in youth, Planned Parenthood, and abortion.

Overview of the District Experience with the AIDS Education Mandate

As requested by the school board the superintendent put together a committee of four community people, and four staff. A couple of school board members volunteered. The committee met monthly for a year and a half. They reviewed a number of curriculum, but primarily focused on the state AIDS curriculum. Whenever a concern was expressed about a certain part they would simply cut it out of the curriculum.

This amended version of the state curriculum was presented to the school board.

The school board had a public hearing on it. An unusually large showing of 125 people attended. An average showing for other controversial issues in this district is about sixty people. Of the 125 who attended, forty-five people testified. All forty five people opposed the committee recommendation.

At this point, the superintendent suggested to the school board that the next step should be to look at more curriculum. The school board accepted his suggestion.

After another year the committee returned to the school board with a curriculum recommendation that was a combination of curriculum by two other districts. This curriculum was received positively by the community and the school board approved it. The curriculum only discussed abstinence.

From this point on the implementation process was trouble free. However, the original opposition group insisted on an ongoing process of parent involvement whereby speakers and films would have to be reviewed and approved systematically.

It took two and a half years to implement, and was a very time consuming and demanding process for all those involved.

Superintendent Role

This superintendent was the Principal of the high school. He was also very involved with the work of the committee. He heard public testimony and responded to concerns of individuals. He came up with the compromise situation when the school board was faced with a very vocal disapproving community. For him it was a very compromising, frustrating, tension filled, resource draining, and time consuming process. He believed it would have been better for his district and youth if the state mandated more curriculum requirements, more of the "how" not just the "what" as well as the resources for doing it.

School Board Role

School board representatives were active on the committee. The entire school board heard public testimony. They agreed to a compromise effort proposed by the superintendent and committee, and finally approved the recommended curriculum.

NARRATIVE SEVEN

District Description

This is a large, poor district. However, this story is based on the experience this Oregon superintendent had in a district in another state which had a similar AIDS education mandate. He was new to the Oregon school district, arriving

after the AIDS education policy and curriculum was in place. Therefore, he could only provide more recent examples of controversial policy from this district.

Goals

This district wanted to obey the law as they understood it, and wanted to "...move forward as an informed group of patrons as opposed to a misinformed or ill-informed group of patrons." The superintendent was very committed to meeting the mandate with the involvement of the community.

Strategy

The main strategy was to have good communication with the public to keep the public involved in the process of policy and curriculum development and implementation. They established a committee representative of the community to do the work. The superintendent also engaged the support of the media. The superintendent also emphasized to the community and the public that they needed to focus on "how" not the "should we" or "why" of implementation. Through looking at best knowledge and best research on AIDS education, the administration and committee tried to anticipate controversy and planned to abate any that did occur. He tried to "...identify issues prior to them becoming issues."

Outcome

The superintendent believed they were successful because the district had very little controversy, and met the mandate with the support of an informed public.

Controversy

This issue was viewed as potentially controversial but the district actually experienced very little controversy during the implementation of the AIDS education mandate. The superintendent described it as a low two on a scale of one to ten with ten being very intense with large numbers of people. A few individuals were opposed but there were no organized groups. There were only a few voices of concern and these individuals were not angry, confused or frustrated. There was no battle or fight, and there was no large attendance at school board meetings. It also did not take an unusual amount of time to implement. The superintendent credited the lack of controversy to the approach taken to diminish fears and the fact that the community seemed to understand the importance of it.

Overview of the District Experience with the AIDS Education Mandate

This district put together a committee of parents, teachers, and administrators. The committee represented the community. There was natural disagreement within the committee on the matter of AIDS education.

The committee received a specific scope of work from the superintendent, and were encouraged to further pursue a review of the literature the superintendent had started on current knowledge in the field of AIDS education and the experiences of other school districts with it. He wanted them to act on "best research and best knowledge." In an effort to prevent or diminish controversy, he wanted to be able to compare his district to other communities and the trends elsewhere.

The committee had public hearings. The Ministerial Association was invited to these hearings. There was a lot of discussion about how AIDS education should be implemented in their district.

The result was to bring professionals into the schools to speak once a year on the subject of AIDS and prevention, usually people in the medical field. This was received well by the community because they trusted the speakers. They were viewed as highly trained "experts", and had respectable stature in the community.

The media's support was enlisted, and shown in print. Also, it did not take an unusual amount of time to implement the mandate.

Superintendent Role

The superintendent determined the process, but delegated the work. He anticipated some of the potential problems, and did some background research on current

knowledge about AIDS education and the experiences of the other districts. He organized the committee and presented them with a scope of work. He also spent considerable time with the media to keep them informed.

School Board Role

The school board was involved somewhat in the committee process, but served primarily in their routine role of review and approval. They also were present at public hearings.

NARRATIVE EIGHT

District Description

This is a small, wealthy district.

Goals

The basic goal of this district was to meet the requirements of the mandate with a strong curriculum that reflected the community's standards, and had the support of the teachers.

Strategy

The most effective strategy for them was "...listening, and being able to hear other points of view without saying you're wrong, we're right and we're going to do it our way." When this superintendent ran into opposition he backed off from what they were proposing, started at ground zero, and listened to a more representative sample of the community.

Outcome

The superintendent believed they accomplished the goal of having a strong curriculum that reflected community and family values. They took a moral stand in the curriculum without taking a strict religious point of view. Eventually he won the support of his teachers who initially were disappointed in the proposed curriculum.

Controversy

The issue was controversial in this district. Organized religious groups associated with state and national anti-abortion, anti-Planned Parenthood, and anti-sex and AIDS education organizations like Eagle Forum and others opposed the initial curriculum proposal. They were very vocal and showed up in large numbers at the presentation to the school board. They had a lot of written "propaganda" on their viewpoint. They were very opposed to the state curriculum, believing it did not emphasize abstinence and family values enough.

Overview of the District Experience with AIDS Education Mandate

The superintendent was new to the district just prior to the deadline for meeting the mandate for AIDS education. Upon arrival he learned that the superintendent prior to him had not yet begun the process of implementation. The superintendent had experience with the mandate from another district in the role of assistant superintendent. He plowed

into the task in this district using the same types of community involvement with existing community committees that worked through the school with curriculum as he had done in his previous district. They were well on their way to adopting the policy and materials that were recommended by the state when they ran into some opposition.

There was an element in the community of generally religious groups that did not approve of the state curriculum. They felt that it was too non-value oriented. It became apparent that the group was adamant, and they were connected with state and national anti-abortion organizations. They had their own curriculum that they wanted to use.

The superintendent backed off and formed a new committee, and then invited input from everyone. They had a couple of community meetings and then went through a process of curriculum development that was their own. The curriculum that was finally accepted was based on some materials from the New York state curriculum guide which was more family oriented and more oriented toward abstinence rather than condom oriented. The curriculum included material about prevention and safer sex, but this was only a compact portion.

The curriculum had the support of the community but teachers felt that the curriculum was bland and not really addressing the issues the way they thought needed. The

superintendent convinced the teachers that schools are here to do not only what they think is right, but also primarily to represent the community's values as they educate kids.

What the district ended up with was in the superintendent's opinion not that different from what they started with, but it went through a process so people understood it. It had been an analysis based on the community's particular beliefs. It was not the curriculum the "ultra-conservative" group wanted the district to have, but it was one they accepted. The district incorporated parental involvement in the review of the materials, adequate parental notification, and the option of opting their child out of the program.

Support for AIDS education was shown in the media, but they also expressed the belief that the schools should be strongly promoting family values.

Though the process was very time consuming and pressure packed due to all the extreme views, the superintendent believes it was a positive and worthwhile process because the curriculum reflects the values of the community and has their approval.

Superintendent Role

The superintendent provided the internal leadership. He organized the committee, and carried most of the responsibility for implementation. He was the liaison and

peacemaker between the staff that was 100% behind the state curriculum and the community that wanted another curriculum.

School Board Role

The school board was supportive of backing off the original proposal, and approaching the development of the curriculum in a more open manner. The school board was committed to the community having ownership of a curriculum they understood and believed to be reflective of community values.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the information provided by the eight study participants. In the first part of the chapter the researcher summarizes and reflects on the superintendents' accounts of their district's response to the AIDS Education Mandate as presented in Chapter IV. The latter part of the chapter focuses on the additional information gathered from the second component of the interviews. This part provides additional examples, definition, and description of controversial policy and its implementation in the educational policy arena and its meaning for school superintendents. The data presented there is organized around the research questions. Formal discussion of the data and theoretical abstraction is reserved for Chapter VI. The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the information offered by the study participants.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NARRATIVES

Outstanding Observations

As mentioned in the preface to this chapter, viewing these eight narratives on the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate through Tatalovich and Daynes' theoretical framework reveals distinct patterns and similarities between them that legitimately qualifies them for membership within the phenomenon of social regulatory policy. Most basically the accounts consistently mention involvement of single issue interest groups; the controversy that did exist was rooted in moral conflict not monetary conflict; and, finally, the school board's role and responsibility to pass judgement was often beyond their routine involvement with regard to review and approval of policy and curriculum.

Also characteristic of district experience with the AIDS Education Mandate was the presence of or the potential for emotional, polarized, non-compromising debate, and the time-consuming nature associated with social regulatory policy as defined by Tatalovich and Daynes (1988) and Lowi (1988). When the implementation of AIDS education was described as controversial by the superintendent, the debate was often described as emotional and filled with tension. There was a tendency for participants to act on emotions versus fact. People were drawn into the debate by an emotional interest and not for tangible benefits. In fact, one superintendent believed only a few people out of many

opposing the proposed curriculum actually read the curriculum and understood the content. There was the perception that people wanted to extend their religious views, their "fanaticism", "...their one sided view of the way things should be." This same superintendent noted the following: "...they [the opposition] kept mentioning the issue of students, what is best for students and so forth, but I don't think that was the underlying motive" (District Six).

Sometimes there was no reference to facts and consequences of district action but only a disapproval of any effort due to its perceived associations with abortion, promiscuity, homosexuality, Planned Parenthood, and secular humanism.

...it is more a matter of not having a number of facts, but starting with one fact and then having a number of people promote it....I guess the main bugaballoo of the whole thing was that the state AIDS curriculum dealt too much or dealt with at all the issue of things other than abstinence, talked about homosexuality. That was a big issue, the state curriculum promoted homosexuality, promoted the use of intravenous drugs. These types of things were brought up. That was what they harped on. (District Six)

It didn't take long to discover that there was an element in the community of generally religious groups that didn't like the state curriculum. They felt that it was an encouragement rather than a deterrent to kids getting involved sexually.... (District Eight)

Debate surrounding the issue could be described as polarized as people focused on the action taken as either good or bad, right or wrong, or morally correct or

incorrect. For example, providing AIDS education is simply a sinful corruption of good moral standards and not talking about the matter at all or at most discussing abstinence is the only solution versus taking action based on proclaimed facts about adolescent sexuality which humanely provide information stressing abstinence and also informing youth about other prevention methods. When such extreme views existed they tended to be non-negotiable, non-compromising, and difficult to resolve. They became moral issues versus health or education issues.

All of the superintendents viewed the responsibility of implementing the AIDS education mandate as unusually time-consuming compared to other policies they have had to implement. In those districts where there was controversy the superintendents found it to be not only time-consuming but an exhausting drain on district resources and energy.

It took two and a half years, a lot of hard feelings and a lot of frustration. (District Six)

That process, even though it ultimately worked out to be a positive one, is very time consuming and very pressure packed because once you do go through the community involvement process for curriculum development you attract those extreme views to oppose those views.... (District Eight)

...we only have so much energy to deal with it on a daily basis, and when we constantly get involved in controversies I think that takes more out of us then we can regenerate (District Six).

Because of the potential for controversy or pure conflict over this issue time was committed to carefully preventing any undesired response to the issue. When there

was controversy time was taken to try to carefully work through the issues. Time was taken as a strategy for prevention of controversy and as a strategy for dealing with the controversy.

...we would not move very fast...the timeline was going to be slow because we were going to let it develop, that we would take that curriculum, study it, and make it fit our needs. (District One)

...they [the committee] took their time and did it carefully was also part of its [referring to implementation of the AIDS Mandate] success. (District Two)

...by taking a little more time and by being as open as you can be takes a lot of the mystique out of this, So things that would be controversial typically become less controversial. (District Three)

If you didn't spend that kind of time, if you deal with it all in this very compact, compressed, charged kind of a thing rather than spreading it out so we actually isolate the problems.... (District Five)

Also characteristic of district experiences with the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate as controversial policy or potentially controversial policy, characteristics not discussed by Tatalovich and Daynes, were the large numbers of people, usually formally organized, involved in the debate, and the tendency for the controversy to show itself in a public forum and be resolved in a public forum. District Six and District Eight support these points.

All of the study participants suggested that the number of people involved was a factor in the intensity of the

controversy. For example, District Six witnessed an attendance of 125 at a public hearing when they have had about 60 people attend for other controversial issues. In the case of District Eight the opposing group was very formally organized: "...this was a very adamant group...they were not only locally oriented, but had statewide and national support."

When controversy was present to any degree the superintendents indicated that it often showed itself in a public forum versus remaining an issue known to and dealt with only by the internal organization. The issues were and could only ever be resolved in a public forum with public approval of school district action.

Brief Characterization of the Controversy Associated with the Implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate

Though six out of eight superintendents report experiencing little controversy associated with the implementation of AIDS education and only two reported experiencing intense controversy with its implementation, all eight viewed and treated the issue as potentially controversial. One superintendent described this particular topic as having potential of resulting in "pure conflict" which he defined as a no-win, no-compromise situation: "Pure conflict is when we have the opposing points of view, but they are not compatible" (District Five).

The controversy experienced ranged from very mild to moderate to extreme- from only a few individuals expressing concern to having to make some concessions without compromising their efforts to large numbers of organized, vocal people with religious affiliations, and anti-abortion affiliations adamantly demanding their way. Constituency response ranged from simple questions or statements of concern to desire for input and compromise to anger, frustration, confusion, and resistance to compromise.

The two superintendents who claimed intense controversy, district six and district eight, had very organized community groups opposing their efforts. In these two cases the groups had religious affiliations, and state and national anti-abortion, anti-Planned Parenthood, and anti-sex education movement affiliations. They believed their values, good and correct moral standards, were not being represented and should in fact be adopted by everyone. District four had an organized and outspoken community group similar to district six and district eight but they did not insist on imposing their expectations on other people. They were content with having the choice of pulling their children out of the program. The superintendent from this district says they have never had to determine policy or curriculum based on the viewpoints of this one organized group. District Two had such a formally organized group and this group had an impact even after the program was in place

resulting in the compromise situation described in Narrative Two.

As indicated in the narratives, six out of eight superintendents credit the lack of controversy in their district to the community being educated, informed, and involved throughout the implementation process. The result was a policy and curriculum that reflected community values and had their understanding and approval. Two superintendents explained involving people and keeping them informed as useful and important as follow: "...a lot of the controversy is removed because they don't feel that you are trying to slip something by" (District Five); "I think that by involving people we do away with most controversy" (District Four).

For some of these districts it wasn't much of an issue because there were other more important issues present that drew the attention of constituents. As mentioned in Narrative Two that district was experiencing rapid growth and as a consequence was contending with related issues like tax base and bond issues. District Three was implementing a school-based health clinic which was receiving the greater amount of attention and concern.

For others the community at large saw the need for AIDS education and there was little disagreement about how it should be done.

...it is also not a community I think that is out there in a very fundamentalist way such that

homosexuality or AIDS as it needs to be taught in connection with understanding about human sexuality would be outside the bounds of the school district. The majority of people in our community believe it should be taught in the school district. Then it is a question of range. (District Five)

...I would say it is because the information is needed, so critical that we all have it. (District One)

Three of the districts had dealt with AIDS education or sex education in some capacity before. Therefore the issue was a familiar one.

Finally, for all of the districts, whether it was experienced as controversial or not it took considerable time to implement the mandate. Time was taken to work carefully to avoid controversy and to diffuse any controversy.

Summary. These narratives show patterns with regard to how controversy surrounding AIDS education showed itself. The greater the controversy or the potential for controversy the more time it took to implement, and the more likely the issues were debated publicly with large numbers of people attending the public meeting and expressing their concerns, opinions, and beliefs. If formally organized single issue interest groups usually with religious affiliations or anti-abortion affiliation were part of the community the greater the likelihood for controversy. Controversy at any level of intensity was rooted in a concern about what is right and what is wrong, about promoting correct morals and values.

Overview of the Strategies Used for Implementation
of the State AIDS Education Mandate

Because the issue was perceived by all of the study participants as potentially controversial all of the districts made a special effort to prevent or diminish any controversy. The following are some of the strategies considered by these superintendents to be most effective for the implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate. The superintendents credited the lack of controversy or abatement of controversy primarily though not solely to the use of these strategies. The narratives and participant quotes throughout the previous pages support and clarify this overview of strategies.

First, they took the time necessary to work carefully to anticipate and avoid controversy. Then they took the time to resolve as much as possible any issues that did surface.

Second, they were certain to filter the policy and curriculum through a local process, one that encouraged an outcome that reflected community values, understanding, and ownership. This involved committees representing the various communities in the school district- teachers, parents, administrators, school board, the ministerial association, and other community groups- opportunity for public review of the curriculum, and public hearings. Extreme views were incorporated into the committee so there

would be natural disagreement within the work of the committee.

Third, all viewpoints were considered legitimate and all input was seriously encouraged and considered. The superintendents consistently showed that they were sincere about incorporating feedback. They listened. There was also an understood and functioning system through which constituents could comfortably and successfully provide feedback.

Fourth, they researched to some extent what was best knowledge and practice in the field. This included looking at what other districts had experienced, and consulting educational journals and experts. The majority of the study participants relied to some extent on the Oregon State Health Division. The study participants focused primarily on gaining information about successful implementation.

Fifth, they enlisted the support of the media, keeping them informed and included every step of the way. This was intended to reduce the likelihood of the media sensationalizing , "playing the issue out" or in fact creating a controversy.

Sixth, they intentionally identified individuals or groups in their community anticipated to oppose their efforts and then involved them from the start. They invited extreme views to participate in the process.

Superintendent Role in the Implementation
of the AIDS Education Mandate

The superintendents' role seemed to vary with district size. Superintendents in smaller districts were much closer to the implementation process and more directly involved with and responsible for implementation of the mandate. These superintendents were active workers on the committees, and were frequently engaged in direct outreach to the community. They viewed themselves as the facilitators, and negotiators. These superintendents also were more likely to experience the task as time-consuming, personally exhausting, and sometimes threatening in that they created enemies or were concerned about their job safety.

Superintendents in larger districts were less likely to be closely involved with the implementation of the mandate in their district. They delegated the responsibility of meeting the mandate to other staff, usually the assistant superintendent. superintendent involvement only increased as the issue became more controversial. Then their role was more immediately that of peacemaker and negotiator.

All of the superintendents viewed themselves as having the final responsibility for resolving any controversy, believing that the buck did stop at their desk. Also, they all were concerned about keeping the school board informed at all stages, and they ensured that come review and approval time the school board was as comfortable as could be and not the target of disapproval from the community.

Board Role in the Implementation of
the AIDS Education Mandate

The school board role ranged from following routine policy procedures to that of active participation throughout the various stages of the implementation process, with this latter role being more likely. Most of the school boards ensured that procedures for community input were in place and being followed. They took public testimony. Because the issue was potentially controversial or controversial in the actual district experience the school board was often more extensively and carefully involved in the review and approval of both policy and curriculum than usual.

A Look at Goals and Outcomes Associated with the
Implementation of the AIDS Education Mandate

By and large all but one of the districts reported outcomes that were reflective of their goals and that they were satisfied with these outcomes. The most often mentioned goal was to meet the requirements of the mandate while reflecting community values. It was important to have the understanding and approval of their community. They wanted community involvement.

Other goals mentioned were to provide a curriculum to youth that was age-appropriate and meaningful; to have a program that the teachers understood and could easily implement at the classroom level given all of their other demands; to integrate AIDS education into their already existing health or sex education curriculum; and, to prevent

or diffuse any controversy surrounding AIDS education in their district.

Three of the districts did have to make some compromises but two of these superintendents were not disappointed in the outcomes nor did they believe they sacrificed their initial goals because of those compromises. However, one of these two superintendents indicated that his teaching staff was disappointed in the final curriculum (District Eight). The teachers believed the curriculum did not sufficiently address the needs of youth.

The superintendent from District Six that had experienced intense controversy over AIDS education was disappointed with the resulting curriculum, describing it as "watered down", as not effectively addressing the needs of youth who are sexually active because it only discusses abstinence.

Summary

AIDS education policy and its implementation is an example of social regulatory policy. As an example of social regulatory policy the narratives provide further insight and clarity on how the phenomenon is perceived and experienced. Whether AIDS education is controversial or not in the superintendent's experience it has the potential for "pure conflict." It has distinct characteristics which qualify it as a unique, complex, and challenging phenomenon in the educational policy arena.

The superintendents could not predict with much certainty whether it would be controversial or not or to what degree of intensity any controversy would be. It could become controversial anytime during the implementation process, even after the curriculum was in place for a year. There is never certainty that the issues that do surface can be resolved until they are. It is not a still, black and white phenomenon but instead a very dynamic, fluid, and varied one.

According to superintendents its implementation requires careful consideration and attention to certain factors. There is a conscious effort through particular strategies to prevent or diffuse controversy surrounding this issue with certain strategies considered to be more useful and effective for this than others. Sometimes controversy is resolved by making compromises during implementation which may be unsatisfactory to the superintendent, perceived by him or her to not be in the best interest of youth.

ADDITIONAL DATA ON CONTROVERSIAL POLICY IN EDUCATION AND ITS MEANING FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Based on the experiences and beliefs of school district superintendents as told by these individuals, the last part of this chapter and accompanying appendices- C, D, E, and

F- present the data collected in response to the research questions. The information is organized as follows:

Examples of controversial policy in education; definition and description of the phenomenon; influences on the implementation process, and a discussion of effective strategies, and goals and outcomes; and propositions about the meaning of controversial policy for school superintendents.

Each section begins with reference to an accompanying appendix, and ends with a presentation of "researcher's observations and summary." Please note that the superintendents' accounts of their district's response to a particular controversial policy in education, the AIDS Education Mandate, was presented as "case narratives" in Chapter IV. A discussion of the case narratives and other observations provided by the eight study participants occurs in Chapter VI.

Working within the phenomenological research tradition, this chapter is dependent upon the language of the study participants as presented in Appendix C, D, E, and F. The researcher's language was intended to help organize the data. When summarizing, an effort was made to preserve the intent and language of the superintendents as much as possible. Any summarizing and the researcher's observations are noted as such, "researcher's observations and summary."

To complete the cycle of inquiry the researcher must tell the story well, as it was told to the researcher. I asked eight superintendents to identify, describe, and

discuss the phenomenon of controversial policy. This chapter summarized their observations.

EXAMPLES OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY IN EDUCATION

The superintendents identified several controversial policies, policy areas, and curriculum issues that came up as a result of a particular policy. The examples included those which evolved from concern and competition over scarce resources, and those which reflect more of a concern over allocation of values and morals. All served to provide some definition of controversial policy in education, and an understanding of how it is dealt with. The quotes included in Appendix C are examples of controversial policy issues in education as identified by the eight study participants. Please refer to Appendix C.

Researcher's Observations and Summary

Some of the examples provided by the study participants were described as more intensely controversial than others. Some have the potential for more "polarized" debate, extreme views. The sexuality-related issues like AIDS or sex education, school-based health clinics, dispensing of birth control or birth control information on campus, and others like textbook and censorship issues are examples. All of the examples can be put on a continuum from less to more controversial relative to each other.

An observation about the examples provided by the superintendents is that they fall into three categories: money matters; curriculum matters as an extension of policy decisions, how something should be taught; and policy and program matters, considerations about what will be committed to by the district or not.

The last two categories, curriculum matters and policy and program matters, frequently were concerned about sexuality issues, personal rights issues, and moral and religious issues. These are values areas in that money was not the central issue but instead values or morals were central to the controversy.

Finally, in addition to these observations, the researcher notes that other policies and curriculum issues that appeared in a review of educational journals as controversial or potentially controversial were not raised by the study participants. Examples are nuclear education, education about Vietnam, and environmental education. This is odd given that nuclear power and specific environmental concerns are presently intensely controversial in the state of Oregon. Lets call these environmental issues.

The researcher speculates that either the school districts are not dealing with these environmental issues or that these issues are dealt with in education but truly have not been experienced as controversial. If these environmental issues are not dealt with in the educational

policy arena, why not? Given that they are so present in the politics of the state how have they not been forced into this arena? If they are dealt with, why are they not experienced as controversial? This is a curious gap in the examples of controversial policy in education provided by the study participants.

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY IN EDUCATION

The quotes in Appendix D from the eight study participants reflect their views about what makes policy controversial, and how the controversy shows itself. Based on actual experiences and examples posed by the superintendents, they provide vivid and detailed descriptions of these superintendents' perspectives on the meaning of controversial policy in education. There are many similarities among what the study participants have to say. Please refer to Appendix D.

Researcher's Observations and Summary

Broadly, controversy is a result of three main situations: competition over allocation of money; a threat to personal rights or lifestyle; and school district efforts that raise intense discussion about values and beliefs, and moral standards. Clearly the examples and description provided by the study participants are in line with the description of educational politics as the allocation of

values and scarces resources (Easton, 1979; Wirt & Kirst, 1989).

Generally, intense controversy showed itself in a number of ways. It was viewed, acted out, and resolved in a public forum. There were large numbers of usually formally organized, and very vocal people involved. There was "polarized" debate; there were extreme views and people were eager to take a stance on one extreme or the other. In the long run, one side was likely to feel like it had lost, another like it had won. There were sometimes threats to the school board and superintendent. There was some negotiation and compromise, but it was difficult to achieve and took time. Single issue groups were more likely to be involved. Groups taking interest were usually formally organized and had state-wide and national affiliations. The school board tended to take on a more active, non-routine role in the review and approval of policy and curriculum. The superintendents' involvement increased as controversy intensified. The task of policy implementation associated with controversial policy was very time-consuming and exhausting for everybody involved, especially the superintendent. The policy being implemented was associated with other intense issues like abortion, secular humanism, and homosexuality. The policy and its implementation needed special attention from the administration, attention beyond routine policy procedures. Emotions were more prevalent in

the discussion around the issue than facts. In fact, there was often a lack of facts and a great deal of misinformation, and out of context references. The media was more likely to have a key role, usually one of sensationalizing or playing out the issue longer. Finally, the district policy intentions or curriculum efforts were contrary to or perceived to be contrary to the values and beliefs of the constituents.

Controversial policy was perceived as unique, distinctly different from non-controversial policy. Non-controversial policy was described as routine, nobody or very few people took interest, no one was impacted by or perceived the policy as threatening.

Simply, policy was labeled controversial when the community responded to it as such. The study participants noted that some policies were controversial or potentially controversial in content alone, AIDS and sex education for example, and that a policy could become controversial at any point during implementation. Also, policy could become controversial at some point down the road after it had been in place a while. Essentially, policy could be tested later on; a policy experienced as non-controversial for years could later become controversial.

The superintendents agreed that trying to anticipate controversy was important and worthwhile most of the time, but controversy itself was not something they could predict

with much accuracy. The phenomenon was perceived as too complex and dynamic.

The controversy experienced by the superintendents also varied in intensity. There was an emerging aspect of the discussion with the study participants which indicated that level of controversy could be put on a continuum or types of controversy could be put in categories. This is pursued further in Chapter VI.

The superintendents directly indicated or suggested several factors that influenced whether a policy would be controversial or not and to what intensity: (1) if the policy dealt with non-routine business it was more likely to be controversial; (2) the community's values determined whether a policy was controversial or not; (3) the trust, credibility, and reputation of those proposing and implementing the policy; (4) how much of an emotional chord was struck with the constituents; (5) the extent of past experiences, positive or negative, with the policy or similar policy, and (6) how the policy was presented and handled by the administration.

There was a distinction between controversy as a result of competing over scarce resources and controversy centered around values or moral standards. Though they had many similarities they were different primarily in that for the latter scarcity of resources or money was the cause of controversy and competing values and the solution to the

controversy whereas money was not the cause nor the solution for controversy surrounding policy of a social regulatory nature. Also, there was a greater likelihood of involvement of formally organized, state and nationally affiliated single issue groups. Controversy over morals and values tended to be around such topics as censorship issues, textbook selection, school-based health clinics, birth control information and dispensing on school grounds, and AIDS and sex education. There was a strong presence of religious testimony as a part of the debate as revealed in the evolution versus creationism subject, abstinence instead of discussion of additional prevention methods, values clarification versus values indoctrination. There was less likely to be a win-win resolution and this resolution would take much more time and effort to achieve. The debate was more emotional and polarized, with misinformation more rampant.

Summary. Controversial policy in many forms is prevalent in education. It is experienced as a unique, complex, and challenging phenomenon by superintendents. Also clear is the distinction for these superintendents between controversy surrounding money matters and controversy surrounding values and morals. Again, money is not the cause nor the solution to controversy surrounding policy of a social regulatory nature. District size and wealth can impact the strain the district and

superintendents experience when responding to controversial policy of a social regulatory nature. They may be tired and pressured from demands they've had to contend with related to scarce resources. Controversial policy of a social regulatory nature exists in education. It has both similarities and differences from controversial policy over money matters. As discussed in the next section, superintendents perceive such policy as requiring special efforts with regard to its implementation.

INFLUENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS,
EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES, GOALS AND CRITERION
USED TO JUDGE THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

The following summary and observations are related to the study participant's comments on the implementation process associated with controversial policy or potentially controversial policy. The interviews provided some initial information on the strategies superintendents considered to be most effective for the implementation of controversial policy, factors they perceived as having the most influence on the implementation process, and some discussion of goals and outcomes. Again quotes from the interviews with the superintendents were placed in an accompanying appendix, Appendix E. Please read Appendix E.

Researcher's Observations and Summary

Influences on the Implementation Process. The superintendents identified factors influencing the implementation process associated with controversial policy or potentially controversial policy. They are similar to what was identified by the study participants as causing controversy and what characterized the controversy.

First, the timing was a factor. What else was going on in the district, state, or nationally helped to determine what kind of an issue it would be in that district, how much attention it would get, and how it would have to be handled. For example, if it was controversial elsewhere then it was more likely that it would be controversial in their district. This potential controversy was then factored into the approach for implementation. If other issues took precedence locally because of the amount of time, resources, and attention it required or something was more controversial, then this was factored into the approach to implementation. Sometimes, superintendents found themselves having to make decisions about what issues would take priority given limited resources, including time and energy. Finally, whether or not the district was having good or bad labor relations could influence the implementation process. Tense labor relations meant taking extra care not to add to the frustration level.

Second, how supported or opposed the policy or curriculum or program efforts were and by whom influenced implementation. The numbers of people and the clout of people supporting or opposing a district's efforts affected the how and extent of implementation efforts. For example, if groups were very formally organized or had state and national affiliations then efforts to identify, understand, and involve these groups in the policy process were intensified.

Third, how educated and how informed the community was affected the ease and effectiveness of implementation. The more informed the community, usually the easier the policy or curriculum was to implement and the greater the likelihood of coming to a win-win solution to any issues that did come up.

Fourth, the general values or moral standards of the community were perceived as strongly influencing the implementation process and outcomes. The superintendents' interest in understanding and respecting these community values was reflected in their approach to implementation. They wanted to have community input, and secured that through a number of community involvement strategies like public hearings, and broad-based committees.

Fifth, the credibility and trust level the community had for those proposing and implementing the policy was judged by the study participants as not only a strong

determinant of the community response to a policy or curriculum matter, but also as an influencing factor on the district's approach to and success with implementation. Communities that trusted, and believed in those in charge were less suspicious and resistant, more cooperative and understanding, easier to work with, and more willing to negotiate.

Sixth, how the issue was presented and managed by the superintendent, assistant superintendents, or committee was directly associated with a successful or non-successful implementation processes and outcomes. Some strategies were perceived to be clearly more effective and necessary than others.

Perspectives on the Implementation of Controversial Policy. The study participants reported and described several strategies for the implementation of controversial policy that they have tried at one point or another. Again, some of these strategies were perceived as more effective than others. The criterion used to determine the effectiveness of the implementation process, strategies, and outcomes was established primarily as the success of the strategy in preventing or reducing controversy and the extent to which it helped negotiate or achieve a win-win situation while at the same time striving for a policy and curriculum meaningful to youth.

Based on their experiences, and judgement of others' experiences the study participants had beliefs regarding effective strategies associated with controversial policy and its implementation. The following suggestions are presented as emerging possibilities for practice based on the discussion around Sandman's (1988) work, as presented in more detail in Chapter VI, and what the eight study participants had to say as presented in Chapters IV, V, VI, and the accompanying appendices.

There are four general principles to follow in addressing controversial policy. Both the factual and emotional dimensions of controversial policy are important and need to be dealt with. The emotionalism or outrage component is far more important to contend with first. Changing the level of emotionalism or the "outrage" factor is a key strategy in the implementation process associated with controversial policy. Finally, the emotionalism surrounding the issue should be sincerely regarded as legitimate. It is central to any positive outcome related to policy and curriculum, teaching and learning, and school-community relations.

Changing the level of emotionalism or outrage factor involves working with the components of outrage identified in Chapter VI. Based on an integration of Sandman's factors that contribute to outrage, and the information from the study participants, changing the level of outrage is

accomplished by: (1) reducing the perceived risk by making the issue more familiar. This can be done through education and good communication; (2) presenting the issue as natural and as a sensible next step given what the schools are doing, what the youth need based on knowledge of best practice and research, and other circumstances surrounding the issue; (3) carefully exploring any perceived risk rather than allowing it to be sensed as immediate and threatening. For example, the superintendent from District Four believes he was able to work with the opposition to a school-based health clinic by agreeing not to dispense birth control devices immediately. They would visit the issue again later as it was not an uncompromisingly necessary component to getting the program in place; (4) being sure the risk is viewed as fair by the community. They should not feel like they are taking more of their fair share of the risk or any loss; (5) assuring that the source of the policy, program, or curriculum proposals are trustworthy and credible; (6) having a solution that is morally acceptable to the community. It helps to know the community's moral standards and for there to have been dialogue between the school and community around beliefs and practices in these moral areas.

The following distillation reviews implications of the strategies superintendents considered to be effective in working with controversial policy and balancing its emotional and factual dimension.

Specific Strategies Considered to be Effective for the Implementation of Controversial Policy. First, there has to be community involvement. It is important to have a commitment to broad-based involvement; a working system for easy and comfortable community involvement; to encourage and welcome involvement; and to seriously consider and respond to the suggestions of those involved. This strategy should include all the school communities such as parents, faculty and staff, students, the media, businesses, and other community members and organizations, including those that may be opposing the school district policy. The administration should make extra efforts to have community involvement, beyond the routine implementation procedures. It is especially important to have teachers involved as they have the final responsibility for implementation at the classroom level.

Second, listen sincerely, consistently, and carefully. The superintendent should listen to concerns and suggestions whether they are inspired by emotionalism or fact.

Third, become informed. Know what is best research and best practice. Know the facts. Refer to outside expertise.

Fourth, educate. Provide the community with accurate, clear, simple, and understandable facts about the policy and surrounding issues. An educational base is needed to prevent controversy and manage any controversy that does arise. Education also contributes to reasonable community

involvement, allowing people to provide reasonable input into the implementation process based on sound information.

Fifth, be firm but flexible. It is necessary to allow the community to influence the policy process, but if at all possible not to let extreme views totally dictate, resulting in policy and curriculum which may not be in the best interest of youth. It is necessary for the administration to take a stand on the issues they believe to be in the best interest of youth, and if these beliefs are seriously threatened to limit compromising as much as possible.

Sixth, know the community. The superintendents emphasized the importance of trying to understand the make-up of the community which they believed to strongly influence community response to a policy as controversial or not. It is important to know the community well in order to anticipate who might respond to the policy in consideration. Identify organized groups, especially those with state and national affiliations, individuals that might oppose the district efforts and those who might support them as well. It is important to know how well educated the community is on the topic, and, in general, how supportive they are of education.

Seventh, try to anticipate and plan ahead. Though a policy can not be predicted to be controversial or not with accuracy, the study participants believed it was worth trying to anticipate and plan for possible controversy. Try

to anticipate controversy but know that it can't be predicted very accurately. Try to anticipate if a policy will be controversial or not by knowing what is going on statewide and nationally as well as what other districts have experienced with similar policies. This means researching best knowledge and best practice, and applying this insight to one's community.

Eighth, take your time. Take the time necessary to thoroughly anticipate, plan, educate, involve the community, listen, and work out issues. Time as a strategy means a greater chance at having a curriculum meaningful to youth that is understood and approved by the community.

Ninth, be open and honest. In line with the strategies of community involvement and listening, the superintendents stressed the importance of being above board, of not hiding anything, of not trying to force the adoption of policies, programs, or curriculum.

Tenth, work toward a win-win solution to any problems. Discuss the issues and be willing to integrate the suggestions and ideas that come from others. The preferred solution usually is the one that is collaboratively arrived at provided it is believed to be in the best interest of youth given knowledge of best practice and research. Work together to find compatible views.

Lindblom (1959) stresses that looking to the record of past experience with policy will better enable present

practitioners to predict the consequences of taking similar action now. This provides some guidance on whether they should extend or constrict the use of a particular method in a given situation. The eight study participants strongly endorsed the perspective and strategies presented above. Their experiences have taught them that they can be effective when applied and can have negative consequences when they are not heeded.

These strategies helped to prevent or reduce controversy. They worked toward having community understanding and approval of the district policy and curriculum efforts.

Also, these strategies were somewhat beyond or in addition to the routine district policy implementation procedures for non-controversial policy. Extra effort was made to secure community involvement and to keep the community educated on the issues, and informed with regard to the process and status of implementation.

Goals and Criterion Used for Judging the Implementation Process and Outcomes. The criteria the superintendents used to judge the policy implementation process and the outcomes- the policy, program, or curricula- were six-fold. First, did the implementation strategies they chose succeed in preventing or reducing controversy? Second, did the policy, program, or curriculum reflect the community's values and moral standards? Third, did the community understand and

approve of the policy and curriculum? Was it something everyone could live with? Fourth, was the community approved policy, program, or curriculum meaningful to youth? Did they meet the needs of and work in the best interest of the students? Fifth, did they meet at least the minimum requirements of a mandate? Sixth, do the teachers who have the ultimate responsibility for implementation support it? If these criterion were satisfied in full then the study participants judged the implementation process and outcomes as very successful.

In reality, these criterion were satisfied in varying degrees resulting in different degrees of satisfaction with the outcome. Sometimes, the study participants believed that the community approved policy and curriculum did not accurately and effectively address the real issues of youth as the superintendents understood the issues to be based on knowledge of best practice and research. Consequently, the study participants judged the implementation process and outcomes of policy, program or curricula as moderately successful and useful or not at all. For all the study participants the primary goals were to age-appropriately meet the needs of youth as they understood them, and to have the support of their teachers. Sometimes these primary goals came in second to satisfying the community whose values and moral standards may have influenced an outcome of

policy, program or curricula that was from the superintendent's perspective meaningless or incomplete.

MEANING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

This entire chapter and its accompanying appendices combine to establish a broader understanding of the meaning of controversial policy for school superintendents. In summary, it is a phenomenon that is perceived as complex, dynamic, challenging, unique, surprising, time-consuming and exhausting, sometimes threatening and risky, and sometimes positive and useful. Appendix F contains some additional language the study participants used to describe or convey the meaning of controversial policy. Please read Appendix F and consider their comments in combination with those in Appendix C, D, and E.

Researcher's Observations and Summary

Controversial policy as a surprising phenomenon was apparent throughout the discussions with the eight study participants. It was difficult to anticipate and impossible to predict with much accuracy if, when, and how a policy would be controversial. Policy could become controversial at any point in the policy process from the formulation stage, throughout the implementation process, and even after it had been in place a while. Policy that was anticipated to receive a controversial response from the community by the superintendents sometimes was not controversial at all.

At other times, policy the superintendent anticipated to be widely appreciated and accepted by the community ran into many obstacles during implementation. Sometimes a policy was controversial in content, and at other times only when it was applied or tested.

Controversial policy experienced as a complex phenomenon was consistently present. In addition to the difficulty in anticipating if, when, and how a policy would be controversial, it was difficult to plan for and prevent controversy. Sometimes controversy could be stopped or curbed, but often it was a phenomenon that furiously ran its own course beyond the school board's and superintendent's control. Superintendents appeared to view controversy as inevitable, and accepted that inevitability as part of what it means to be a superintendent.

The task of anticipating, planning for its implementation, and contending with a controversial response made controversial policy a challenging phenomenon. It was necessary to identify who was responding to the district policy or curriculum efforts and understand why they were responding in a particular way. Often, the superintendent was in a position where negotiation needed to take place, usually around value and moral issues. They believed when it came to resolving any controversy that the buck stopped on their desk. They had the responsibility of finding any peace that was to be found. Usually this was a time-

consuming and exhausting responsibility. Issues like these caused emotionalism to run high, sometimes resulting in threats to the superintendent, and the superintendent being placed in a position where he or she was associated with a win-lose or a lose-lose situation. They were very conscious of the fact that superintendents have been hired and fired around controversial issues.

Despite the unique and challenging character of controversial policy, the superintendents acknowledged that it could be a positive phenomenon. Sometimes going through the process of contending with a controversial response to policy meant a better outcome in that the community understood, felt some ownership in, and supported the final policy and curriculum or program. It also meant that the community and school administration better understood and trusted each other. This sometimes meant that in the future there was a greater likelihood of less of a controversial response from the community to similar issues or increased cooperation from the community while working issues through. Emerging from contending with controversial policy as successful could mean increased trust and credibility from the community for education and the superintendent.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In conclusion, the information in this chapter begins to describe, as perceived by school superintendents, the

significant variables within the phenomenon of controversial policy in education as well as what influences its implementation. The data is reflective of experiences and beliefs rooted in educational practice. Propositions about the phenomenon of controversial policy in education and its meaning for school superintendents can be made based on the discussion with the study participants. These propositions and theoretical abstractions are presented in Chapter VI. There are also meaningful implications for educational policy and educational research, and educational practice. The information provided by the study participants is a useful and relevant starting point for further study and improving educational practice within the educational policy arena. These are discussed in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER VI

THEORETICAL ABSTRACTIONS

PROPOSITIONS ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL POLICY

IN THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY ARENA

The following are propositions based on literature reviews in policy studies and education, the work of Tatalovich and Daynes, and the data from this research as presented in Chapters IV, V, and the accompanying appendices. The propositions are divided into six categories based on the research questions: definition and description of controversial policy and its implementation in education; influences on the implementation process; strategies associated with the effective implementation of controversial policy; implementation goals and criteria for judging the implementation process and outcomes; superintendent role in the implementation of controversial policy; and size and wealth. Some of the questions were collapsed into a single category. These theoretical abstractions convey the meaning of policy experienced by the superintendent as controversial and the associated implications for the policy process in school districts.

Definition and Description of Controversial Policy
and its Implementation in Education

The information provided by the study participants presented in Chapters IV and V and the accompanying appendices affirm that Tatalovich and Daynes' theoretical propositions about social regulatory policy can be applied to certain policies experienced as controversial in the educational policy arena. The primary propositions are that controversial policy of a social regulatory nature is characterized by values that are non-economic, the involvement of single issue groups, and an "activist judiciary." Such policy is further characterized by emotional, polarized debate or otherwise described as ideological warfare, and the fact that it is unusually time consuming. As previously discussed controversial policy was perceived by the superintendents to be unique from non-controversial policy, and policy of a social regulatory nature as distinguishable from controversial policy where money was the central concern.

Controversial policy is unique from non-controversial policy, and policy of a social regulatory nature, with values or morals as central issues, is distinguishable from controversial policy with money as the central issue. The controversy surrounding controversial policy of a social regulatory nature is not caused by competition over scarce resources and money is not the solution to this controversy.

Controversial policy over money matters and social regulatory policy have similar characteristics but are distinguished by what is central to the controversy, morals versus money.

Affirming Tatalovich and Daynes' theoretical framework, social regulatory policy is distinguished basically by ideological warfare versus a focus on economic issues, the involvement of single issue groups, and an activist judiciary.

Controversial policy in education is more time-consuming than non-controversial policy; taking more time to implement and time to resolve any issues.

With controversial policy, especially controversial policy of a social regulatory nature, emotionalism is prevalent versus emphasis on accurate facts, there is emotional debate, and people are eager to take stances.

Controversial policy of a social regulatory nature is a more radicalized or pure controversy or conflict because it is not just the allocation of dollars and values but of which moral standard is better.

When dealing with controversial policy or potentially controversial policy the school board tends to have a more active role in the review and approval of policy or curriculum, a role beyond their routine policy procedures.

The data presented in Chapter IV and V also provides additional definition and description of controversial policy of a social regulatory nature in the educational policy arena. Some new propositions based on the information provided by the eight superintendents can be added to the groundwork laid by Tatalovich and Daynes. Controversial policy was experienced as complex, challenging, time-consuming and exhausting, surprising, and as having the potential for both positive and negative outcomes.

In the field of education, all policy is potentially controversial.

Policy can be controversial or potentially controversial in content, but can also become controversial at anytime in the policy process.

Controversial policy in education involves large numbers of vocal people.

Controversial policy is characterized by anger, fear, and frustration.

Controversial policy is complex, unpredictable, surprising, dynamic and challenging phenomenon.

Controversial policy has two distinct dimensions- a rational and an irrational dimension or otherwise described as a factual and emotional dimension.

Policy experienced as controversial in one district may not be experienced as controversial in another or can be experienced as controversial for different reasons.

Controversy resulting from policy of a social regulatory nature is usually associated with opposition from state and nationally affiliated groups.

Controversial policy of a social regulatory nature has the potential for turning into pure conflict where a win-win situation or compromise is not possible or difficult to achieve.

The more intense the controversy the more likely the controversy shows itself, is acted on or responded to, and resolved in a public forum. The less controversial the more likely controversy is known only to the internal organization and kept internal to the organization.

Controversial policy or potentially controversial policy, especially controversial policy of a social regulatory nature, must go through a process of local adaption before it can be understood, approved, and supported.

Influences on the Implementation Process

The superintendents profiled certain causes of controversy surrounding a policy or policy issue. Certain factors influenced whether a policy would receive a controversial response or not. The presence of these factors also influence the implementation process. The superintendent considers these factors when approaching the implementation of controversial policy or potentially controversial policy.

Whether a policy pushed is perceived as forced onto the community influences the intensity of controversial response and the implementation process. Policy is more likely to be unacceptable and to receive a controversial response if it is perceived as being forced onto the community.

The trust and credibility level of the person or group in charge of implementation influences the intensity of controversial response and the implementation process.

How involved the community or segments of the community feel influences the intensity of controversial response and the implementation process. If the community feels uninvolved there is more likely to be a controversial response.

How much the issue is perceived by the school communities to represent much of a change from the routine or familiar influences the intensity of controversial response and the implementation process. There is a greater chance of a controversial response if it is perceived as much of a change.

How much a policy, program, or curriculum being proposed by the school district is perceived by any segment of the community to be contrary or threatening to their values and beliefs or moral standards influences the intensity of controversial response and the implementation process. The more contrary it is the more likely it will be controversial.

How a controversial policy is experienced by the community can affect school community relations and can influence whether a similar policy in the future will receive a controversial response or not and the degree of cooperation the community will extend.

What is happening nationally, state-wide, or locally can influence whether a policy is responded to as controversial or not.

The media can incite controversy and perpetuate it contributing to the concept of generated controversy.

Something is controversial because it is perceived as radical change; incremental change is less controversial.

Strategies Associated with the Effective Implementation of Controversial Policy

Superintendents identified specific strategies experienced as effective in dealing with controversial policy or potentially controversial policy and its implementation. In an effort to prevent a controversial response or to reduce current controversy, superintendents reported relying on certain approaches. Sometimes the following strategies were within the realm of the district's standard policy procedures; for controversial policy steps were taken to assure that the desired processes were in place and working. Other times, because policy was perceived as controversial or potentially controversial, these approaches were taken as a step beyond the district's usual approach to policy implementation. In either case the following strategies were regarded as critical to successful implementation.

How a new policy, program, or curriculum is proposed, and how the implementation process is handled impacts whether the community will respond to it as controversial or not.

Both the emotional and the factual dimension of controversial policy must be addressed, with the need to address the emotional response from the community taking precedence. This means addressing those factors that lead to an emotional response: improve trust and credibility, reduce the perceived threat, involve the community, share the decision-making, and engage in sincere discussion around the issues.

Controversy can be prevented or reduced by educating the community, trying to anticipate controversy and planning for preventing or reducing it, knowing your community, involving the school communities, listening to the concerns and beliefs of others and regarding them as important, being open and honest, and taking the time to work through issues.

Controversial policy cannot be hidden, it has to be responded to, understood by, and approved by the community.

Policy outcomes can be more in line with kids needs if the administration is "firm but flexible"; if they take a stand on what they think is in the best interest of kids but still stay committed to community involvement and possible compromise.

When dealing with pure conflict sometimes the best decision is judged to be the one that maintains the status quo whenever possible.

It is important to strive for a win-win situation, a compromise situation that is morally acceptable to both sides.

Implementation Goals and Criteria for Judging the Implementation Process and Outcomes

The goals of implementation the superintendent identified were the same as the criterion they used to judge the effectiveness of the policy implementation process and

the outcomes. The ideal outcome would be to satisfy all of the criterion; this is what they strived to do. However, in reality, this ideal outcome was the exception rather than the rule.

The goals of implementation were to meet the minimum requirements of any mandate, to reflect community values in the implementation process and outcomes, to avoid or reduce controversy, to have a meaningful and age-appropriate curriculum or program for the students based on knowledge of best practice and research that meets their needs, to have the understanding and support of their school communities- parents, teachers, administration, union, and others.

Implementation of controversial policy is perceived as successful if the strategies were successful in satisfying one or more of the following criterion based on their goals: the outcome reflects community values; there was no or little resulting controversy and none remaining; the outcome is meaningful, age-appropriate, and meets the needs of kids; the school district has the support and understanding of their community; and the school district has the support and understanding of their teachers.

Policy outcomes can be more in line with kids needs if the administration is "firm but flexible"; if they take a stand on what they think is in the best interest of kids but still stay committed to community involvement and possible compromise.

Goal intentions remain the same throughout the policy process but at given times for different reasons some take priority over others.

The most tension is experienced between the goal of meeting the needs of students and the goal of reflecting community values.

The presence of single issue groups, usually very organized state and nationally affiliated groups, motivates negotiation over which goals can or should be given priority.

Superintendent Role in the Implementation of Controversial Policy

The superintendent had a key role in the implementation of controversial policy. This role increased in importance as controversy intensified. They believed that "the buck stopped at their desk." There was some variation on superintendent role based on district size; superintendents in smaller districts were more directly responsible for the implementation of controversial policy. They felt the impact of controversial policy much more immediately than superintendents in larger districts. Superintendents in larger districts usually did not have the responsibility for implementing policy as a primary job responsibility. They were less involved in the details. They became more closely involved as controversy intensified. However, superintendents of both large districts and small districts experienced controversial policy or potentially controversial policy as risky business and thus requiring special attention.

Implementing controversial policy is more of a risk for superintendents than implementing non-controversial policy.

Superintendents have the final responsibility for resolving controversy, as the controversy intensifies then their involvement increases.

When dealing with controversial policy superintendents are often called upon to be the peace-maker and negotiator.

Superintendents in smaller districts have more immediate and direct responsibility for the implementation of controversial policy, and feel

the heat from controversial policy sooner than superintendents in larger districts.

Superintendents in larger districts are less immediately responsible for or affected by controversial policy, and only become more involved as controversy intensifies.

District Size and Wealth

Despite the selection of study participants based on size and wealth extremes, identification, definition, and description of the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation was similar across the interviews. A combination of district size and wealth was conveyed as primarily impacting the superintendents role, the extent and ease of communication and education for community involvement, the level of strain on district resources, and the community's attitude towards and support for education.

The superintendent in a smaller and poorer district is more involved in the implementation of policy, and has more immediate responsibility for managing any controversy that surrounds a policy or policy issue. This superintendent will feel the intensity of controversy more immediately and personally.

Poorer districts, especially smaller and poorer districts, already experience a great deal of strain on their resources; controversial policy adds to this strain by consuming limited time, people energy, and money it takes to address the issues.

Regardless of district size and wealth, superintendents preferred mandates which gave them adequate time, expertise, and money to meet the responsibility.

Superintendents from larger districts find involving the community more difficult than smaller districts. Due to more limited material

and human resources poorer districts also find community involvement more difficult.

According to superintendents, wealthier communities tend to have a constituency that is better educated and thus are more appreciative, and supportive of education. It becomes easier to have community involvement because of the higher interest in education in general, and the stronger sense of political efficacy a wealthier constituency tends to have.

HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK ON CONTROVERSIAL POLICY

It was suggested by the superintendents that intensity of controversy varied, and that there was a range of the phenomenon. Intensity of controversial response was used by all the study participants as a primary and most significant defining variable of controversial policy. Often times the superintendents spoke of this range, a continuum, categories, or sometimes relied on a scale of one to ten. The following figure will summarize some of the information provided by the study participants, forming part of the broader picture of what was said about controversial policy and its implementation in education, and its meaning for school superintendents.

This picture can be referenced for clarity as further propositions about controversial policy are made by the researcher. It serves as a conceptual framework for understanding controversial policy in the educational policy arena. Such a conceptual framework is defined by Wirt and Kirst (1989) as heuristic theory: "Heuristic theory is not

so much a predictive scheme as a method of analytically separating and categorizing items in experience" (Wirt & Kirst, 1989, p. 33). This approach enables the researcher to present information or hunches about reality as identified or implicated by the study participants. It is an organizing framework for current knowledge (Wirt & Kirst, 1989, pp. 31-34). Please reference Table I on the next page.

CONTROVERSIAL POLICY AS MORAL CONTROVERSY

Controversial policy of a social regulatory nature is the more radical or extreme controversy, regarded as having the potential for pure conflict because it somehow concerns the allocation of not just dollars and preferences but of which moral standard is better, of what is right and what is wrong, of what is good or what is bad, of goodness versus sinful, of what is morally correct versus morally incorrect. It involves issues that are not just for experts within the field or organization, but issues that concern many. It is moral controversy. Moral controversy means moral debate. The implementation process associated with moral controversy is a moral decision-making process concerned with factors that have root in values, beliefs, and morals versus money. Any compromise is moral compromise. There are moral winners and moral losers. The moral winners have achieved moral

TABLE I

HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK: CONTROVERSIAL POLICY ON A CONTINUUM

<u>LOW</u>	<u>MODERATE</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
-routine business, familiar		-non-routine, unfamiliar
-issue understood, facts known		-issue not understood, community has not been given the facts
-not immediately threatening		-perceived as immediately threatening
-zero to a few people involved, low numbers	-50-50 support/opposing	-higher numbers of people involved
-those opposing have low clout		-those involved have a lot of clout or power
-any controversy is known only to a few internal to the organization	- controversy known only to internal organization, controversy is still resolved internally	-public or community controversy
-more of a chance of a win-win solution to any controversy		-less likely to have a win-win solution
-the necessity for compromise is low		-need for compromise is higher
-compromise comes easy		-compromise is difficult to achieve or impossible
-less organized opposition		-more formally organized groups opposing, usually with state or national affiliation
-single-issue groups not involved		-single issue groups involved
-emotionalism is low		-emotionalism high, facts low
-not very time-consuming		

TABLE I

HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK: CONTROVERSIAL POLICY ON A CONTINUUM
(continued)

<u>LOW</u>	<u>MODERATE</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
-not energy draining or a stress on resources		-time-consuming
-non-threatening, low risk for superintendent		-exhausting personally and on district resources
-past experience with a similar policy		-threatening and risky for superintendent and school board
-trust/credibility not that important		-less of a history or less of a successful history with the policy at hand
-very controllable matters		-trust and credibility of implementors very important
-policy and related issues presented to the public in a way acceptable to them		-policy and related issues not presented to the public in a way that is acceptable to them
-issues perceived as having no personal impact		-can rage out of control, mud-flinging, and out of context references
-morals and values not present as issues or not central to the controversy		-issues have personal impact, affects day to day living
-morally irrelevant or not against the community's moral standards		-morals, values, personal rights a prevalent theme
-no debate		-morally relevant or against the community's moral standards

TABLE I

HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK: CONTROVERSIAL POLICY ON A CONTINUUM
(continued)

<u>LOW</u>	<u>MODERATE</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
-public doesn't feel the need to be involved or be influential		-polarized, intense debate with people taking sides
-public does not feel like the issue has been forced upon them or like they have been tricked		-public has to be very involved, constituency wants to share control, be influential
-controversy resolved internally	-school board sometimes involved	-public feels like the issue has been forced on them
-school board not involved		-controversy has to be resolved with public approval, in public
-no mandates associated with the issue		-school board very involved, beyond routine with regard to review and approval of policy and curriculum
-media not involved or not able to carry issue very far or long		-mandate associated with issue, cause of controversy or part of the solution
-superintendent not very involved or doesn't have a key role		-media sensationalizing the issue, drawing it out or in fact generating the controversy
-policy perceived as bringing on a reasonable amount of change, perceived as a next logical step		-superintendents more involved

TABLE I

HEURISTIC FRAMEWORK: CONTROVERSIAL POLICY ON A CONTINUUM
(continued)

LOW

MODERATE

HIGH

-nothing else going on
locally, statewide or
nationally to impact how the
policy is responded to by the
community

-policy perceived as radical
change, as an extreme
departure from standard
practice

-other similar or related
issues going on locally,
statewide or nationally that
can impact how the policy is
received locally

justice, the moral losers have been defeated in that they feel oppressed and their moral standards threatened. Leaders are concerned with doing the right thing and not doing the wrong thing. They become moral leaders in search of the best solution at the time given all those involved and the circumstances. They are in search of the moral solution or the moral compromise.

Based on literature reviews, and this research the researcher believes there are distinct categories of controversial policy- money matters, and values or moral matters. The values or moral matters are typically associated with sexuality, personal rights, religious and environmental issues. The following are examples of controversial policy in education: Money Matters- Measure Five related policy, policy decisions around budget cuts, decisions around closing schools, tax base measures; Values or Moral Matters- policy related to parent power versus power of schools i.e. excused and unexcused absences, no smoking policy, drug testing policy, issues extending from policy on grading, qualifications and rules around athletic eligibility, policy and curriculum matters around sex education and AIDS education, censorship issues, textbook adoption policy, values clarification in curriculum, environmental education issues, nuclear education, education about war and peace (i.e. education on the Vietnam War), school prayer.

All of these issues have risks associated with them, and they anger and frighten people. The politics associated with them have the tendency toward what Lowi (1988) describes as radical politics versus mainstream or traditional. There is frequently polarized debate, a lot of emotionalism, differing values, and no immediate compromise (Lowi, 1988, pp. x-xii).

THE TWO DIMENSIONS OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY:

THE FACTUAL AND THE EMOTIONAL

In his consideration of environmental issues, Sandman (1988) provides some useful language for synthesizing the information presented so far. In Hazard versus Outrage: Public Perception of Environmental Risk, he refers to risks as "hazards" and the emotional response as "outrage" (Sandman, 1988, p. 5-6). Sandman is concerned with risk communication and getting people to listen. He says "...that risk is a function of hazard and outrage" (p. 5). Experts tend to focus on the hazard and the public on the outrage, each looking at only half the total picture of risk or what is at stake. All of the above examples are issues which tend to be accompanied by a hazard factor and an outrage factor. When dealing with controversial policy as an educational administrator both the perceived risks and the emotionalism have to be addressed. The outrage must not be ignored.

Sandstrom identifies nine components of outrage: (1) voluntary risk versus a coerced risk, the public fears coerced risk; (2) artificial risk versus a natural risk, i.e. radon versus dioxin; (3) the familiar risk versus unfamiliar, the familiar diminishes the sense of risk; (4) dread versus not dread, this influences how people assess their risks; (5) diffused risk versus immediate risk, i.e. 300,000 people dying from smoking over time or 300,000 individuals dying in one day for a particular reason; (6) the risk is controlled by the individual versus by the system, the risk is more risky when the individual has no control; (7) risks that are fair versus risks that are unfair; (8) risks that are morally relevant versus morally irrelevant, i.e. pollution is not just harmful it is evil, slavery is evil; (9) sources who are trusted versus sources who are not, characteristics of people who bring you the risk (pp. 7-16).

Given the data presented in Chapters IV and V, the accompanying appendices, and the resulting propositions and conceptual framework of this research, these factors should sound familiar. Factor number eight becomes especially relevant with regard to controversial policy of a social regulatory nature. The necessity for dealing with both the hazard and the outrage components are reflected in the data provided by the study participants. This research has similar conclusions to Sandman's work.

First, outrage tends to matter more to people than hazard, but the approach to implementation needs to embrace both hazard and outrage. Implementation will not be successful without addressing both.

An emotional controversial issue really gets us nowhere, but if everybody has the facts and are working at it then we can usually satisfy a controversial issue...at least we finally get to the conclusion and we get it done and the policy is done and active, but if we stay emotional we don't get anywhere. (District One)

Second, the outrage has to be addressed first. It is difficult to teach about the facts when people are angry, fearful, and frustrated.

Facts are objective and rational, and perceptions are emotional and irrational. Emotions are irrational. Well if reality equals facts plus perception because facts somehow should shape perception that is true. Then if you are absent of the facts then the people will only look for perceptions, perceptions being emotional and irrational. (District Seven)

Third, as discussed in Sandman's work and also proclaimed by the superintendents, changing the level of outrage or emotionalism is the key. If outrage can be reduced then there is more likely to be room for better understanding of the facts or the reality of risks given current and best knowledge and practice. If there is high risk and low outrage then the intensity of the outrage needs to be heightened. If there is low risk and high outrage then the outrage needs to be reduced. The outrage is reduced by making it voluntary and familiar, reducing the dread as much as possible, sharing control, finding ways to

distribute the risks and benefits more fairly, acknowledging it as morally relevant, and building trust (Sandman, 1988, p. 18). If outrage can be reduced then better understanding of the hazard is likely to come into play. "If we can succeed in reducing the outrage, the public will do a fine job in understanding the hazard data" (Sandman, 1988, p. 18).

Fourth, the legitimacy of outrage needs to be accepted if there is any hope for achieving any goals. Treating outrage as legitimate is important because the best chance of controlling hazard is to pay attention to outrage, and outrage is serious in its own right because it is a reflection of social values. We want to live in a society that respects moral values, acknowledges outrage. "We don't want to be advocating a position in schools that would be considered morally incorrect in our community so we have to be very careful that our message is constantly one promoting this..." (District Five). This treatment gives the message that institutions are trustworthy and credible (Sandman, 1988, pp. 16-19).

That is very key to this whole thing. In any kind of controversy, if you're up front with people, and you ask for their advice, and you use it then you usually start building a credibility level. That means each time a controversial policy may come up you probably might have less opposition because people don't have in the back of their minds well here is another scheme coming up to fool us...I would say trust and understanding". (District Four)

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Controversial policy has a distinct meaning for school superintendents, and this meaning impacts the implementation process. Controversial policy is perceived as unique from non-controversial policy and social regulatory policy as somewhat different from controversial policy related to dispute over money. Contending with controversial policy requires the use of certain strategies experienced as effective in preventing or reducing controversy through addressing the issues on two levels, factual and emotional. As presented in the following chapter this initial definition and description of controversial policy in the educational policy arena and its meaning for school superintendents has implications for educational policy, practice, and research, and for policy studies beyond the educational policy arena.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The study's basic research intention was to gain theoretical perspective on controversial policy and its implementation in education based on the experiences and beliefs of school superintendents. The research question stands as follows: What is the subjective meaning for the superintendent of policy experienced as controversial, and what are the associated implications for the policy process in school districts.

The ideas here are primarily based on what the study participants had to say. However, the researcher does at this point begin to extend some of her own perspective.

This final chapter is divided into three categories: The Meaning of the Results; Toward a Theory About Controversial Policy in Education; and Recommendations for Educational Research, the Policy Process in Education, and the Training of School Administrators. The primary goal is to make some meaningful and feasible suggestions for educational practice and research.

MEANING OF THE RESULTS

Descriptive information generated from this study may contribute to current efforts in policy studies to substantiate a classification scheme and definition of policy types by adding detail about what characterizes controversial policy in education, and what happens between policy statement and impact in school districts. Lowi (1972) points out that identifying types of a phenomenon "...is the beginning of orderly control and prediction" (p. 298).

The present study is a first step toward generating hypotheses about controversial policy in education and identifying factors that influence its implementation at the local level. The superintendent responds to controversial policy as a unique, challenging, and complex phenomenon requiring special attention and effort. It is time-consuming, professionally and emotionally exhausting, and sometimes threatening. The data reflect a complex process of mutual adaptation between the implementor's policy and participants in the local setting.

As also suggested by Berman (1978) this process is often experienced as unpredictable, ambiguous, and as adding to the uncertainty of how the policy will be implemented and what the outcome will be. The superintendent is a key actor in facilitating this process of mutual adaptation. The superintendent's behavior directly and indirectly promotes

or inhibits this process which in turn impacts the outcomes of implementation.

This study informs the educational policy process by describing how controversial policy interacts with the local setting, the "mutual adaptation" between policy and the organization or the micro-level implementation experience. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) explain there are two implementation processes: "One is the initially perceived, formally defined....the other is the unexpected nexus of causality that actually evolves during implementation" (p. 217). These study results illuminate aspects of the latter.

Such description begins to tell us what happens during implementation that causes policy intentions to change or stay the same, what influences the policy process, and what impacts the outcome. We can begin to understand why policy decisions do not always lead to expected results. It reveals the complexities of the micro-implementation experience.

In addition, these superintendents' experiences provide insight about what facilitates implementation of controversial policy as well as about the difficulties or obstacles of implementation. Their observations begin to provide a picture of the demands and expectations placed on superintendents, and on what administrators realistically can and cannot do.

All this in turn begins to identify some key considerations to apply in the evaluation of policy and programs, especially those of a controversial nature. Palumbo, Fawcett, and Wright (1981) contend a policy has to be both well designed and well implemented. "Promising emerging functions for evaluation research include determining how well a policy is being implemented..." (p. x). Williams and Elmore (1976) stress that policy success or failure depends not only on the theory within and content of the policy, but on implementation as well. Palumbo, Fawcett, and Wright (1981) warn that it is not always best to measure attainment of original goals because these can be changed during implementation. If evaluation is approached in this way then policies can have the appearance of failing when in fact we may be applying the wrong criteria for measuring failure and success. Those interested need to ask questions about whether a policy has been properly implemented: for example, acquiring a picture of what is perceived by key actors to be the outcomes in place versus applying only the formally stated policy intentions, and determining if they are pleased with the outcome or if they perceive it as "watered down".

Finally, current practice is improved by naming and describing the controversy and the implementation strategies used in the face of controversy. Policymakers, community interest groups, and researchers interested in the

administration of schools can benefit from this "close-up view" of the implementation of controversial policy that many administrators are confronting. It is the hope that the perspective gained by systematically identifying for policy-makers and administrators some of the characteristics of successful implementation processes for controversial policies, as presented in Chapter V and VI, will be applied to the policy process and administrative practice, and that their accuracy and relevance will be further clarified by doing so. The major contribution of this research is to bring the phenomenon into the open for further systematic consideration.

TOWARD A THEORY ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL POLICY IN EDUCATION

The study of the policy process is a complex, demanding, and elusive task, and the heuristic framework proposed in Chapter VI identifies factors associated with controversial educational policy. The study participants emphasized that a controversial response to policy could not be predicted with much accuracy, but also suggested that trying to anticipate controversy and planning to prevent or reduce it was worthwhile. As Berman (1978) believes, implementation will always be full of uncertainties, never fully predictable, or context free, but implementation analysis can contribute "...to a more effective policy by developing institutionally grounded heuristics to help

policy-makers adapt their decisions as implementation problems arise" (p.180). Systematic consideration of a phenomenon can lead to more accurate prediction. It helps to frame the context in which controversy occurs and to illustrate how this controversy appears to a key actor in the policy process.

The proposed heuristic can be used as a frame of reference to anticipate possible responses to a policy in a particular community. It is an organizing framework to be placed on local dynamics. It is useful for anticipating, but not necessarily for prediction. It would not be meaningful or accurate to use it to tell a superintendent that his or her district is going to experience a specific level of controversy because the factors associated with controversy may have a different meaning for different districts. It would be useful to say that, given certain factors and depending on which ones come into play, a district may experience a greater than average amount of controversy around this issue. Then the opportunity could be taken to identify some effective ways the superintendent might respond to the potential for controversy, to advise the superintendent about strategies that encourage the school and community to reach a morally relevant outcome tolerable to both yet still meaningful to youth.

It is a theoretical framework grounded in the beliefs and experiences of those who have dealt with the phenomenon.

It thus provides an initial, accurate reference point for reflecting on the reality of practice in schools. Its value lies in that the assistance it offers as a guide to the identification and description of factors associated with the level of controversy in the policy implementation process.

This heuristic was developed out of an examination of superintendents' experiences of controversial policy of a social regulatory nature like AIDS and sex education, school-based health clinics, and censorship and textbook adoption issues. The common factor to all of these is that money or lack of resources is not the cause of the controversy. Acquiring additional examples and descriptions these and other kinds of social regulatory policy in education (PL 94-142, gifted education mandate, multiculturally responsive curricula are examples), can further clarify the phenomenon in education. In particular, study of a specific policy in each of these areas, across different district contexts, could provide additional insights.

The researcher believes theory about controversial policy and its implementation in education should serve six basic purposes: (1) it should reflect the complexities of the micro-level implementation experience; (2) it should be based on the experiences and beliefs of key actors in the educational policy process; (3) it should help school

administrators "anticipate" controversy by identifying factors that contribute to controversy and which illuminate how the controversy might appear in their locality; (4) it should point to effective strategies for managing controversial policy and its implementation; (5) it should explain the relationship between the implementation experience and implementation outcomes. Otherwise stated, any theory on the phenomenon should embrace the concepts of identification, definition, description, anticipation or prediction, and explanation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational Research

The Tatalovich and Daynes theoretical framework on social regulatory policy is relevant and useful for identifying and understanding key variables associated with controversial policy in the field of education. The field of education has many examples of social regulatory policy as initially defined and described by Tatalovich and Daynes (1984, 1988) and Lowi (1988). The information provided by the eight study participants confirms Tatalovich and Daynes' work and provides further clarification and detail on what characterizes controversial policy, its implementation in education, and its meaning for a key actor in the educational policy process, the school superintendent.

This researcher would recommend that the theoretical framework of Tatalovich and Daynes be reapplied in further studies. It can be used in combination with the heuristic that evolved from this study to explore the phenomenon in further detail.

Most broadly, educational research should include systematic consideration and discussion of the phenomenon of controversial policy in education. More specifically, it can focus particularly on controversial policy of a social regulatory nature and the special problems and challenges that accompany it.

Additionally, the relationship between the outcomes of controversial policy and what is best for kids has to be explored. How closely does the final policy, program, or curriculum reflect what is known to be best practice? We need additional research assessing what is best for kids in areas like health services, AIDS education, and sex education, areas typically regarded as controversial policy of a social regulatory nature. What is known isn't shared with or sometimes is not understood by the community at large. Often there is no commonly shared knowledge about the issues among professional educators.

We need to build awareness of how knowledge about best practice should be communicated to the public and to what extent. Knowledge about the issues needs to be better understood and better communicated. Schools and communities

have a better chance at sharing a moral standard based on knowledge, understanding, and their own values. The outcome is also more likely to be supportive of the needs of youth.

In line with what is effective practice for reducing the outrage or emotionalism associated with controversial issues, and the strategies considered by superintendents to be effective for the implementation of controversial policy in general, certain questions remain. More detail would be useful on how strategies are put into effect: How does an issue become more familiar? How is risk diffused so as to be less threatening? When does the risk associated with controversial policy exceed an acceptable level? How do those proposing the policy gain and show trustworthiness and credibility? What does trust and credibility mean to the community? How does the district arrive at a morally acceptable solution to controversial issues or how do they decide what is right or wrong given the circumstances?

How do the professional backgrounds and personal values and beliefs of administrators impact the policy process and outcomes associated with controversial policy of a social regulatory nature? Though this question was not directly explored through this study, it did surface. Superintendents can directly impact the outcome through decisions based on their singular professional judgement as well as their moral preferences. For example, the superintendent from District Four decided that his

district's school-based health clinic would not provide birth control because he believed the program would be more acceptable if they backed off some on this issue and worked toward more acceptable incremental change rather than asking the constituents to face an unfamiliar and undesirable immediate change. As another example, the superintendent from District Three strongly supported the requirement that students using the school-based health clinic in their district waive their right to a confidential visit. He mentioned that this was not disagreeable to him as he had a daughter in high school and would want to know if she attended the clinic for any reason. He also implied that the parental notification requirement was discretionary in that parents were usually only notified if the visit was related to something deemed serious. When it came to AIDS education, all of the superintendents believed their district's students should have information on prevention, not just abstinence. The curriculum outcomes for all of the districts except for one, District Six, reflected this belief. The superintendent from District Eight agreed with the opposition that if there was going to be discussion about prevention beyond abstinence it would be strictly kept to a small, contained part of the curriculum. This is the outcome of this district despite frustration voiced by teachers that the resulting curriculum less than adequately addressed the needs of youth. Administrator's beliefs and

personal moral standards do have an influence on policy implementation.

Finally, the meaning of controversial policy for the superintendents is only one perspective on understanding controversial policy and its implementation in education. Repeating a similar study to gain more definition and description from others would be useful. Teachers, board members, parents, and single issue groups associated with certain issues all have valuable perspectives and experiences which would add to knowledge of the phenomenon.

The Policy Process in Education

The study participants confirmed that what happens during the policy process at the local level can impact the classroom and learning. Compromises may occur during implementation which result in policy, programs, and curriculum that are not in the best interest of youth. Interest in meaningful and effective teaching and learning at the classroom level should be held paramount in the policy process. The researcher suggests at least one route for keeping the interest of students close to the policy process. Along with other members of the community, involve students in the policy process consistently and sincerely. They have to live with the outcomes of policy and should have, for their benefit and the benefit of society, some ownership, acceptance of, and belief in those outcomes.

With regard to the districts' responses to the AIDS education mandate an observation is that all of the districts did not include students in their community involvement efforts. According to Rienzo (1989) who references Wilson (1988) and Scales (1984) this can have two consequences: (1) it increases the chances that the curriculum will not meet the real needs of students (Scales, 1974); (2) the students are a source of support for relevant and meaningful curriculum content and programs and to exclude them is to the disadvantage of the implementation process as they are usually the "most eloquent advocates" for programs (Wilson, 1988; Scales, 1984; Rienzo, 1989, pp. 172-173). Not including youth in the policy process increases the chances of the outcome being "watered down" or reflecting the values of the community over the needs of youth in an effort not to offend the community's, often a vocal minority's, moral standards.

The superintendent from District Four was a strong advocate for student involvement. He believed youth representation was an integral part of an honest and effective policy process. Students in this district were increasingly invited to participate. Although this district did not have students represented on the AIDS committee, they did include students on their school-based health clinic committee. Their participation was highly esteemed by the superintendent.

...they acted just like an adult member of the group. If they were talking about looking at some brochure they were going to hand out or anything that came up they had a full voice same as the adults. The funny part of it is the kids that do get involved this way we found are not a bit afraid to talk up in front of a group. In fact we did our strategic planning, we had four or five students involved in that, when we broke into small groups the adults in all five cases appointed the students to be the facilitator of the small group. They were so adept at it. One of them happened to be the student body president for two years, a girl, just absolutely marvelous. I could have turned the whole thing over to her and gone fishing and she would have come up with just as good a result. (District Four)

However, it is important to note here that, according to the superintendent, this district had a strong, consistent, historical commitment to community involvement on all issues, not just controversial ones. The quality circle approach to participation, planning, and decision-making was tightly integrated into their district philosophy and standard operating procedures. As a district they practiced broad and honest community involvement on a daily basis. They welcomed and encouraged community input, regarded all suggestions as legitimately worthy of consideration, and actually integrated suggestions from the community.

The issue of student involvement is one example of how understanding local dynamics allows us to ask better questions about the policy process: How is the level of student involvement related to the outcomes of implementation? As we systematically begin to identify some

of the strategies experienced to be most effective across situations for the implementation of policy, particularly controversial policy, these strategies can be encouraged through policy as well as made known to educational practitioners. The Oregon State AIDS Education Mandate is an example of this in that it mandated community involvement, a strategy known to be effective, but perhaps it was deficient in that it did not specify involving students as part of the community.

Clearly the policy process is complex and governed by local dynamics. The data confirms it is characterized by multiple and competing goals, and that decisions are arrived at not through a logical decision-making process, but rather by compromise and concession arrived at through negotiations from all those involved in the policy process (Patterson, Purkey, & Parker; 1986). There sometimes are positive and negative unanticipated occurrences which can mitigate or facilitate the policy. However, as referenced in Chapter II, Montjoy and O'Toole (1979) stress that some of the problems during implementation can be predicted from the nature of the policies themselves. They encourage analysis of prospective policies in terms of their "implementability."

Their studies revealed that the surest way to avoid problems with implementation is to establish a specific mandate and to provide sufficient resources. However, the

conditions of difficulty or ease in implementation of particular policy types is not yet clear.

Relationships between state intentions and local intentions and outcomes is worth further examination. Taking the reader back to a quote in Chapter I: "Victory in the legislative halls may be short lived if it goes to the wrong place in the bureaucracy" (Ripley, 1985, p. 176). This point can be safely broadened to mean a lot can happen at the local level to alter state intentions. For example, the state mandated AIDS education, but consider the arduous implementation process and disappointing outcome experienced by the superintendent from District Six. Was meeting the minimum requirements of that particular mandate enough?

...I get the general feeling of frustration at the state department and with the legislature mandating item after item without any support, and anytime they mandate it is going to cost the districts time and effort and energy and money. With the mandates of course, with the state legislature, I think they're reacting mostly to political issues and not really taking into consideration the needs of students of the districts and the districts themselves. I am very frustrated when they do this type of thing. My immediate thoughts when they presented this was another cop out. (District Six)

Rienzo (1989) suggests that "...districts are reluctant to develop local policies that go beyond those established at the state level, especially in controversial areas, and that the district officials would like that support for themselves and their teachers" (p. 173).

According to the study participants state mandates are of both positive and negative value, but were preferred when dealing with controversial or potentially controversial issues. Due to strained time and resources, sometimes mandates in general are frustrating. They are useful in that they give incentive to districts to act on matters the superintendents perceive as important but have not yet or would not act on due to lack of or a strain on resources and/or the potential for controversy. When dealing with a controversial or potentially controversial issue mandates provide a scapegoat for those with local responsibility for implementation. Local administrators can point to the mandate to relieve some of the heat and to shift the "blame". Also, a mandate changes the focus of the debate from "will" the district make a commitment to certain issues to "how" will they act on a commitment. This sometimes cuts the battle in half.

Mandates which allow for local adaptation of policy and curriculum are generally preferred. However, with controversial issues a few of the study participants indicated more specific mandates which still allowed for local adaptation but spell out minimum expectations are more useful for preventing or abating controversy.

The superintendent from District Six wished the state had mandated the AIDS curriculum they were using as a suggested guideline for local communities to use in the

development of their own curriculum. He believed such a mandate was the only hope the students in his district had of having a curriculum in place at the classroom level that meaningfully and accurately addressed the needs of all youth sexually active or not, homosexual or heterosexual. According to the superintendent, this district ended up with a curriculum limited to talk about abstinence that had a religious slant to it. It was frustrating for this superintendent of a small, poor district to be asked to meet yet another mandate, a controversial one at that, with little time, money, and people energy available to do the job. Leaving to the district the responsibility for working out curriculum details and dealing with the controversy was in this superintendent's mind not worthwhile. Mandates which specifically require what is known to be in the best interest of youth may be more appropriate when dealing with controversial issues.

Educational Leadership and the Training Of School Administrators

Prior to implementation a policy may be viewed as controversial; yet, when implementation arrives controversy may intensify as the policy or program becomes a reality. Boyd (1983) and Layton (1988) believe that political savvy is a dimension lacking in the training of educational administrators. Researchers should strive to translate relevant data into "...knowledge and concepts to which

educational practitioners can relate" (Layton, 1988, p. 25).

Educational leaders can apply the experience of others to their situation, possibly resulting in more effective and efficient use of scarce resources like time and money for the goals desired. In "Thinking and Learning about Leadership", Cronin (1984) says: "...students can learn to discern and define situations and contexts within which leadership has flourished" (p. 34). Ripley (1985) states it is important to understand, rather than condemn, the ways in which government organized to get the job done" (p. 170).

Study of a leader's ability and willingness to deal with conflict and controversy in given situations can produce useful knowledge in the educational policy arena. Recognition that a critical component of leadership is contending with controversial policy may strengthen our understanding of leadership, especially transformative leadership associated with implementing "maximal change", and the strategies associated with it (Bass, 1978). From the perspective of the superintendents as educational leaders the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation is never fully predictable. However, it is possible to gain useful insight on the dynamics of the phenomenon and the leadership qualities associated with it.

Given the present study the implications for educational leadership are that administrators need to be willing, and have some degree of comfort and specific

ability, to deal with controversy. The current leadership literature talks about vision, communication skills, persistence, and the ability to empower followers (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Gardner, 1990). Based on what the eight study participants had to say, having vision requires that superintendents include in that vision extreme and competing moral views. They need the skill to communicate that vision which allows for competing moral views. They also need the skills and qualities to gain support for that vision through addressing the facts and emotionalism of the issue-communication skills, listening skills, empathy, honesty, trustworthiness and credibility. They are called upon to be persistent, to endure time-consuming, sometimes threatening, and exhausting hard work. They need to be able to empower the community, creating a sense of shared responsibility, understanding, ownership, and approval of policy and curriculum efforts.

Superintendents are called upon to lead within the reality that policy, programs or curriculum intentions sometimes change during implementation and that results of initial efforts may be unsatisfactory. Consequently, all of this in turn may mean for the future more change and a new cycle of controversy and conflict (Bennis, 1984, pp. 64-71). There may be no permanent resolution to any controversial issue. The effective leader can live with the anxiety of

that, and feels confident in his or her ability to respond as obstacles confront him or her in the process.

Cronin (1984) contends that an effective leader welcomes many kinds of conflict, and is more likely to consider it an opportunity for change rather than an obstacle. He states:

The strength of leaders often lie in their tenacity, in knowing how to deal with competing factions, knowing when to compromise, when to amplify conflict, and when to move an organization or a community away from paralyzing divisiveness and toward a vision of the common good. (p. 31)

Finally, with specific regard to controversial policy of a social regulatory nature, educational leaders need to have, according to the researcher, moral fortitude. This means they must have a comfort and a willingness to deal with controversy, controversy around resources and controversy around competing moral standards. It requires a comfort with choosing and expressing a viewpoint and supporting what is in the best interests of students given knowledge of best practice. It also means sometimes compromising to some degree what is in the best interests of students in order to reflect community values and moral standards.

Controversial policy is risky business for superintendents, sometimes leading to job threats and personal attacks on their moral standards. It requires courage and many skills, some fundamental and some more sophisticated.

Current knowledge about controversial policy and its implementation also has implications for the training of school administrators. Information from the literature and study participants reveals specific skills needed to work with controversial policy in the educational policy arena, and provides insight on the cause, effect, and management of controversial policy as perceived by key actors in the policy process. From the data the researcher concludes that the competent administrator needs a strong foundation of interpersonal skills, moral fortitude, and training grounded in studies from the field of practice.

For effective management of controversial policy, the study participants emphasized the significance of specific interpersonal skills, and the benefit of hindsight gained from past experience or foresight acquired from looking to the experience of others. Though understanding how the superintendents learned the importance of or acquired these skills was not a direct focus of the study, it was clear their frame of reference was that of experience, their own or others, and reliance upon basic interpersonal skills. Two of the study participants had masters level training, three had post-masters studies or doctoral studies in progress, and three had completed doctorates. Despite this high level of professional training the study participants did not credit their awareness or successes with controversial policy and its implementation to academic

training. Again, there was a clear association with experience and interpersonal skills as their frame of reference.

To be successful at managing controversial policy it is apparent the school administrator needs a strong foundation of interpersonal skills. It is common knowledge that these are skills that take time and practice to learn. A lifetime can be spent honing these skills. Professional training programs should not be deficient of opportunity for refinement of these interpersonal skills, especially as these skills are challenged by the unique phenomenon of controversial policy.

In addition to requiring a strong foundation of interpersonal skills, the competent school administrator needs moral fortitude. Moral fortitude is defined by the researcher as the strength to take a stance on issues based on systematic consideration of knowledge about best current research and practice in specific policy areas. Moral fortitude is arrived at partially through a process of professional and personal values clarification. Moral fortitude companioned with interpersonal skills allow the school and community to engage in a moral policy process, a process which embraces competing moral views and works toward outcomes acceptable to all. Policy involves not only competing values but competing moral standards as well.

Though formal training is not the only or in fact not

even a primary source of moral fortitude, there appears to be advantages to providing current and future educational leaders with the opportunity to clarify their personal and professional beliefs about the issue at hand.

At least in the area of controversial policy and its implementation, it appears the training of current and future administrators would be most useful if it were grounded in studies of actual experiences from the field. Reflecting on the experiences of others serves several learning purposes: (1) it is a reflection of reality from which study participants claimed to learn, not merely theoretical abstraction far removed from the context of experience; (2) it is an opportunity to see and consider what has and has not worked in practice, and to speculate why; (3) it is an opportunity to practice interpersonal skills to heighten interpersonal competence; (4) it is an opportunity to undergo professional and personal values clarification on the policy issues and thereby to heighten one's moral fortitude; and (5) such a learning process contributes to foresight and the ability to anticipate and plan ahead. When dealing with controversial policy of a social regulatory nature key actors in the policy process are called upon to engage in the actions noted here. Identifying a training regime which emulates these activities makes good use of everyone's time, energy, and resources.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This research offers five key understandings about controversial policy and its implementation in education. First, it is a unique, complex, and challenging phenomenon. Second, systematic consideration of the experiences and beliefs of school superintendents provides meaningful guidance for educational practice and research which reflects the reality of practice. Third, those dealing with controversial policy need a high degree of interpersonal competence and moral fortitude. Fourth, there are insightful perspectives on controversial policy, and specific strategies considered to be most effective for the implementation of controversial policy. Fifth, this study organizes knowledge about the phenomenon of controversial policy and its implementation in a way that is immediately applicable to the training of educational leaders. It begins an important and long avoided dialogue about a specific policy type and the challenges it poses.

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APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND ON THE OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULE
ON AIDS EDUCATION

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND ON THE OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULE
ON AIDS EDUCATION

Beginning in 1987, with funding from the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Health Division wrote and published AIDS: The Preventable Epidemic, a curriculum for grades four through twelve. The Oregon Department of Education collaborated on the material for grades four through eight. The curriculum was intended to serve as a basis for local districts in their development of AIDS education curricula, providing instructional strategies and methods to assist with prevention education (Oregon State Department of Education, 1987, forward). Verne A. Duncan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time, and Kristine M. Gebbie, Human Resources Administrator in the Health Division, state in the forward of the curriculum that the AIDS epidemic "...provides unique and important challenges for public health agencies, schools and communities....education is the only tool to eliminate or reduce the spread of the disease..." (Oregon Department of Education, 1987, forward).

In 1988, the Oregon Department of Education passed an administrative rule, OAR 581-22-412, with the force of law

which mandated that each school had to provide an age-appropriate curriculum on communicable diseases which included AIDS education. It had to be integrated into the health education curriculum from kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition, this would be done with the involvement of parents, teachers, the school Board, and the community. Compliance with the mandate was graduated according to the level of the schools- middle schools and high schools had to comply within the next year or two. Elementary schools had more time to meet the mandate.

APPENDIX B

CODEBOOK FOR ETHNOGRAPH

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CODEBOOK FOR ETHNOGRAPH

Story

Segment or remark that would be useful to the writing of the district narrative on the school district's response to the Oregon State AIDS Education Mandate.

Meaning

Reference to meaning of controversial policy to Superintendent or implication of meaning.
Superintendent beliefs or opinions about controversial policy and its implementation.

Contro

Indicates remark that relates to characterization of the controversy, description, definition, how it shows itself or a remark that indicates something that occurred around or because of a controversial policy.

Examcon

Example of a controversial policy.

Examnon

Example of a non-controversial policy.

Noncon

Reference to what characterizes non-controversial policy.

Strat

Reference to strategy used for implementation of policy in general be it controversial or non-controversial, and what is considered a useful and effective approach.

Board

Any reference to the school Board, usually their role.

Goals

Reference to goals- Superintendent, school district, interest groups, school Board, committees, etc.

Media

Any reference to the media.

Outcomes

Any discussion of outcomes to the implementation process.

Size

Any reference to size of district.

Wealth

Any reference to wealth of district.

Time

Any reference to time taken- role of time or time as strategy.

Mandate

Any comment on opinion or value or role of mandate(s) with regard to controversial policy or potentially controversial policy.

Religion

Any reference to religion or religious values or religious groups.

Issues

Reference to issues/problems related to controversial policy and its implementation.

Note

Anything else I want to note- idea, concept, implication, opinion or quote I may want to pull out- more subjective material.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY PROVIDED BY THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY PROVIDED BY THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

District One: Small and Wealthy

...let me give you an example...lets say you have an overall athletic policy that states if a youngster is involved in a weekend party where there is alcohol consumed...that person will be taken out of athletics for lets say a two week period or one lets say a one week period.

Gifts, what do you do about somebody that you've helped their student and they feel so great about that they want to give the district a gift of some sort or another.

District Two: Large and Wealthy

There were some ongoing policies that were more controversial and somewhat remain controversial today. One of those was our no smoking policy that was adopted. That was a very controversial policy...Another example that deals with personal rights would be a question on the use of videos in schools. We had a policy recently that restricted "R" rated videos.

...some topics are by their nature controversial and they can be so labeled. If you're going to talk anytime about sex education, that is a controversial topic. You know it is going to be one. If you're talking about changing school boundaries, controversial topic. You know it is going to be.

In this other state the media was interested in how we select library materials...a censorship issue about books being removed from the library and the school board had actually decided to actually take the books.

There is a textbook controversy going on now in this county, with the secular humanism view....

District Three: Small and Poor

...right now the most controversial thing that we have had in the district since I have been here was a school-based health clinic....

The school district was asked by the local Indian population to become involved in restoring tribal status for that particular Indian group. I became involved in that. Surprisingly, it became a little bit controversial because of the fact that there were a number of people who did not perceive a need to have this Indian organization to have tribal status.

Another controversy that we faced over the years in that same school district was the controversy over the death and dying, and values clarification.

Years ago in a classroom I was doing a unit on evolution. I had the son of a Presbyterian minister in my class. The minister came to school during the time of that presentation, asked me if he can sit in my class...

...the issue of whether I expel a student or not for calling in bomb threats to our schools.

District Four: Large and Poor

...two years ago we were asked by the state of Oregon to put a health clinic in our high school. Those can be very very controversial. Especially if you're passing out condoms and giving them all kinds of reproductive information and so on.

District Five: Large and Wealthy

Lets take an issue like a smoke free district. We should have no smoking by our students or our employees in the district. Well that particular issue you can have board members all the way from believing that is what we should have...and somebody over here saying no that is human choice....

Lets say we wanted to go to a completely merit pay system for our administrators. Right now the school board might think that the merit pay system for administrators is a good way to pay the administrators. Many districts went to a merit pay system and junked it. They didn't like it. We have talked from time to

time because the board is intrigued by that idea. I don't like that idea and so if we went to it it is not that I couldn't try to do it, it is just that I am opposed to that...Now the board will face situations and I will face situations where I have to make choices like a boundary...like right now we are changing school boundaries.

Administrative reduction....we just wrote a policy. I just wrote and we just passed it. We worked on it for two months, on reducing administration, reducing administrators in the district. It is a policy that establishes confidence and merit both as indicators in reducing force so when we have to down size our administrative staff as a result of ballot measure five it is a set of guidelines. Real potential there for pure conflict....

Another example would be grading, the district policy on grading...The policy isn't terribly controversial because the policy doesn't say anything. Basically it says that we're going to grade...but when you get to an issue as an outgrowth of the policy about a teacher's right to grade that is really a charged issue for the teachers, is for some parents too, and for administrators, but for the community at large not so.

Another one would be right now we're looking at responding to ballot measure five...we have two high schools in the district and one of the things that we need to study and look at, but I don't think we will do, but what we will look at is closing one of our high schools...It is the kind of thing that I would say that we would run into pure conflict no question about it because we'd have opposing points of view that were incompatible.

...we work so hard at so many things that we really have to make choices about what things are going to be most valuable to spend our time on. AIDS policy is obviously one. Boundary changes are another.

District Six: Small and Poor

Another that I know will become controversial or will be controversial is over the budget process.

...one of the areas that we have constant problems with is excused and unexcused absences.

I guess another area, issue, that is always

controversial are our policies dealing with athletic eligibility, that the student is caught drinking or smoking or whatever and breaks training rules and are automatically suspended for the remainder of the season.

District Seven: Large and Poor

I think negotiations can be very controversial with labor relations...Sex education, but that is close to AIDS...Sometimes your social studies program and whether or not what you teach and what is in the science book in terms of the whole creationism versus the...OK and that whole issue and how the textbook will approach it...what should be in a textbook and what shouldn't, what ought to be in the library for kids, and what shouldn't be, highly controversial. Some of the literature that comes to mind right now, the Diary of Anne Frank that I read in the paper was highly controversial to a group of parents who wanted the book out of the library that by scholars would over think that it is a piece of literature that ought to be read....

District Eight: Small and Wealthy

Measure five is that very subject...

Policies related to sex education are extremely controversial. Superintendents have been hired and fired on that very issue....that has been dealt with. Of course the AIDS is a part of that whole picture. Textbook adoption, people have a religious base. Of course personnel policies that on the one hand are designed to meet collective bargaining agreements that were worked out with unions sometimes are contrary to the communities best interest as far as some members of the community are concerned.

Well again the most obvious is the sex education issue. Anything that we would propose as a policy related to sex education or AIDS will immediately bring participation from certain member of the community.

APPENDIX D

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY AS PROVIDED BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

APPENDIX D

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY
AS PROVIDED BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

District One: Small and Wealthy

We're not used to talking about condoms and sex and all that and immediately our group felt like wow!

...well just project that if we had done nothing and waited for the curriculum to be developed further and never heard of the word condom before.

They struggle because they didn't involve people.

Some people find things like that [AIDS and sex education] very objectionable...at the elementary levels I should say.

We heard that a third grade teacher or a fourth grade teacher was not going to be able to deal with this. Her religion wouldn't let them or their personal feelings wouldn't let them...

The hard part of the question is that every policy has potential of being controversial because you don't know what segment of the population may take it as a controversy.

It has been my experience that some policies that I didn't have even the slightest idea anyone would ever care about would drag on for weeks in a bitter battle so to speak and I would be shocked. I had no idea that was going to be controversial and some that I really knew were going to be controversial were not.

I have given up trying to anticipate. I just try to get all the information. Have it available for all parties, and again educate. I really believe in that. When I'm in trouble and when I have a controversial issue it is because I haven't done the ground work ahead of time to get the information to all the people that needed it, and get them educated to it. It doesn't mean they're going to agree with the policy, it may still be controversial in quotes whatever that

means, but they'll do it from a factual standpoint rather than an emotional standpoint. An emotional controversial issue really gets us nowhere, but if everybody has the facts and are working at it then we can usually satisfy a controversial issue that everybody...at least they finally get to the conclusion and we get it done and the policy is done and then active, but if we stay emotional we won't get anywhere.

They started out as a very good policy, an improvement on what was going on, but maybe somehow or another not everyone knew what was the intent of that policy or what their applications might be of that policy.

Controversial? Usually personal, usually. If affects me. It is a great policy as long as it doesn't effect me. It is a great lesson as long as I don't have to do it. Yeah I don't mind the work, but let Joe do it or let Bill or let Sue or...It affects me. It is just like...lets take in a broader sense the war we're in right now. You know I can be mad about the war or whatever we want to be or pray for or pray against it or whatever, but if you have a loved one there then it is personal. Then you deal with it a little different, even then.

The least people that it effects personally then it is probably not going to be controversial.

...there are so many levels of controversial now so you know...I really can't think of anything that we could enact that is so simple that it didn't involve somebody having a question about it. Well if that is controversy or not I'm not sure, but that would be the lowest level...The highest level is where they take off their shoe and pound it on the desk. That would be the highest level, and there is just all ranges in between.

...the biggest problems I would have in running a school district are not the policies it is in enacting the darn things...That is when you find out it effects so many people. Then you have to look at the human side of that and say why I didn't even think of that? Why didn't we go to those people first? That is why we try to do that and avoid that. That is what a controversy is. It is not always in the policy itself, it is how that policy is interpreted and used.

...lets say there hadn't been a news blitz, and our timing wasn't quite as good, and it was a brand new thing. Lets say we were in some really tough negotiations right at the moment with salaries and that

sort of thing, how do you think the union might respond with a policy coming out and hitting them in the face? They're going to say Oh they're just doing this to try to beat us down, there is another way of administrators taking advantage...they might have done that. Then you'd have controversial policy from the start.

...this policy remains non-controversial simply because someone hasn't chosen to use the policy to their own benefit.

There wasn't a lot of attention. There wasn't a lot of interest put into the policy that it received large public play.

...if I was going to assess that I would say it is because the information is so needed, so critical that we all have it...

The least people it affects personally, then it is probably not going to be controversial.

It was also an advantage to us that we were in good relationships, with both associations [union].

District Two: Large and Wealthy

After the curriculum was adopted and after it was in place that group subsequently then has organized, has approached the school district, and has requested an alternative instructional component to the AIDS and the sex education curriculum. There was a level of controversy at that point....The level of controversy was that they did not think the district was giving enough notification to parents about what was in the curriculum and what were the options that parents...that students had to opt out. As a result of that we did some changes in our opt out procedures and are now offering in the evenings some support to a substitute curriculum offering.

I think the reason they're controversial...I think a number of it deals with an interpretation of personal rights, and it affects people in terms of lifestyle and habits. Secondly, it was controversial because it represented an area that an organized group believed was an infringement on some of their rights, and in this case there was union involvement. So anytime I think you deal with policy that is considered either a personal rights violation or an intrusion on some kind of authority that has been granted through contract or

law or precedent to a union you are asking for a controversial response...that no smoking one was an example.

...I think the only time that you can make a reasonable assumption that it is going to be controversial is if you can see a direct link with those two conditions that are going to be considered a violation of personal rights or is this going to rub up with one of the unions.

Sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. At times even though you may plan for it, to have broad based involvement and work on a timely basis, you go into it without knowing that there is a group or there is an individual out there who is not going to be satisfied with anything you do. Their whole purpose is going to be to target that particular policy and make it controversial. That is a strategy that sometimes plays out and you see it playing out. You have to almost sit back and say this is going to happen and there is nothing we can do to stop it. It is going to stop when the union or when that individual wants it to stop. In the meantime we now have to deal with that whole sense of generated controversy.

They didn't like the state model at all because they thought it represented to them the state dictating the values of education, dictating curriculum that they disagreed with. What they wanted was a model that...in fact they brought their model. Their model was a church developed model and lots of values clarification, and clearly religious values.

They came in with a number of stories about teacher X saying this in the classroom and that is not correct scientifically, it is not correct that teacher X was trying to promote his or her religion or was promoting secular humanism.

You can't anticipate it [controversy]. If you could or I could there would be other employment opportunities. Any of us could pick where we want to be, but you can't anticipate it. It is something that is part of the job. You have to just deal with whatever turns or whenever it comes up again.

...two concessions were gained by this group as a result primarily of criticizing the implementation.

Well again some topics are by their nature controversial and they can be so labeled. If you're

going to talk anytime about sex education, that is a controversial topic. You know it is going to be one. If you're talking about changing school boundaries, controversial topic. You know it is going to be. Those two might seem far apart topically, but they have some things in common. The things they have in common are number one it is going to affect me personally, it is going to affect what goes on in my home and it is going to have some kind of impact on my values. So, it gets the attention of the people, the parents, or the employees or the students. They are drawn to it and they want to take their position. They want to make sure that they are not in any way inconvenienced or in any way compromised in terms of what they view are their personal rights.

Other topics that you introduce you may not think at the time are going to be controversial at all and then for some reason then become controversial. So there are some things that you just can't predict, but the vast majority of policy questions are generally non-controversial because they are routine business, because they don't have any immediate impact or change impact on the employees or the client in this case, the parent as a customer.

If it represents the change from the norm often it will be controversial even though the change is minimal.

...in one sense you can anticipate what policies will cause controversy and in another sense you can't so then you have to respond to the controversy.

I would probably say that there is a range. Probably there could be three levels of controversy. The lowest level of controversy is when you are dealing with a single individual. It becomes a passion for one person and that person is able to generate some controversy over it. The second level is where the controversy is with an employee group, typically a union, and they have decided to make it a controversy. I put that at a second level because often times those things can be dealt with within the institution. The third and the most troublesome is the controversy that involves the community at large and draws people who normally are supportive or aren't normally involved in school affairs into the event. There is a lot of discussion and there is a lot of emotionalism and a lot of position building that involves both the employees as well as the community at large. So the last, the third level, is often the kind that you can't escape from cleanly. It requires time before you can look back and

see what really perhaps were some of the issues and perhaps what some of the damage was that was done.

It happens very quickly. It happens unpredictably, and you spend a lot of your time responding to controversy that wasn't designed by anything that you have done recently at all. It may be something that someone simply decided to take on as an issue.

For example, the lowest level would never get that far [to a public forum] so the resolution is rather one of ignoring the individual and reassuring through personal contact the other people who this individual has spoken to that there is nothing to this. There is immediate affirmation that we're just calculating everything he says as wrong. The second level resolution is often done within the institution...It is very controversial, but it is contained within the school district. The public is unaware of it.

It has to be resolved in a public forum when you get to this level three grouping of mine, the only resolution is a public resolution.

The state mandates that come out as a result of measure five are going to be a different thing entirely. You don't know what they're going to be, but I can envision all kinds of new mandates. For us there is plenty of the potential for controversy and it is going to be in the cases of reduction of programs because this district will stand to lose resources.

The interesting thing is that any one of your policies regardless of how routine they have become could quickly become a controversial policy if the media chooses to begin covering it, and talking about all of the possibilities...A routine issue begins to be controversial because all of the possibilities are examined and groups that usually had no interests in it suddenly become interested in it.

Finally it all ended and often these things do end at a public hearing in front of the board of directors where there is plenty of shouting and plenty of discussion. The board voted to leave the book on the shelf. It died down, but only after it went through some spasms. The spasms were that these groups were going to recall the board. They were going to get the superintendent. They were going to run their own candidates for the board. They exhausted those emotions and none of those things happened. There was no recall. There was no campaign to get the superintendent fired, and none of

them ran for the board.

District Three: Small and Poor

...right now the most controversial thing that we have had in the district since I have been here was a school-based health clinic. It was very controversial because we had a number of parents who felt that they did not need to have their youngsters have this available to them. The Portland clinics that are under the Planned Parenthood guideline can give out condoms, and can give out birth control pills, can discuss and even make appointment for young ladies to have abortions. The health clinic that we have is not under Planned Parenthood, it is under the state department of health...formerly prohibits discussion about abortions, prohibits the dispensing of birth control pills or condoms and yet, the papers, the Oregonian, for several years now, at least three years, has been full of the Portland based Planned Parenthood involved health clinics.

We went through a stage of having public hearings. We had five public hearings in fact before we got to the point of the board addressing the fact that were contemplating a school-based health clinic. The night that we had the formal board decision, the board agreed to implement the school-based health clinic, it was very controversial at that point...Oregon law for one that says if a girl who is fourteen years of age can go to a doctor or the health clinic or county health, and can be diagnosed as being pregnant and the doctor, the county health nurse, no one has to tell the parents if she is fourteen years of age or older. She can actually then under Oregon law set up a time to go have an abortion and the parents never know anything about it.

Most of the controversy...basically dealing with pregnancies, promoting Planned Parenthood or some type of family planning, given the abortion end of the family planning, dispensing of condoms and birth control pills...the sexuality of the whole thing was the major controversy.

...the textbook that is out there has a model of a male in the picture and it shows the genitals of the male. They really don't think that is the way it should be...

Anything that goes against local community mores can make it controversial.

Once tribal status was established the controversy kind of just went away because it was over and done with. There was no real reasoning behind it, not even any worthwhile dialogue as to why or what the concerns were, but it just came out as being controversial...

Another controversy that we faced over the years in that same school district was the controversy over the death and dying, and values clarification. Teachers everyday that they are in the classroom are doing values for kids. There is just no way they can get away from it, but it is how they do it that can be the controversy. You put the words value clarification on it and you are automatically going to disturb controversy...because people have their own idea of what values clarification means.

So, you're asking what makes controversial issues? One is when you entitle it by something that has a different meaning than what everybody agrees on. That will help to cause a lot of controversy. If you go into a strong Mormon community you can get into trouble real quick in a controversial issue of freedom of speech...of a policy at the high school which says certain things that girls should do because you are flying right into the fact of some of the traditional Mormon values of things that girls can do. So you become a realist and say you are not going to do that and quite often when you don't understand those community things that you're fighting that is when you get into the controversial issues, quite unknowingly most of the time.

The biggest controversy school districts face now is money. What do you cut when you don't have the money?

Oh I think you can generalize quite well in this particular arena because I think what is least controversial are those issues which are...we have the least control over and that least impact us as individuals. Those which become more controversial are those that we have definite control over or input to and those which are more closely to the individual...

...there is a whole range, there is a whole gamut of controversy.

If we would have gone out and said every kid who doesn't get a three point is going to be kicked out of school now you're involving a lot of people so that is going to become controversial immediately because they're going to see that my kid has a chance of not

getting a B average.

If we take and put the two side by side the parents in this community...the parents in this community are not going to be, unless they are deeply connected with an AIDS victim, are not going to be very very concerned about AIDS because it doesn't apply. It is off over here. It doesn't apply to my kids. Those it does apply to would only maybe be one or two. So now you not only have a small number, but you have something that is far removed, potentially far removed. The school-based health clinic however is immediately impacting...Even though they have some common issues, like especially the sexuality issues, the distinguishing thing between those that made one more controversial than the other was the fact that personally, the personal impact, the parental notification of the school-based health clinic...The one is here and now not something way over there and it has an impact on my kid everyday when they go to school. It is personal and it is here and now. It is non-personal and way over there makes it less controversial.

Non-controversial is because nobody cares...they don't feel it impacts them.

District Four: Large and Poor

I kind of identify a controversial issue as one that actually when you do get controversy. That can be different from one district to another. The exact same policy can bring the screamers out of the woodwork in some districts and absolutely no response in others.

...if it were something that was very controversial and very important then I probably would really get involved at that level.

Once in a while somebody very well understands the issue, and it may be for moral or religious reasons or whatever they oppose it. The people that come from that direction are a little bit tougher to change...Now once in a while you will find groups that even though they can opt out still don't want you to do it for anybody. Those kinds are a little bit tougher to deal with sometimes.

Making change in a school district, as well as any organization, if it is a fairly radical change from the way things have been done forever and ever. This takes

a lot of guts...I think that it is things like this that we get stuck in the old way of doing things, in the old paradigm, and you can really get beat up bad when you start going away from those paradigms. I think good leaders, good people who do have a lot of guts and aren't afraid to try a new thing would get a lot of things accomplished, but they can also get themselves in real trouble or get fired.

...anytime something is mandated some people don't like it and they start bucking it...

I recognized the people who were opposing it and it happened to be a very fundamental church here in town, a big church, a lot of people go to it and it is a pretty powerful group.

...we put a ban on handing out contraceptives here. That was the one thing that really really got people fired up.

I was very surprised. Just the fact that we were not trying to hide anything...you know we were totally up front with them in getting them involved. They really didn't not let us do very much.

When we first said we would not hand out condoms and give out some certain information the state didn't like it.

Well their main concerns were people that have the feeling if you tell kids about...if you hand out a condom then you're condoning premarital sex. You know it is the same argument that you hear nationally and everything else. Somehow or another if you don't tell the kids about it then they won't know about it.

Some church groups actually feel very strong that these kinds of things that are controversies are to disrupt the morals of the United States, but again if it is a legitimate concern of theirs then you have to deal with it. Had we not involved them directly, I have no doubts in my mind that they would have put so much pressure on us that it probably wouldn't have gone through.

With any controversial issue the goals of the different sides will be different. Most of the time those differences are based on not understanding each other sides.

I think the thing that characterizes it more than

anything is misunderstanding.

I think that what is a controversy today generally will change with time and I think that what changes is people maybe understand it, but even the social conditions can change...

...the policy you developed then would be totally different probable than a policy you would develop on exactly the same subject now simply because the environment we have is different. That can change from month to month, from year to year. So developing policy is a very fluid thing.

The beliefs and the morals of the society, the town, the school district that you might be representing totally will dictate whether it is a controversial issue or not.

...as I mentioned before, mistrust...if they think you are doing it for a reason other than what you are articulating to them it can be very controversial.

I think you move very very controversial people over towards the more non-controversial if your trust level is pretty high.

If nothing else they really do trust us. They may not like what I say, but they know what I say is the way it is. At least I am not playing politics, and I am not lying to them or telling them a half truth. They don't always like what I say, but I have people describe it as being able to go to the bank with it...

I think a non-controversial issue basically is one that doesn't cause controversy to happen, but generally they're of a nature that are kind of routine hum drum type things that are maybe happening in the district that are probable very important, but they're not eye-catching.

District Five: Large and Wealthy

Controversy to me would be something that I would not necessarily label pure conflict so let me give my definition. We can have opposing points of view and have controversy. Pure conflict is when we have the opposing points of view, but they are not compatible.

Pure conflict to me is where we have two opposing points of view and they're not compatible. In other

words, we have to choose one point of view over another point of view, and then we have to eliminate that other option based on those opposing points of view.

...now we'll deal with what I would call controversy all of the time. We'll have different points of view on an issue, but as long as we can work it out to have that be able to exist in our society- temperate, negotiate, make sure that we have reasonable options for people- then we don't face that choice where you have to put that sword in the sand and draw the line and you can step over it or you can't.

That [a drawing] became the issue with some parents because they said you can look at those and not see male female and you could then be communicating a message of homosexuality being a proper lifestyle.

I come back to my pure conflict definition that somebody would take issue with what we were doing and set up a no-compromise position. We either kind of have to do it dammit sort of approach that we're going to do this and it doesn't make any difference how much you come at this...we set up just kind of a no-win opposing forces situation then basically dig the fox holes and then everybody loses to some extent whether we continue to do or don't continue to do it.

...anytime you're talking about human sexuality issues and what should be taught about lifestyle and sexuality, you're talking about a fundamental religious orientation to human sexuality.

The other one I think was primarily how you play the abstinence issue versus the instruction in what we would call safer sex.

We don't want to be advocating a position in schools that would be considered morally incorrect in our community so we have to be very careful that our message is constantly one promoting this.

...I would call controversy a differing of opinion about that direction, those values that are being communicated in a statement of policy.

When you have a pure conflict that is potential or you have a choice of letting it get to the point that it is polarized or not dealing with it, and if you can identify that, a lot of time we just avoid it, literally we avoid it.

You spend a tremendous amount of time. One of the things that we do is spend a hell of a lot of time, but we have a community to me that is relatively demanding. If you didn't spend that kind of time, if you deal with it all in this very compact, compressed, charged kind of a thing rather than spreading it out so we can actually isolate the problems, and in the problem-solving sort of way I'd look for win-win solutions and work with people.

Controversy is a natural outcome of trying to work in a complex system and working with different values, but to have conflict that is negative in what I would call pure conflict that is something that we are trying to avoid.

...they are going to be pure conflict for some groups in the district and other groups are not going to give a rip about it at all.

...you've got degrees...it is until we get to the point that we have completely incompatible points of view, they won't coexist, I mean anything up to that point what I'm looking for is a way for those views to coexist, even though they are opposing views. If they can coexist. We can bring about some kind of a harmony to a win-win negotiated settlement or compromise and still move in the direction that you want to work in. When they literally can not coexist and you must make a choice and we're going to pick one over the other and they are not compatible that is what I would call that pure conflict stage and everything up to that I'd say is controversy. We can work at it. We can make that work to a degree. We can make a pure conflict work too, but you lose. When you step over that line your losses are much greater...

I would look at power in a different way than that because it depends on the clout...we could have a whole lot of people that took issue with something that don't have a really strong power base.

...when it is consistent with everyone's belief system you really don't have much controversy.

Policy is a direction of belief, a statement on the part of the board by in large. How that policy will be carried out, that is more of a managerial regulatory standard practice kind of an arena. We could have pure conflict in that arena in that we could just have someone say we are not going to do this or we refuse to do this or feel so strongly about it that we have an

issue about it...

...most policies have had some degrees of controversy because there are different values and perspectives, but they are not so far off center that you get very clearly opposing points of view...if you have those opposing points of view you can find a way to make it work for those people together even though the board is going to go one way or the other on it. They can coexist in that system.

The majority of the people in our community believe it [AIDS education] should be taught in the school district. Then it is a question of range, how much and then in what way. So we didn't have to fight that one.

It was obvious from the beginning that this was one that could have been a real problem. If we did not to well with it or something developed that was beyond our control we wanted to damage control it as much as possible, make sure we covered every base, and make sure we went over it very carefully.

...if your belief system of the community- and I say community in a larger sense, community of more the administrators, the teachers, all the people that are sitting there in the audience that are looking at policy when the board is trying to deal with a policy- when it is consistent with everyone's belief system you really don't have much controversy.

District Six: Small and Poor

At every meeting that they had they had a number of people there expressing their own views. There was a lot of tension and a lot of pressure on this committee whenever they met.

One hundred and twenty five people is a very large group...At any one time the largest in any controversial issue might have sixty people...there was only about forty-five that testified, that gave their opinions. In that process all forty-five were against the curriculum.

There is still some controversy, there will still be some controversy I would assume around the curriculum. Speakers are invited in and so forth. There are a group of parents who want to know who they are ahead of time and what their views are and so forth.

There are a lot of side issues brought up about the AIDS curriculum, such things as Planned Parenthood...this community won't have any of that at all. You don't teach kids anything other than you tell them that abstinence is the only way. That is permeated through our curriculum.. That is the only thing we can advocate, because they feel if you talk about issues such as safe sex and these kinds of things...there is no such thing as safe sex. In their view the kids should not be involved in sexual activity period. There is still that dilemma going on because we know kids are involved. The statistics nationally show that there is a tremendous number of kids...by the time they get out of high school have had some sort of sexual activity.

...well mainly is the sex education aspect of the issue. There is a group in this community who is very strong and it is associated with the Catholic Church, very strong Catholic Church background in this community that are strictly anti-abortion. They are very very staunch against sexual activity. It is just a real strong group which has their beliefs. I think at least we've had two or three controversial situations evolve the two years that I've been here. In each case, including budget time, the same group is present.

There were all kinds of statements made concerning what should and what should not be.

...it is more a matter of not having a number of facts, but starting with one fact and then having a number of people promote it.

That was a big issue, the state curriculum promoted homosexuality. Promoted the use of intravenous drugs, these types of things were brought up. That is what they harped on.

They were relying mostly on word of mouth from the other people that did look at the curriculum and used them as experts on it.

The state law and the state policy gives the districts the right to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused, but parents feel that is within their realm of making the decision.

...it is really the perception of the parents versus what actually is the law and the responsibility of school.

The parent is operating basically on gossip and hearsay...There is a lot of distortion and opinion that fits in on the parent's part.

...again it is the perception of the parent versus the reality of the situation.

...the parents and the people that are complaining don't have a lot of facts. They are operating again mostly on opinion.

I think controversy comes about probably in two respects- one is that the people who usually complain, making the complaints and so forth, don't have a lot of facts. They are operating on a lot of gossip and opinion. I think the other issue is because of the rights and the responsibility, the privacy act of both the staff and students, the school can not go out and give the community specific information on specific incidents. The lack of that information to the community kind of lends itself again to more gossip and opinion rather than trying to seek a solution to the controversy.

It built up to the point where the people wanted to have their say. Once they had their say most of them just went all about their business.

Now and then in that curriculum there may be an issue about which a parent feels is contrary to their religious belief...

...in the parent's mind the issue is not resolved. So it will continue.

A couple of them are still not resolved. They tend to come and go.

I think whenever controversy comes the situation tends to become more and more tense and you know people start to read things into it, people start to rue about it, you know they mull things over. They start looking for reasons and excuses and trying to blame things on something that happened five years ago...

There is a lot of opinion and a lot of gossip and a lot of hearsay and not a lot of actual facts...

The other factor that you get, we have a situation here where the local newspaper was printing all kinds of information about a particular case involving a student...Everything that they printed for the most

part was incorrect.

...I think there are issues that seem to permeate every district...

I think there are going to be some that will surprise you in particular situations...

...I would think so [all policies are potentially controversial] because it is not so much the policy it is how you apply it...The policy itself is just sitting there and then when you start to apply it that is when it becomes controversial.

Like I said it is a perception. It is something that people want to believe, forms a rumor pretty. In this community rumors travel real easy.

...teaching mathematics in schools is non-controversial. Everybody thinks that all kids ought to be able to have it as a prep. What becomes controversial is the way teachers do it...no one argues with the fact that language arts is important. All kids ought to know it. There are the mother, god, apple pie kinds of issues out there that are what I would call non-controversial.

Non-controversial...I guess if you go back to the beliefs of the neighborhood, of the community. When people feel that it is not affecting them...then I guess it is non-controversial.

I think our controversial situations evolve into people, teachers, board members, administrators reevaluating whether they want to be in that position or not. I think it takes its toll.

Well I think with the AIDS you're not boxed into a situation where money is the deciding factor.

District Seven: Large and Poor

To me a definition of what is controversial is when one or more people don't like it. Something becomes controversial and they come to the board of directors or commissioners meetings or what have you and raise holly heck about it, and you manage the issue and so forth.

I also have some premises that I feel on why things become controversial. Sometimes it is because of the

way we management or people choose to handle the topic in the first place.

Sometimes and my feeling is when you get people involved in the decision-making and you know they not only embrace the problem, the issue, but they are also a part of the solution. You have some ownership you see in that solution and a controversy isn't there, especially since your community is involved, that is the patrons you serve.

I've always had the premise that controversial doesn't have to be controversial all the time.

A lot of ignorance and silence. That is the greatest enemy or the greatest you know obstacle that you have...what adds to the issue becoming controversial is ignorance.

In my experience over the years in the public and the private sector in management is the more informed people are the less frightened they are, the less emotional they are, the less negative they are. The more informed people are the more appreciative they are, the more cooperative they are, the more understanding they are. I can go on and on about statistics. That doesn't mean that all people that are now informed agree, that is not what I am trying to say. I'm not trying to say it is a panacea and you know it is not. It diminishes the problem.

Ten would be negative in this case. It is very controversial. People are upset. They are mad. They are frustrated. There is a fight. There is a battle. There is controversy. OK?

Confusion, anger, fear, depends on which group you want to talk to, but I would say those kinds of things I've seen characterized in communities. They are different kinds of verbal statements that you look at- the administration or the board doesn't know what they're doing, the teachers have done it to us one more time, what are you doing this for, why don't I have something to say about it, why aren't you doing it my way the high way...you know those kinds of things. They characterize their frustrations and their fears and their concerns in a lot of different verbal behavior.

...the other thing on a ten would be lots of ink, a lot of press, a lot of media attention. That attention being kind of negative or misinformed and off tangent, adding to the problem of communication...

On a scale of one to ten, ten being high, meaning high in controversy and volatile and everything else, one would be at the other end of the totem pole. In other words, in the AIDS thing, we were probable about a two. There were some people who still objected, but the point of it is that what we anticipated and did turn out to be controversial in some school districts and it did not turn out to be in ours because I think we planned...there were individuals out there, but no organized groups against it.

...a level five...fifty percent of people like what you did and fifty percent don't. Do you win on that? No.

Now sometimes groups make political decisions even though the information, the research would say, all of the data that we have says this is the way we have to go, they may bend to some political group out there that they perceive as a powerful group. They need to appease them for whatever the reason might be-- she has got the legislators, and she has got the school board, and she has got the city council, and she has got the county commissioner. No one is really immune to that. She has got them.

Some on religious grounds. This topic should be taught in the home. It is the families business to do this...Sex education doesn't belong in the schools.

I said how would you like a permission slip. Would it help you if we dealt with this issue that anyone in this class could opt out if they wanted to and all parents could ask for permission, sign this permission slip? It is pretty tough for them to argue against that one. We'll have one person who tries to do that, and they speak for the whole world, but basically it quiets it down and it is a nice compromise. It ends up shutting them up because they want their kids out of it and it is pretty hard for them to argue against other parents having the right to say I want my kid in there.

There are a couple words such as fanatics who just feel that the schools shouldn't be doing X and they shouldn't be doing Y. They want to speak for all teachers and all kids and all parents in the whole wide world. They've got this message that everyone should do it their way. When it comes down to it it should be their way and not some other way. You never please them.

When one or more people don't like it and they make a big fuss about it.

...I say controversy is one or more people who don't like something because more than one person or one person in a democratic society like ours has a tremendous amount of power. They are enabled to do a lot of things that can either help or hinder. They can raise a big issue.

...one or more people who don't like something and decide to do something about it...or take action on their beliefs.

...means one or more people decide to behave in a certain way, and take some action on their beliefs against the organization that seems to be practicing something that they think that organization shouldn't be practicing.

This was resolved. It is done. It is over with. On the other hand the feelings are still there...The feelings last. There are some negative things about a controversy. People didn't get their way, and they still have their right, and they lost...Nobody likes to lose, especially when it is done in public.

To me controversy itself means upset people, a disrupted organization. We can't go about doing the business of whatever it is we do the business of in any organization when you have controversy...it says to me we're not communicating very well, and I need to do something about that.

Controversy means frustrated, angry, unhappy people, and sometimes for the right reasons and sometimes for the wrong reasons. Controversy means that you need to be vigilant. You need to look ahead. You need to plan.

You are going to have controversy when you have change...I think it is change as opposed to AIDS.

Well I have had people [board members] that no matter how many studies, research studies, surveys, parent surveys, whatever evidence you put in front of them, they simply won't accept the evidence. I have to approach things from a rational, objective point of view, and put information in front of people hoping that they will accept it in a rational, objective point of view, but there are some people whose biases are so great...Basically there isn't evidence that they will accept.

District Eight: Small and Wealthy

It didn't take long to discover that there was an element in the community of generally religious groups that didn't like the state curriculum. They felt it was too non-value oriented.

...when that became very apparent that this was a very adamant group and that they not only were locally oriented but had statewide and national support...

That met with positive responses from everyone except for some of our teachers who felt that the New York curriculum was a little bland, and not really addressing the issues the way they ought to be addressed, but after quite a bit of work with the teaching staff and an understanding that folks we're here to not only do what we think is right, but also primarily to represent the communities views as we educate kids. If the parent's prefer that this is the way we approach this particular subject that is the way we're going to do it.

Much of their concerns, the parent's concerns, are unfounded, but the only way that they are going to discover that is by being involved in what we are doing, and observing the materials, and seeing how you are going to present it, and discovering that it is not the horrible thing they might of thought it was.

A big pile of stuff they collected from the National Organization and now it is all formatted as to how local people are supposed to attack this whole thing...very organized indeed...all connected to anti-abortion efforts across the United States, anti-Planned Parenthood and all those kinds of things.

...the fact that sex education in schools shouldn't be taught because all it does is remove the inborn modesty and encourages kids to try.

Policies related to sex education are extremely controversial. Superintendents have been hired and fired on that very issue.

...by individual contact with the superintendent, by attendance at school board meeting where certain policies are being discussed, by letters to the editor regarding what is going on in this school district and around the nation that is leading us down the wrong path for our kids. Immediately indications that they want to influence the policy before it becomes a policy

so it comes out the way they want it to come out.

...the conservative elements in the community, and then eventually the entire group, as they pointed out what they thought was not representative of community standards which was a matter of out of context quotations and those kinds of things. Then that made it apparent that we needed to redo the whole thing. Usually if it is a common sense type of policy that makes sense to me and no one gets excited about it is just that we are putting it in writing, a fair type of policy, one that guarantees positive treatment of kids, and quality curriculum and education, and all those kinds of things. The kinds of things everyone agrees is right. There is no religious slant to it. There is no this could do harm to you. It is just like I say common sense stuff, not controversial.

APPENDIX E

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS ASSOCIATED WITH
CONTROVERSIAL POLICY: PRIMARY AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES,
AND GOALS AND OUTCOMES AS PERCEIVED
BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

APPENDIX E

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS ASSOCIATED WITH
CONTROVERSIAL POLICY: PRIMARY AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES,
AND GOALS AND OUTCOMES AS PERCEIVED
BY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

District One: Small and Wealthy

As an administrator at all levels and also in this district it has been my personal philosophy and the district has adopted or adapted to the ideas that we do a lot of things by committee. We like that approach. We even hire that way. We try to get as many people involved as we can and there are names for that kind of management style and stuff, but I won't get into that...but it works very nicely for us. We're small and it takes all of us together to make it work, and we all feel that way.

When we ended up we had a curriculum that we believed thoroughly is ours and like I told you it is the states with very few attachments but we really feel it is ours all the way through.

The first one being getting people involved OK. The second one is getting accurate information and getting that digested and feeling comfortable with it. Whereas I don't see how you can sell anything unless you first understand what it is you're going to sell and that you like what it is you're going to sell. We really became salesmen.

When we went out we were really going out to do our sales work. We really also were listening because we were changing our approach each time that someone had suggestions. We listened very carefully. We were good listeners.

So we used to do that in small group process and then come back in a large group. So, everybody felt like they could say what they felt was wrong, and be comfortable with it.

I just try to get all the information. Have it available for all parties, and again educate. I really

believe in that. When I'm in trouble and when I have a controversial issue it is because I haven't done the ground work ahead of time to get the information to all the people that needed it, and get them educated to it. It doesn't mean they're going to agree with the policy, it may still be controversial in quotes whatever that means, but they'll do it from an emotional standpoint. An emotional controversial issue really gets us nowhere, but if everybody has the facts and are working at it then we can usually satisfy a controversial issue that everybody...at least they finally get to the conclusion and we get it done and the policy is done and then active, but if we stay emotional we don't get anywhere.

...the overriding goal of course is to deliver this information to the students at the age appropriate age level and appropriate need. That was our major goal, and to try to get that information, and get it in usable form for our teachers so they didn't feel burdened by the intrusion of a new curriculum into their already packed curriculum and make them accept that.

District Two: Large and Wealthy

I think the manner in which the committee went about its work. They did it...they took their time and did it very carefully was also part of its success.

I think it is pretty much going about it the same way, but you may do some things slightly different. For example, you will make sure that notification has gone out whereas with most other cases you assume that the procedures are just going to work smoothly and you don't have to worry about it, but when you see that there is that potential as a superintendent you double check and you may even be involved in sitting down and talking to some community leaders rather than letting the notification fall into the normal channels of the assistant staff doing it.

...from the instruction component we involved the people who were going to have the personal investment...

Sometimes you lose in the sense of realizing that you did start with a bad idea. Your concept was not fully thought out or you didn't have all of the information and that this group or individual in fact represents this, despite the messenger, represents an opinion or

information that you have to include so you make that realization just as you try to sit objectively and see what is being said and what is being represented and you come to the conclusion that we have got to change our position on this. In fact, we have to incorporate what they are saying and in fact we would have to adopt it, drop where we started.

You do sense when that time has come to negotiate and if you are...the best position that you can be in when that happens is to show that you are now taking the initiative from them. You begin to represent their view in some of the revisions and some of the changes you are making rather than letting the community do that for you or letting for example the board who may be receiving political pressure start telling you we want those changes incorporated.

So sometimes when you are dealing with policy, you are dealing with policy revision, you can sit down as we do and we talk about how big of a change is this, and who is going to be affected, and what is the level of information we've got to give out to try to make people understand, that the change is not going to be misunderstood.

You do a lot of anticipating. I would say not some. We do a lot of anticipating.

District Three: Small and Poor

Then we brought that back to our entire staff, in-serviced our entire staff, took their opinions, their concerns, their comments and ran that back through a developmental process, brought it back again, refined it again, and we did that about four times.

...but I also have learned a long time ago that by taking a little more time and by being as open as you can possibly be takes a lot of the mystique out of this.

Anyone who reads the paper can go down and take a look at this. Putting it out there in a public agency. They don't have to go to school to get it. They could go down in quiet to the public library and look at it. They don't have to feel like somebody is taking their name down...

I think a lot of times the people, and one of the things that I worked very hard in this district to

overcome, are afraid to come face to face with the hierarchy of education of the city. People don't want to go face to face with the mayor. They don't want to go face the school superintendent. So what you do you make it easier for them...

...quite often a lot of people all they want to do is have you listen. They don't want you to do anything. They want somebody to know how they feel about an issue. They don't expect you to do anything about it they just want to make their voice heard.

Then as it came into our local district, our local people modified it a little bit more. That is what our board actually bought was one that came out of the state and was filtered through V.E.C. and filtered through our own people and basically fits this district.

I think the whole tact that you would take would be...in your more metropolitan, more affluent areas, I think you have to be a little more conscious of the level of understanding and acceptability of those people. I come out of an urban affluent district prior to coming here and I know that they see and understand things in a different way than they do here where it is kind of rough and tumble and a little bit of what I consider to be red neck community.

...my mode of operation is to get people involved who are going to have the right of implementation, and get them involved very very early, to make it open to anybody and everybody who has a question or concern about it, listen to them, carry it back, and if it is valid do something about it. I find that there is a lot less controversy in dealing with it in that manner.

We went through a stage of having public hearings. We had five public hearings in fact before we got to the point of the board addressing the fact that we were contemplating a school-based health clinic.

We asked them to get on this committee originally as a result of they didn't want anything to do with it. I went to them, each one, and said you know you can just say I didn't get my way and walk away, but how are you ever going to know if what we promised you...if we're living up to it or not? There is a way to do that and that is to get involved with this committee where you will have some guidance as to what this committee does. It will go along with some of your objections that you have to certain things and you will be in a position to

have a little more weight in decision-making.

...I think it is always necessary that you listen to what people are saying and then try to make them feel that you have listened to them.

...I have had some success at causing controversial issues to be less controversial is just by getting...being open to people to talk to, having the facts to explain to them about what it is, listening to them, taking care to listen to them so that I can in turn if they do have some good ideas use those ideas and show them that they did have an impact. By being open, that is something I have professed for years. There is nothing inside the school house walls that is secret so why not let people come in and see what we are doing.

...if you're open and sharing in all this stuff with the people, they don't think you have a hidden agenda. They don't think you're trying to pull a fast one on them. They understand and they go along with you.

You just have to I think be in tune with your community. You can't in my estimation you can't be the superintendent of a school district and run the schools and that is all you do. You've got to be in there running the schools, but you've also got to be involved in the community with community people, listening to the community.

...the first intention was to meet the state mandate. Secondly, I think was to take a look at it as a social problem as opposed to a finger pointing at homosexuality or promiscuity...

...that is my intent...to educate the community about our schools and our school system and make them more accepting about what we actually face.

...was to make it meaningful, to try to adapt it so it is meaningful to our kids in the community.

District Four: Large and Poor

I think that by involving people we find that does away with most controversy.

I think one of the things that we do in this district to try to keep things from getting controversial is to get both sides involved in the development of the

policy.

I think most controversial issues can be solved by just talking to the people and making them understand where you are coming from.

We constantly are involving people in all kinds of things around here so we're not doing it just on an emergency basis.

If you have a few people who really object to something or have very strong feelings on it generally if you give an opportunity to place their concern and really listen to them they're satisfied. You may not do what they want to do, but at least they feel like they have been listened to.

...we were not trying to hide anything...you know we were totally up front with them in getting them involved.

That is very key to this whole thing. In any kind of controversy, if you're up front with people, and you ask for their advice, and you use it then you usually start building a credibility level. That means that each time a controversial policy may come up you probably might have less opposition because people don't have in the back of their minds well here is another scheme coming up to fool us.

I try very hard not to hide anything from the press and I think that is a mistake that a lot of people make, is thinking you can hide stuff from the press. You can't, and you shouldn't be able to.

...I would say trust and understanding. You know your people can trust you but you also have to understand both sides of the issue. That is why I like to involve them. You know the best way to shut a critic up is to put them to work.

Trust and involvement. I think you have to have both of those.

Well I think the proof of the pudding always is what kind of instruction do you have you know, if you are talking about the instruction part of it, is it age appropriate...

Well the goal was to provide those kids with a lot of medical help that they weren't getting.

District Five: Large and Wealthy

...when we have people in our community that do not agree with a particular curriculum that we are teaching, but we work with it to a point with them so that they are in understanding of why we are doing it. We allow some options for kids to opt out of it if the family doesn't want it. We find a way to make those views, even though they are opposing, compatible in that we can still do what it is we want to do and we can make it work for us.

What we try to do when we set that up is avoid a no-win pure conflict situation- the school has one point of view, the board or whatever, the school district and the community or a segment of the community that we feel responsive to because we are responsive to our community has a completely opposite point of view and there is no compromise position...then we don't face that choice where you have to put that sword in the sand and draw the line and you can step over it or you can't.

We basically discuss it. We see if we can't work towards kind of a win-win situation.

We believe as a community that if they have to have that information to prevent a problem then they have to have that information, age-appropriately, such that if they are going to engage in sexual activity then they've got all that information. Now that kind of a discussion needs to take place and be understood by the community so you have a rationale for why you are approaching this a certain way, and the community has to buy those values.

We don't want to be advocating a position in schools that would be considered morally incorrect in our community so we have to be very careful that our message is constantly one promoting this...

...you can get different opinions to work together as long as we can find a way to avoid what I would call that pure conflict situation where one point of view is incompatible completely with another. Most of the time we work toward a kind of win-win perspective or we work at convincing one another that there is another way to look at this, and a better way to look at...and we look at the system as a whole, the whole district and what is good for the whole district. We have a value system that we believe in that we have worked hard to develop. One of the reasons that we have avoided a whole lot of

controversy is we spent four years building a value system that we agreed with that the school district has helped develop, and the community helped us develop. We have fundamental principles that we adhere to.

When you have a pure conflict that is potential or you have a choice of letting it get to the point that it is polarized or not dealing with it, and if you can identify that, a lot of time we just avoid it, literally we avoid it...In other words we maintain status quo rather than changing something such that it gets into that arena.

We try to set up a three or four step process that will allow information and then a hearing, and then a problem solving with the community, and try to get the best possible answers to the problems as we see it.

I mean we will listen to them, and we will try to incorporate what they say, and we will give them the reason why it won't work with the data and given information or we'll pick the right answer you know. We will be accountable for using what they have to offer and will spend the time with them to work it first because often times they don't have a sense of the whole system.

We've got to do our homework very thoroughly and very well.

I haven't stressed that you can't have them more involved in the process unless you give them good information.

...we spent the time to go through organizational development...

...the way you typically resolve pure conflict is to decide not to deal with it. You decide not to make it an issue. You find a way to back off the issue because if you make the choice you're in a lose-lose.

You've got to get people that good information and work at accurate, clear, and good information. You've got to give them a real voice in the process. That is three things. You've got to have a process that they can actually make a difference in. They have to have a voice. If they have a real voice, and they're listened to, and the process makes sense then the whole thing unfolds. It really did make sense, the problem solving conflict resolution process, and they had good information then they have the ability to influence

outcome. Most people will be reasonable and attempt to get what they can and look at the greater good being served rather than just digging in and saying it has to be this way and only this way.

The plumbing is already there [the routine policy implementation procedures]. You can run anything through the pipes.

The board adopts not just the policy, that is if we are going to have AIDS instruction, but the curriculum itself becomes something that the board has to approve also.

We involved the board on the committees. So what we did was we had a five member board and we put a board member on the committee. There is one board member at least that sits from beginning to end with it and other board members can drop in and out of those. Plus they go to hearings, the board members would go to the public hearings that we have set up to take testimony. All the committee would be there at the public hearings to share where they were and take public testimony about the appropriateness of it.

We try to keep our board up on those kinds of situations. We work like heck to make them look good and not set them up so that they have to make those kinds of decisions. For the most part, we work to make sure that they don't deal with many of those. It is impossible for me, so far in this district, to keep them out of those situations, but we definitely try not to get them into those situations where they must make that no-win choice.

District Six: Small and Poor

I think in most cases we again we follow our process and try to deal with those people directly involved as much as possible.

Well again the main thing was to try to keep statements in the papers and to the public that pointed out that the committee essentially was considering the following process. They were considering input and the public would have an opportunity to give input...

Now and then in that curriculum there may be an issue about which a parent feels is contrary to their religious belief or if a student has a serious emotional or there is some other good medical reason

then the parents have a right to ask their student not attend that.

Well I think the real part of it is to develop that policy so it is very understandable and clear cut as much as possible. If you have a good policy to deal with and you can understand it then I think what you do is you take the argument away from the person stirring up the controversy. You take away from them the opportunity to argue that this is not right. It is pretty well stated and you just can't argue with that.

...the curriculum we have meets the requirements of the mandates, but I'm not pleased with it. It is watered down...We don't deal with a lot of the other information that possibly students should know. Again we meet just the minimum requirements. I guess we'll survive with it. I think kids need more information than what we are able to give.

Their moral views are a little different...of course they kept mentioning the issue of students, what is best for students and so forth, but I don't think that was the underlying motive.

District Seven: Large and Poor

It was not a controversial issue. Probably the way we handled it...simply we had a committee of both teachers and parents. It was a discussed issue.

...my feeling is when you get people involved in the decision-making and you know they not only embrace the problem, the issue, but they are also a part of the solution. You have some ownership you see in that solution and a controversy isn't there...

I wanted a balanced committee because if you're really after the ownership the committee itself needs to have credibility in the community.

You manage that potential problem before it even becomes a problem.

Well one, that gets it all out on the table. People know that it is public. Two, you have a way of informing the public in this, communication, make sure the press is covering it, everything is out on the table, there is nothing underneath the table...we make a public thing out of it, an open forum...

...that [strategy] may vary with the issues...

...try to do some trend analysis yourself...what is happening in the community...find out what you really know and what is best information you have from around the country. That forms like a sculpture. It formulates what it is that your strategy is going to be...Then you take that information and say now what in our opinion..., and you get others to help you to characterize your community to the general public.

The idea is that you try to make decisions based on best research, best knowledge as opposed to what I determine to be cumulative ignorance.

You also get the feeling of people's level of education and how informed they are on the topic.

Get the public involved, and good communication.

Facts are objective and rational, and perceptions are emotional and irrational. Emotions are irrational. Well if reality equals facts plus perception because facts somehow should shape perception that is true. Then if you are absent of the facts then the people will only look for perceptions, perceptions being emotional and irrational.

We educated ourselves on other peoples' failures.

...you want everybody to win and you are trying to deal with a win-win situation as best you can...

...one is to obey the law and carry out the mandates as I understood those mandates...Goal number two...to move forward with an informed group of patrons. That plan that we devised, with rule number three, which gets at the other two goals, is to do it with their involvement.

The evidence that I accept that we were successful is that I do not have a controversial issue or I do not have a furor in my community over whatever this issue is that I am trying to implement...if it does happen on a scale of one to ten, ten being high, you know somewhere around three or some low number as opposed to an eight or a nine or a ten.

...we were very successful, but we went to school. We educated ourselves on other people's failures. We came up with a plan to try to make sure that didn't happen in our district...

District Eight: Small and Wealthy

Much of their concerns, the parent's concerns are unfounded, but the only way that they are going to discover that is by being involved in what we are doing, and observing the materials, and seeing how you are going to present it, and discovering that it is not the horrible thing that they might of thought it was.

What we ended up with was not a whole lot different than what we started with, but it went through a process so people understood it and weren't being told things that were pulled out of context by the group. It had been an analysis based on their particular beliefs and tried to get everybody to go along with those.

After listening to more of the community, people that we felt were level-headed and not tied to a national effort to destroy the educational program about AIDS or sex education or those kinds of things, we ended up with a product that I think met the needs of the district and also reflected the community standards. People felt good about that.

Most effective, I think was listening, and being willing to hear other points of view without saying you're wrong we're right and we're going to do it our way.

First of all you need to plan ahead, and anticipate.

If you are going to be involved in a controversial policy-making decision like I said first of all you need to anticipate that it is potentially controversial and if so how can we lessen the controversy by being open about it and making sure that everyone, all the constituents, and all of the publics that we need to deal with are aware of it, have an opportunity for input, and in that development that we addressed as much as possible what seems to be the overwhelming community standard, and not let individuals' standards or small groups of people control totally how that is going to come out.

Anything that I anticipate to be controversial that requires more than that [their routine approach] then I want to make sure that more than just the normal announcement that appears in the paper was posted in our building occurs, and that people are directly notified that the district is considering...

We wanted to have a good strong curriculum, but we also wanted it to reflect community standards as well.

What we ended up with was not a whole lot different than what we started with, but it went through a process so people understood it and weren't being told things that were pulled out of context by the group. It had been an analysis based on their particular beliefs...The curriculum we ended up with was not what the ultra-conservative group wanted us to have, but it was a curriculum that they accepted.

...we ended up with a product that I think met the needs of the district and also reflected the community standards. People felt good about that.

We need to be willing to take a stand in this is right and this is wrong without setting a strict you will go to hell if you do it this way religious type of approach, not a doctrinal approach.

APPENDIX F

QUOTES FROM THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS
REFLECTIVE OF THE MEANING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY
FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS |

APPENDIX F

QUOTES FROM THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS
REFLECTIVE OF THE MEANING OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICY
FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Please note that these comments from the study participants should be considered in combination with those in Appendix C, D, and E.

Anytime there is a controversy the superintendent doesn't have the luxury of passing the buck to somebody else (District Two: Large and Wealthy).

...it always helps if you can more or less lay the blame on somebody else...it takes a lot of guts to change a policy, especially one that really causes a lot of controversy if you don't have some kind of mandate or at least some really good research behind it to show that it is a good thing to do (District Four: Large and Poor).

My role is to be the major political mastermind of the district as well as the kind of educational leader or the statesmen educator kind of role...If we really got into problems then I'd have the responsibility of working with the politics of it, with the board and with the community. I'd also have the responsibility of making it stand up from the educational perspective what we were really trying to do (District Five: Large and Wealthy).

Well it depends on the personality of the superintendent. It varies from one individual to another. One, I try to be objective about it. That is easier said than done. Two, I have to continue to remind myself who I am and I don't want this issue to split my community. I don't want my faculties fighting with my parents, and my parents fighting with my faculties or the school board...part of your job is to be a leader, to persuade, to develop a vision and to try to move everybody in the right direction. That vision of what it is that you want to be in the 21st century or whatever, five years from now, it is a "we vision...I spend a lot of time trying to develop what the "we" vision is so hopefully, if there is a "we"

vision instead of a "me" vision then you have the ownership of your community, and some consensus building goes on with focus groups etc. you're going to have less controversy. So how do I feel when we have one...I want to resolve it. I want people to be informed and communicate with and feel that they are...So you're trying to do our consensus building in the organization and in the community that you represent. You find yourself in that role...trying to build consensus. Sometimes you're peace-keeper and sometimes you just have to say no. I mean it goes with the job. You're the risk-taker, and the buck stops on the desk and you need to move forward (District Seven: Large and Poor).

It took a lot of time and a lot of effort on my part personally (District One: Small and Wealthy).

I have to, from my standpoint, be encouraging PR wise to the public. I have to say we're doing a good job...but with the special proposition five and the state that we are in as far as education goes it is very hard to do. It is very difficult. It is very difficult to try to be positive when things are falling out around you (District One: Small and Wealthy).

Even though I may not be at the butt of the attack somebody in the district or something that happened in the district and so forth...the superintendent has to deal with that issue. That item can drain you energy and time (District Six: Small and Poor).

On a personal note sometimes, when you get a lot of these going on, even though like I said it is not pointing at you directly, you begin to wonder about the quality of life you have for yourself. You might want to put up with this or take a look at another profession (District Six: Small and Poor).

There are other issues I think when dealing with the controversy. No matter what you do there are always going to be some people who you know are never going to agree with you and therefore you more or less create some enemies (District Six: Small and Poor).

I don't think that in education we need to back off of saying this is morally correct or morally wrong. We don't need to take a strict religious point of view, but we need to I believe support the concept of family, and ethics, and values in school because we're becoming more and more the social entity that still does that. A lot of families aren't associated with church. A lot

of families aren't even associated as a family so kids rely on schools for whatever they're going to get out of...other than just facts. The tendency to just go to a factually oriented curriculum without ever saying this is right or wrong and you make the decision, that may be a mistake. We need to be willing to take a stand in this is right and this is wrong without setting a strict you will go to hell if you do it this way religious type of approach, not a doctrinal approach (District Eight: Small and Wealthy).

I had to provide all the leadership internally...be the liaison and the kind of peacemaker so to speak between the staff that was 100% in support of the state guide (District Eight: Small and Wealthy).

Luckily I have been in the business long enough to know that you have to be firm and flexible, and not just let folks just come in and at the first loud noise take over the direction that the policy is going and the curriculum is going (District Eight: Small and Wealthy)