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Andrews, Maxine Ramseur

REFLECTIONS ON A REALITY: THE DECLINE OF FEMALE
ADMINISTRATORS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Ed.D. 1985

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REFLECTIONS ON A REALITY:
THE DECLINE OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

by

Maxine Ramseur Andrews

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of The Requirements for the Degree
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Approved By


Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

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The number of female administrators in the public schools of North Carolina and the nation has significantly declined in the past fifty years. The purpose of this inquiry was to identify the major factors that have contributed to this problem.

Information for this descriptive study was gained from two sources: (a) a review of the available literature, and (b) direct dialogue with five administrative educational powerholders in the field.

The dialogues and the literature findings suggested that the reasons for the decline of women administrators are numerous and complex, and can be classified into two groups: reasons that relate to economic, political, or sociological factors, and reasons that grow out of internal or external causes. Overall, gender is seen as the pivotal point for all reasons.

Possible solutions for the problem are also presented and discussed.

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PREFACE

Embarking on a distant journey without sufficient motivation or knowledge of your destination is like jumping into a bottomless pit. In both cases, you attain no personal gratification, your efforts are useless, and your time is wasted. This is why I began this project by first considering the questions: "Why am I focusing on this area of study?", and "How is this topic personally relevant?"

My Personal View of the Problem

The problem of the decline of female administrators in the public schools of North Carolina and across this nation has been a major concern of mine for over ten years. The concern has grown, not only out of my own personal frustrations of not being considered for a position as an administrator; I also was bothered by the awareness that other prospective female administrators were in the same predicament. It seemed evident that our denial of jobs would eventually deplete female representation in educational administration.

My concern has been further intensified by the recent surge of interest in this topic among educational researchers, female educators, and women's advocacy groups. These groups have written books and magazine articles, performed surveys and opinion polls, and conducted workshops to call attention to

the growing decline of female administrators in education. Despite these advocacy efforts, the problem is not being addressed by the public nor the educational powerholders-- school board members, school committeemen, superintendents. Seats of power in the field of education are dominated by males who appear to be insensitive to this problem. Females are not being hired, and, consequently, the number of female administrators is declining. In my viewpoint, it is difficult to understand why these powerholders fail to utilize their group of credentialed females when administrative positions are vacated. Females could play vital roles in improving the quality of overall administrative programs. Females tend to use democratic leadership skills; they have instructional expertise based on long-term classroom experience, and they have a positive role modeling influence on students.

Because of the high percentage of newly hired women assistant principals, the lay public may mistakenly believe that the number of female administrators is steadily increasing. Ordinarily, an assistant principalship or administrative staff position would serve as an important step on the career ladder to the principalship and ultimately to the superintendency. However, contrary to popular notion, this has not been the case for women. Women have been placed in positions as assistant principals or in central office staff positions and have remained there. Within the past ten years, 25 of the 55 assistant principalships in my local school system

were held by women. Only four of these women have been promoted to principalships. Seemingly, placing women in supervisory positions or as assistant principals has been a stopgap measure to appease governmental civil rights officials or to placate some strong-willed aggressive women who might attempt actions against local boards of education.

Personal Relevance of the Problem

I am a credentialed female administrator! For over 25 years, I have evolved through the career ladder of education. I have held the positions of classroom teacher, school social worker, college administrator, and a quasi-administrative position of a curriculum supervisor. To become a practicing administrator, I acquired the standard credentials and engaged in professionally related activities to gain the necessary leadership experiences which are prerequisites to becoming an effective administrator. Despite the credentials, varied work experience, and leadership experience, my efforts to obtain an administrative position have proven to be futile. I have experienced frustrations, rejections, and victimizations emanating from a school system whose logo espouses equal educational opportunity for all and the well-worn phrase, "We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or creed."

The following describes my experiences. I have had a standard application for administrative positions on file in several administrative units for the past ten years. During

this period, I have received no invitations for job interviews outside of my local administrative unit. In my local unit, I have received four interviews for vacancies which have occurred. These vacancies were eventually filled with men who not only had less experience than I, but also lacked the required credentials for the positions. They were given a year after obtaining their principalships to obtain a Principal's Certificate. In the interviews with local committeemen, the questions asked of me had little to do with my ability to administer a school. The questions were sexist in their presentation and inferences. Examples were "How would your husband feel about your leaving home at night to answer a burglar alarm or being away from home a lot?", "Do you think you could handle disruptive seventh grade boys and girls?", "You look too young to be a principal." In most instances, the job vacancies were not even advertised. Instead, the "old boy" network was activated and potential men administrators were placed in vacancies as they occurred. Being a senior employee, I could readily perceive how the administrative checkerboard was set up and then played. Upon inquiring about the lack of promotion for these jobs, the responses ranged from "The committeemen wanted a man in the large school;" to "The community was not ready for a black female yet." Such comments were indicative of the double-bind predicament most black female administrators face; that is, you can lose on the basis of sex or race. The comments were also indicative of the mistaken beliefs administrators hold about the capabilities of

female administrators.

My personal experiences have not been unique. They typify what has happened to other women in my position in school systems throughout the state and nation. The statements make clear the value of investigating the status of female school administrators. As I consider my experiences, several questions came to mind: Are female administrators actually declining in number? If so, what are the factors contributing to this problem? Why does this problem exist in a nation in which human equity and civil rights are duly honored? What measures have been employed by the public or school powerholders to prevent or rectify this situation? How has this affected the productivity of the nation? How has the problem affected the worth of individuals? These questions served as a guide in my search for a methodology to explore the status of female educational administrators.

My Approach to the Problem. My approach to this inquiry was mainly a qualitative one. As Bikien (1980a) explained qualitative research methods are characterized by a sustained contact between the researcher and the subjects; they are built on direct experience, and they produce data that is descriptive of events, people, places, and conversations. My direct dialogues with educational practitioners fit with these criteria for qualitative research. It was felt that personal conversations would provide answers that more

traditional quantitative research methods do not uncover (Shakeshaft, 1981). In addition, this approach gives the inquiry a more direct, more human flavor. It is expected that educators like me can more readily apply their peers' comments to their personal occupational experiences. To complete the descriptive picture of the previous problem, empirical research data and writings on the issue were reviewed.

Desired outcomes of this research effort are (1) a better understanding of the status of female administrators in current educational systems; (2) identification of factors which cause and promote problems for female administrators, and (3) recommendations on how to bring about desired changes for women in educational administration. The findings should prove useful to several groups, including (1) individual women seeking administrative positions, (2) school officials committed to the establishment of equitable hiring practices, (3) women's advocacy groups involved in lobbying efforts, (4) professional educational organizations and associations, and (5) the lay public who are interested in restoring the principle of human equity to the American ethic. These groups have a collective interest in remedying any problems which may exist for female administrators.

CHAPTER I

The Problem

"The underutilization of American women continues to be the most tragic and senseless waste of this century."

Lyndon B. Johnson

Definition of the Problem

Public education is faced today with one of the most critical problems in its existence, the decline of female administrators. Why is this a critical issue for American public education? As stated in the report of the National Conference of Women (1976), the decline of women in the educational hierarchy not only is a major assault on educational effectiveness, but it also tarnishes the American ideal of equality of opportunity.

Women, with their greater emotional sensitivity, utilization of democratic methods of administration, and consciousness of women's issues are valuable resources in our school systems. Women administrators are of particular value in providing leadership in this age of educational revitalization with its emphasis on accountability, the promotion of "back to the basics," the utilization of the principles of time management in school administration, and the stressing of moral and patriotic values. Without the viable

presence of female administrators, the scope of these educational changes will be severely limited. Another deterrent to educational effectiveness is the reduction in available female role models for boys and girls. It is necessary for our children to gain awareness of the leadership abilities of women and what contributions women have made to education as effective leaders. Young girls need the opportunity to see women in leadership positions and to envision themselves as administrators. For boys, the paucity of female administrators entrenches the concept that women's proper roles are as followers rather than leaders. The lesson is clear; students who never see women in positions of leadership are not likely to believe that female aspirations should transcend traditional stereotypes (Neidig, 1976).

Furthermore, the rapid decline of female administrators in public education serves as an indictment against our belief system and promotes the concept of inequality. A predominant theme in American society for the past 20 years has been the provision of equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, creed, color, or sex. To achieve this goal, legislation (Titles VII, IX, Women's Educational Equity Act) has been enacted, executive policies have been provided, affirmative action programs have been implemented, and the banners of justice have been raised. The decline tarnishes the credibility and effectiveness of these efforts.

A review of the history of women's status in the field of education indicates the enormity of the problem. Between the

1920's and the 1930's, women established themselves as the predominant sex in the field of education. The wave of feminism between 1920 and 1930 accounted for a major increase in women's level of participation in educational administration (Gribskov, 1980; Kalvelage, 1978). Shortly, after this time, the upward trend began to change. This change was influenced significantly by the sociological, economic, and psychological factors which grew out of the Great Depression that swept the country during the 1930's. "A woman's place" was considered to be in the home implementing the socialized roles of nurturing and caretaking. For a woman to seek employment was considered inappropriate because the jobs were reserved for the men, who were considered to be the breadwinners of the family. An additional factor was the decline in the activities of feminist organizations, weakened by the Depression and made complacent by their success with women suffrage. Consequently, women were once again relegated to their traditional roles. During the same time period the schools and school districts became larger and more complex. Their expansion and reorganization initiated the increasing exclusion of women (Kalvelage, 1978). School boards, dominated by male businessmen, perceived that the schools should be operated as cottage industries. Businessmen's leadership qualifications were desired for administrators. Women's leadership styles, as well as their credentials were considered inappropriate for the bureaucratic school systems. During the early part of the 1940's, while the

men were on the battlefields of World War II, women returned to educational management (Gribskov, 1980), but this situation was short-lived. Men returning from the armed services after the war commenced to seek employment in the teaching profession. Gradually, men began to dominate, particularly, at the administrative level. The 1960's and the early 1970's were periods of social turmoil and disorder. Schools were faced with the problem of maintaining discipline and high morale. Communities, faced with these problems, perceived men as being more effective administrators in maintaining stable environments conducive to learning. Therefore, women were not hired as administrators.

Today, the percentage of female administrators at all levels of management is the lowest it has been in the history of the country (Fiske & Sandbank, 1982). Comparative data indicate the gravity of the problem. In 1928 for example, women held 55 percent of elementary principalships. Today, that number has decreased to 23 percent. Women also held a majority of secondary principalships during the 1920's as compared with a mere 3 percent today. Additionally, it is important to note percentages at the highest echelon of school administration, the superintendency. In 1928, 25 percent of county superintendents were women as compared to a mere 1 percent now (National Center for Education Statistics, 1979; National Institute of Education, 1980; Gribskov, 1980).

These statistics are particularly troublesome when one considers that 63 percent of all public school instructional personnel are female (McQuigg & Carlton, 1980), and females represent the majority of the elementary (85 percent) and secondary (50 percent) teachers. Only a small percentage of these numbers are chosen as administrators. Men hold 99 percent of the superintendent's positions, 97 percent of the secondary principalships, and 82 percent of the elementary principalships (Rosser, 1980; American Association of School Administrators, 1982).

Another revealing statistical viewpoint is the profile of female administrators in North Carolina. The number and proportion of female leaders in North Carolina is reflective of the national decline. Nancy Farmer (1984) noted that out of the 2,058 principals in North Carolina in 1981, 235 (11%) were women. Of the elementary principalships 14.2% were held by women and only 1.4% of secondary positions. Fifty-six out of 144 school districts had no women principals and a third more had only one woman. For the superintendency, there were only two women superintendents out of 144 positions.

In summary, the findings and discussion indicate dramatic downward shifts of the number and percentages of females in educational administration over the past 50 years. Persistence of the downward spiral, despite the enactment of legislation forbidding sex discrimination in hiring and promotion and the

demands for equality by women's rights groups was evident, as were the potentially devastating effects of the decline of female administrators on the equality of American education.

Neidig (1976) and Clement (1980) projected that the number of positions available in school administration for women will steadily decline. In this era of economic recession, fiscal difficulties, and student population decline, there have been drastic budget reductions, consolidation of facilities, and the elimination of many administrative positions to achieve economic austerity. These factors have increased the probability that the female administrator may become a legend in our own time (Neidig, 1976; Clement, 1980).

Purposes and Methods of Inquiry

The major purpose of this inquiry was to identify major factors that have contributed to the problem of declining female representation in educational administration. Identification of these significant contributing factors will clarify the nature and scope of the problem, making it possible to determine the extent to which this problem is amenable to change. Possible remedies and solutions emanating from the analysis of the problem will also be considered. This information can be used by groups such as school boards and personnel directors, aspiring women administrators, and women's caucus groups, in their respective hiring, job selection, and advocacy activities. The ultimate aim is the maintenance of

the female administrator as a viable entity in American education.

Information will be obtained from two sources: (1) available educational literature, and (2) direct dialogues with administrators (board members, superintendents, principals) of a large public school system in North Carolina. Previous inquiries have followed the former approach. Here, personalized perspectives will also be obtained. The literature will be critically reviewed to ascertain significant contributory factors identified by previous authors and their possible solutions for the problem. Personal perspectives gained in the dialogues will include the educators' revelations of their experiences, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. The presumption is that this direct subjective descriptive information will: (1) enhance and expand upon the meaning of objective literary viewpoints and (2) shed new light on factors maintaining and perpetuating the lower status of females in education (Bikien & Brannigan, 1980b).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE FINDINGS

The educational literature cites several misconceptions which have contributed to the decline of female administrators. The most popular notions can be conceptually divided into sociological and psychological factors. Sociological factors refer to sex-role stereotypes, career preparation and qualification trends, sex discrimination practices, and family responsibility requirements. Psychological factors relate to women's personality characteristics, aspiration levels, individual beliefs and attitudes and self image concepts (Shakeshaft, 1981). These predominant factors are listed and classified in Table 1. They will be evaluated here in terms of their adequacy for explaining the problem. Sources of input will be available research findings.

1. Women are less effective than men as leaders in our public schools.

Numerous studies have compared ratings of the job performance and leadership styles of men and women administrators. One of the initial leadership studies of women was the Florida Leadership Project (1952), which began at the University of Florida and involved high school and elementary principals (Grobman & Hines, 1956). The purpose of the study

TABLE 1

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS

Misconceptions	Sociological	Psychological
1. Women are less effective leaders than men in our public schools.	X	
2. The public perceives the male as the role mode for authority; therefore, female administrators have major problems in public schools.	X	X
3. Women's unique personality traits of tolerance, emotional sensitivity and compliance may be detrimental for the female administrator when confronted with stressful situations.	X	X
4. Women are less certified or qualified than men to be administrators; therefore, few female teachers aspire or apply for these positions.	X	X
5. Women compared to men have too many career breaks because of family related responsibilities, which inhibit their leadership behavior and organizational effectiveness.	X	
6. Male and female subordinates would rather work for male than female administrators.	X	X
7. Females are less effective than males in handling discipline problems.		X

was to discern what kind of behavior was indicative of a good principal and whether a man or a woman makes a better principal. Using a Principal's Behavior Check List, 80 principals were asked to choose their probable course of action for 86 situations. The research team classified the returned responses into three classifications of leadership behavior: "democratic," "authoritarian," or "laissez-faire". The interesting findings of the study were that women tended to use more democratic and more effective administrative practices than men. Elementary principals tended toward more democratic practices than high school principals.

Barter (1959) performed another related study at the University of Michigan. Among Barter's goals were to determine the proportion of women administrators in the school districts of various communities (2,000-over 100,000 in size), and how much the attitudes of the teachers contributed to the status of the female administrators. Barter's research revealed that women administrators were few in number, but according to the local districts' official policies, discrimination did not seem to be a factor. Women and men did differ in their views relative to women, but both groups felt women and men principals performed equally in job performance.

Hemphill, Griffiths, and Fredericksen's study (1962) provided yet another interesting set of data on women's leadership ability of elementary school administrators as

evaluated by teachers and superintendents. The study was conducted in school districts which were typical of school districts across the nation. The communities ranged in size from a population of 40,000 to 100,000. Two hundred thirty-two elementary principals were in the sample, 127 men and 95 women. The researchers asked the respondents to react to a complicated set of materials and projective techniques dealing with a hypothetical school. Principals in the study were given "in-baskets" filled with a variety of memos and letters dealing with routine or crisis situations. The reactions were calculated using a sophisticated scoring system. The results indicated that women were superior to men administrators in numerous ways: (a) women were more concerned with the objectives of teaching, project participation, and evaluation of learning; (b) they tended to be better in evaluating the performance of new teachers; and (c) they were more willing and able to provide instructional leadership in the schools.

Morsink (1970) examined the differences in the leadership behavior of male and female secondary school principals in Michigan. Using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, the findings can be best summarized in the following statement:

If the appropriate secondary school principal is defined as one who more often speaks and acts as representative of the group, is persuasive in argument, emphasizes production, maintains cordial relations with superiors, influences them, and strives for higher status, the findings favor women as secondary school principals. (Morsink, 1970, p. 84)

Van Meir (1973) studied 25 elementary principals, 15 male and 10 female in a random method of selection from schools in seven suburban school districts in Chicago, Illinois. He investigated what differences existed between male and female principals regarding the leadership behavior at the elementary level and whether there is justification to the claim that men are more suited as leaders than women in the elementary school principalship. Using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire, Form XII, an instrument developed by the Ohio State Leadership Studies, Van Meir sampled four respondents per leader on 12 hypothesized dimensions of leader behavior. The findings of the study supported the position that the leader behavior of female and male elementary principals, as perceived by teachers, provided little evidence as to the superiority or inferiority of one group over the other. And, although the two groups appeared to be more equal than unequal, the evidence tends to favor the behavior of the female principals.

Gross and Trask (1976) conducted a very extensive study with over 500 principals in 41 cities in the nation. The objectives of the study included questions on whether the sex of principals affected their job histories and career decision-making, their orientation toward and reaction to their work, the way they carried out their roles, and the functioning and productivity of their schools. The results indicated that women's performances as elementary school principals is

superior to men's. Another finding was that the caliber of performance of both pupils and teachers was on the average of a higher quality in schools with women administrators than in those administered by males. The female principal's image was one of a firm manager of teachers, oriented to the problems of classroom teaching and instructional program, interested in the pupils and their individual needs, and personally engaged by the task of administering the school.

In a more recent study in 1982 of the school leadership in Hawaii, Araki surveyed 3,081 teachers' perceptions of 226 public school principals' (71 percent male, 29 percent female) leadership behavior and organization output along with other variables. Regarding the question of sex differences in leadership, the study showed that women principals are viewed as more effective than men in several leadership characteristics: general leadership; supportive relationship; capacity to foster teamwork; familiarity with teachers' problems; the ability to help teachers "work smarter instead of harder"; and their competence and ability to promote high goals and standards.

In summary, the literature findings indicate that when rated by their superiors, colleagues, and subordinates, women's performance and leadership in administration is considered as being equal to or better than men's. The validity of the

perception of women as ineffective leaders is questionable (Van Meir, 1975).

2. The public perceives the male as the role-model for authority; therefore, female administrators have major problems in public schools.

The dominance of males in positions of leadership in educational institutions has established a precedent in our society that purports the male as a role-model for power and authority in our society. It is the public's perception that the schools of America should be administered by males. Consequently, female aspirants to leadership positions encounter difficulties in being hired by board members and superintendents.

While females may have difficulties in becoming hired or promoted, research studies of the few female administrators who currently administer the schools indicate that they do not encounter major job problems because of their gender (Bonny Baur, Personal Communication, May, 1984; Martha Jenkins, Personal Communication, May, 1984). Payne and Jackson, in a 1978 survey of minority women administrators, reported that female administrators got their highest level of acceptance from their subordinates. Hemphill et al. (1962) and Gross and Trask (1976) compared male and female principals on a variety of nonrelated variables. Gross and Trask relied on supervisors and teachers, ratings of the professional performance of their

principals in their studies. Hemphill et al. were able to make actual behavioral comparisons by involving subjects in simulated work tasks involving resolution of crises and general decision-making. The findings generally indicated that women surpassed men in their ability to work with teachers and the community. Women principals displayed greater respect for the dignity of the teachers in their schools, had closer communication with the teachers, maintained a more closely knit organization, were more effective at resolving conflicts with staff members, were better at reconciling conflicting demands, exercised stronger leadership, and generally exhibited more effective administrative techniques. Parents, it was found, looked more favorably on schools with women principals, were more involved in school affairs, and more often approved of the learning activities and outcomes in the schools headed by women (Fishel & Pottker, 1975; Tibbetts, 1980).

There also is abundant evidence of outstanding contributions by female administrators as role-models of authority, which challenges this perception. Several large public school districts, such as Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. have chosen female superintendents. It is significant to note that such leaders as Drs. Ruth Love, formerly of Chicago, and Floretta McKinzie of Washington, D.C. were selected primarily because of their demonstrated competence and problem-solving abilities at a time when these

school districts were beset with complex problems.

The problem women face is "loneliness at the top". Women administrators, being few in number, are a minority who encounter the same problems as other minorities. These problems include nonavailability of mentors to provide guidance, few peers with whom to share, and lack of emotional support. While these problems are major, they are not significant enough to influence the superior job performance of women administrators as indicated by the research on the performance of women leaders.

In a study conducted by Owens (1975), women principals in South Carolina were rated highly by supervisors and teachers on their ability to manage school finances, handle disciplinary problems, and run general operations within the building.

Fishel and Pottker (1975a) reported that in the behavioral studies which they reviewed, it is clearly indicated that in terms of ability to supervise, administer a school, and maintain good relations with students and parents, the few women who have been able to obtain administrative positions have performed as capably as if not more capably than their male counterparts. It was found that female leaders encouraged cooperative relationships among teachers more frequently than male administrators did.

Smith (1977) reported that a large number of Pennsylvania state school superintendents rated the

behavior of women principals as good or excellent in areas of building climate, problem-solving, human relations, and leadership characteristics.

3. Women's unique personality traits of tolerance, emotional sensitivity, and compliance may be detrimental for the female when confronted with stressful situations.

Recently, a mass of psychological literature has focused on the psychological differences between men and women. The differences have been found to affect job performance (Caplan, 1984; Goleman, 1984). Female researchers such as Carol Gilligan and Paula Caplan stress that the differences between the sexes are not negative factors. The negative view reflects a male bias (Goleman, 1984).

For example, the new research accepts the proposition that women tend to nurture and to mother. This nurturant quality is seen as giving women a different rather than a deficient outlook on life as compared to men. As stated by Caplan in the Fayetteville Times (1984), to be nurturant is considered mature, even laudable. Also, the juggling of multiple roles of wife, mother and professional is conceived positively. The juggling actually seems to lessen stress contrary to predictions that increased work would multiply stress in such women.

Specifically, in regard to the field of education, Grambs (1977) has suggested the personality traits of nurturance, tolerance, emotional sensitivity, and compliance could be advantageous in school administration. She suggested that if these traits were true of women in general, this would make more women school leaders more responsible to the reality dimensions of situations. Women would be less likely to respond immediately to a threat of aggression, but instead would look beyond the threat to the rationale behind the behavior. Women, being more sensitive to human factors in situations, would be more willing to compromise, to support cooperative efforts, to be patient while persons grow and mature in responsibility whether children or adults.

The public schools of today are faced with many kinds of stressful situations which have been engendered by political, sociological, and economic factors operating in the societal structure. Many of the citizens of the nation have an authoritarian view of how schools should be run and what kind of education should be provided for the youth. Such a stance invites collision with diverse parents. Therefore, a leader who is agile and adaptable, who is able to perceive compromise positions which can be satisfying to both parties can survive in this milieu. Women who possess these traits are well suited to fit the requirements for leadership in these public school systems (Grambs, 1976).

Smith's Pennsylvania study (1977) of women principals and assistant principals in the public schools of that state was conducted to discern whether women were satisfactory building principals. Out of 500 school districts contacted, only 126 had employed females as building administrators. The superintendents (85% response) who employed female administrators were requested to rate them with regard to 34 characteristics which included the areas of curriculum, building climate, human relations, leadership characteristics, and budget preparation. Significant to the discussion here is the high rating (good or excellent) given by the superintendents to the women in their integrity, enthusiasm, ability to handle stressful situations, ability to control emotions, and ability not to fear a loss of power in confrontations. Contrary to men, women in our society have been socialized to submit, adapt, accommodate, or compromise rather than to assert their position on issues. Women also openly express their emotions, often resorting to crying as a means of ventilation. These psychological traits of the feminine sex should not be construed as signs of weakness, immaturity or poor leadership skills, but rather as psychological differences from men. Both kinds are necessary ingredients for an effective leadership.

4. Women are less certified or qualified to be administrators; therefore, few female teachers apply or aspire for administrative positions.

Current research shows that women in great numbers are qualified to be school administrators. Historically, women have received the majority of undergraduate degrees in education: 74 percent in 1971 and 1972; 73 percent in 1975; and 72 percent in 1977. At the master's level, 52 percent in 1971; 58 percent in 1973; 62 percent in 1975; and 66 percent in 1977. At the doctoral level more than one third of the degrees (35 percent) in education were earned by women in 1977 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1979). Estler (1975) noted that within the pool of people to be promoted to administrative posts, the representation of men and women is equal. When the criterion is either the past performance of women or their formal qualifications in terms of the number of years in education, equal numbers of men and women are prepared for administrative posts. In general, women have more total school experience and more classroom teaching experience than their male counterparts. The average woman principal has had 15 years of teaching experience prior to an administrative appointment compared to about 5 years for the average male principal (Estler, 1975; Gross & Trask, 1976; Paddock, 1978). Extensive experience as a teacher is clearly a valuable qualification for an administrative position. It adds to the administrator's understanding of teacher's responsibilities, needs, and concerns.

Research further indicates women's high aspirations for leadership positions. While only 8 percent of the student

population in educational administration programs affiliated with the University Council for Educational Administration was female in the late 1960's (Cirincione-Coles, 1975), degree counts for 1978 show that 39 percent of the master's and 25 percent of the doctoral degrees in educational administration were earned by women (National Center for Education Statistics, 1979). Picker's study (1980) of career aspirations revealed higher career aspirations of female administrators when compared with men. In general, females, in contrasted to men, aspired beyond the position of principal as their ultimate career goal. Fifty percent of the male participants in the study did not aspire to positions beyond their current status.

Barnes (1976) reported on the question of certification. Regarding the number of qualified and certified persons within the Los Angeles School District, the second largest in the United States, she stated,

If the total number of administrators assigned were to reflect the ratio of males and females in the certificated service, the number of women administrators would increase by 520. If the total number of administrators assigned were to reflect the district-wide ratio of males and females meeting degree and credential requirements for administration, the number of women administrators would increase by 181. The number of women in elementary school administration would increase by 73 positions, in secondary school administration by 23, and in central and area offices by 85." (p. 93)

The evidence suggests that criteria other than certification, competence, and qualifications are applied in the selection process of educational administrators. In a study on this process, sex was the only significant factor

among age, type of position, length of experience, and size of school district. The study revealed that sex had no valid correlation with the job qualifications for hiring (National Project on Women in Education, 1978).

The research on women's qualifications and aspirations for positions in administrative leadership indicates women's competency and proficiency as gained through advanced training and on-the-job experience. Factors of sex discrimination, in hiring and promotion, have contributed to low acquisitions of available jobs. As stated by several authors (Owens, 1975; Mertz, Grossnickle and Tutcher, 1980; Lyman & Speizer, 1980; McQuigg & Carlton, 1980), women are not encouraged or placed in career paths to aspire to leadership positions. There is a network consisting of an informal web of contacts that administrators use to recommend people for jobs and to promote themselves and their friends (Taylor, 1971; Rosser, 1980). Women are not encouraged to apply for leadership positions because of their lack of inclusion in this "old boy" network.

5. Women compared to men have too many career breaks because of family-related responsibilities which inhibit their leadership behavior and organization effectiveness.

This phenomenon may have had a degree of validity in the past, but presently, statutes and employment policies have been liberalized, lessening the amount of time mandated for a

working mother to be absent on maternity leave. The National Education Association reports that career breaks among teachers, for example, are no longer typical. Women are spending far less time at home child-rearing before to returning to their respective employment after childbirth. For the last ten years, the number of teachers initiating one or more career breaks has declined from over fifty percent to roughly thirty-three percent (NEA, 1980).

Career breaks of childbirth and rearing are a fact of life (Clement, DiBella, Eckstrom, Tobras, Bartol & Alban, 1977). Men also have career interruptions for business or the military. However, these career breaks are considered by the public as increasing men's expertise for management positions, whereas women's management of the home and family is not comparable (Knezevich, 1971).

In North Carolina, of the 234 female state-supported principals surveyed, 110 or nearly half the population had children at home during their first year as principal. The majority did not believe that having had children had slowed down their move into administration. A little over 44 percent of this population had had one career interruption as a teacher and 2.7 percent had interrupted their career while serving as principal. The reasons most frequently cited were maternity leave and child-care (Farmer, 1981).

In addition to a study of job mobility, which indicates that men change jobs more frequently than women, the Annual

Public Health Service survey reports that there exists no significant sex-related difference in time loss rates from all causes, including childbirth, pregnancy, and illness (McQuigg, Carlton, 1980).

6. Male and female subordinates like working less for female than male administrators.

Most male and female teachers, who have expressed the view that they did not like working for female administrators, have never been supervised by a female. This view is typically based on assumed differences between female and male characteristics. Female principals have been depicted as tending to be more emotional, more petty, more evasive, and less decisive than male administrators (Gross & Trask, 1976). People want to work for an employer who has power. Since women are currently underrepresented in school administration and are seen only as "tokens," bosses are usually men. People, therefore, say that they would prefer men as bosses rather than women.

Research findings regarding this belief differ between industry and education. According to Kanter (1977), in a 1965 survey of 1,000 male and 900 female executives, among Harvard Business Review readers, over two-thirds of the men and nearly one-fifth of the women reported that they themselves would not feel comfortable working for a woman. Very few of either sex thought that men felt comfortable working for a woman (9 percent of the men and 15 percent of the women) (Kanter,

1977)). In contrast, the findings in educational management (Barter, 1959; Zimmerman, 1971) maintained that the majority of women and men teachers favored working under women principals. Men who had experienced teaching under women principals held a more positive view toward women principals than those who had not. Zimmerman's (1971) findings were consistent with Barter's. She found that teachers as a group were more favorably disposed toward female administrators. Attitudes tended to be more positive when both male and female teachers had experienced working for female administrators.

Finally, a 1975 Gallup Poll showed that over half the adults surveyed do not care whether a school principal is male or female. Identifying factors associated with favorable attitudes toward women administrators, Stockard (1979) revealed that urbanization and increased education among the public are strongly associated with favorable attitudes toward female administrators.

7. Females are less effective than males in handling discipline problems.

Women are often denied jobs in educational administration strictly on the basis of the power-holders' perceptions of their ability to maintain order among students or maintain discipline. Discipline is considered to be the nation's number-one problem in the schools as evidenced by the findings of the Gallup Polls for the past ten years. Seemingly, the concept of brute strength or physical prowess is

a prime prerequisite for the maintenance of discipline in the schools.

In general, men are physically stronger than women. Physical prowess, however, is not an indicator of one's ability to apply disciplinary procedures. Women may employ a different style of discipline than men because of their socialized roles of nurturing and caretaking. Gender as a determinant of effectiveness is irrelevant in the application of the disciplinary process. Research reports on discipline indicate that parents approve of women principals' disciplinary procedures more often than they do of men principals' procedures (Grobman & Hines, 1956; Fishel & Pottker, 1975b; Tibbetts, 1980). Gross and Trask (1976) corroborated the other studies and stated that:

the most difficult schools, those with students from lower socio-economic classes, would be better off with female than male principals, though the latter are perceived as being needed because the schools are so difficult. (cited in Grambs, 1976, p. 297).

Ratliff (1979, 1980) maintained that although the approach to discipline problems is often different between female and male professionals, the results are usually about the same. However, the general approaches which are characteristic of women administrators are more compatible with successful theories and practices of contemporary experts.

The review has indicated that the major reasons cited in Table 1 as accounting for the decline of female administrators are unsubstantiated. A number of authors have also used the

term "myth" to designate these misperceptions (Combs, 1979; Fiske & Sandbank, 1982; Lovelady-Dawson, 1980; Mertz, Grossnickle & Tutcher, 1980; Schmuck, Charters & Carlson, 1981; 1981). A proposition made by Combs warrants exploration. He stated:

A myth is defined as a widely held belief that is not true. But people behave in terms of their beliefs and the damage done to human thought and action by the myths people hold is incalculable. Myths are major factors behind inefficiency of institutions, breakdowns in communication, and failures to cope with many problems. In educational thinking and practice, they create a continuous barrier to innovation and change. (p. 1)

It is suggested that the belief in mistaken notions about the causes for the decline of female administrators is a major reason for the problem. Educational powerholders may often use the myths as barriers to discourage female employment. Information gained in dialogues with true life educators is expected to enhance understanding of the changing impact of the myths.

CHAPTER III

Dialogues with the Educational Powerholders

A computerized listing of all administrators in a large educational administrative unit in southeastern North Carolina was scrutinized for selection of participants in this investigation. The search was for administrators who (1) had more than five years of administrative experience, (2) were willing to engage in "gut-level" discussions about the problem and (3) had expressed concern about the future of education.

Five people were selected, who hold the positions of superintendent, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, and chairman of the board of education. The group was comprised of four males and one female, ranging in ages from 40 to 60. All are married, Protestant, Democrats, and have children. Two members are black and three are white. All have been employed or connected with the school system for over ten years. Most helpful for present purposes are their experiences, longevity in positions and commitment to high quality education.

The inquiry consisted of two phases. First, a preliminary discussion was held with each person to present an overview of the problem area and to observe and interpret their reactions to the problem. The question presented to them was, "Why is the number of female administrators in the public school systems

declining?" The second phase consisted of a return visit in which the participants were engaged in more in-depth discussions about this problem. Two sessions were necessary to establish trust and rapport with the participants. Initial problems of guardedness, indifference, and formality which may have invalidated the findings were absent in later dialogues.

To maintain the anonymity of the participants, fictitious names have been used in the following descriptions and discussions of their views.

Mrs. Penny, The Champion of Female Administrators

Mrs. Penny is a 40-year old vocational educational supervisor at a community college. She holds the unique position of having been the first female member and the first female chairperson of the school system's five-member school board. Few women across the nation have been successful in being elected to a leadership position on a school board. She did not gain her position easily. She campaigned diligently, using a network of women caucus groups to get out the vote.

Mrs. Penny's experiences as a college supervisor, board member, and chairperson allowed her to readily identify with the plight of women in educational administration. She indicated that in her professional roles, she has personally encountered many episodes of bias and discrimination. These incidents led her to sometimes feel that her efforts were useless and hopeless. However, she has persisted, motivated by her belief that "one person can make a difference" in any

situation "if this one person has the courage, conviction and desire to achieve goals." She described herself as the one person who tried to make the difference in her social and educational activities.

During her tenure on the school board, Mrs. Penny has championed the cause of female administrators in the school system. Noting that only one female was principal among fifty or so principals, she encouraged her fellow board members to rectify the inequitable situation by hiring and promoting six women to principalships during her first three years on the board. She further stressed the enactment of Affirmative Action plans to establish a trend for the future employment of women assistant or associate superintendents. Unfortunately, this powerful voice on the school board has been lost. Mrs. Penny was defeated by a male in her second bid for the school board in the last election. Women in the school system have lost a true champion and a fighter for sexual equity.

Mrs. Penny summarized her beliefs with the statement, "Women are declining in administration because they are not being hired by male dominated school boards and superintendencies." She cited the following factors as being the primary causes for the failure of these two groups to employ females: the lack of females on school boards, the reduction in the number of available administrative positions, the public's historic perception about women's place and their role in society, and the inability of women to organize

themselves into a functioning group to promote women's causes.

Mrs. Penny felt that a woman's voice on school boards and on local school committees is necessary if females are to be hired as school administrators. Women occupying these positions can serve as catalysts in influencing male-dominated boards to hire women as administrators. She stated, "I don't believe women will be hired for administrative positions until more women are influenced to make the decision to serve on school boards." Mrs. Penny believes that the majority of the nation's school board members are men and they will not hire women as administrators because of the belief that positions of power should be in the hands of males. These men think that women's places are in the home, not in leadership positions.

Commenting on the percentage of women administrators presently in her school system, she referred to the fact that six women had been appointed to elementary principalships within the last three years. She stated that this could be designated as "tokenism". However, she feels that the concept of "tokenism" does not infer inferiority but rather indicates the prevailing sentiment among the predominately white school boards to placate women and to fulfill federal or state legislature requirements by appointing a few token women where previously there was one or none. Mrs. Penny expressed the firm belief that these appointed women were well qualified and were effective leaders in public relations, faculty-staff relationships, school organizations, and discipline. Mrs.

Penny further noted that all of the recent female appointees were placed in elementary school principalships. She indicated that the male school board members felt women were more effective leaders at the elementary level and the general public would more readily accept them there.

The prospect for the increase in the number and proportion of women administrators is dismal, according to Mrs. Penny. In her view, there will be fewer administrative jobs available in the future because of (1) school mergers which cause a reduction in the number of administrators needed to run the system; (2) the failure of veteran administrators to retire because of recent increases in professional salaries and extension of the mandatory retirement age; and (3) the increased pressure on school board members by the public to hire more males from the huge pool of qualified male applicants. Certified male administrators have grown impatient with school boards' efforts to develop sexual equity programs. They, according to Mrs. Penny, have become very vocal and have expressed little empathy for the plight of female administrators. They have begun to exert pressure on school board members to be hired.

Mrs. Penny further stressed that females are not being hired as administrators because of the public's perception of women's proper places in the school. The public expects schools to be headed by men. Women are expected to maintain the role of teachers in the classroom. This perception of women's

place has existed for a long time. It is difficult for people to believe that sex does not make a difference in the effective operation of schools. Mrs. Penny asserted that this prevailing attitude must change, but she feels it will not occur quickly. Since such perceptions originate with pupils, she suggested that we must influence youngsters to perceive women as being as qualified and as capable as men in providing leadership for schools. This can be accomplished by hiring women administrators at all levels in the school system. Positive females are needed as role-models for boys and girls who are forming ideas about the role of women and men in the workplace.

Reflecting more on the public's perception of female principals as leaders in these schools, she stated that parents have given many favorable comments. Most parents are pleasantly surprised when a female replaces a male as principal. Such comments are made: "I didn't know that she could operate the school so effectively," and "I just enjoy being a part of the school family at Mrs. X's school." Mrs. Penny stated that usually female principals go by the book more in adhering to the rules and regulations. They appear to be more in tune to the "do's and don'ts" of administration. She considered this to be one of the strengths of women administrators.

To be hired as administrators, females should not forget their feminine qualities of tolerance, nurturance, and non-

aggression, according to Mrs. Penny. Male-dominated boards tend to look for these qualities in females when they are considering them for employment. She described an incident where the failure to follow this axiom resulted in the non-hiring of a female as an assistant superintendent. The school board was considering employing a female to replace a male in that position. The board had reached the point in the hiring process of discussing the salary for the job. The female applicant was offered a salary lower than the one that the male in that position had previously received. The rationale provided for the discrimination was that she had no experience in the system, whereas the male had been tenured in the system. Upon learning of this, she demanded the same salary and would not change her stance. The board was turned off by her apparent greed and lack of professionalism. As the only female on the board, Mrs. Penny voiced the opinion that it was not greed but an act of negotiation. This act, nevertheless, by a woman, was frowned upon by the men on the board. If this same act had been committed by a man, it would have been acceptable as a masculine quality to negotiate about salary. Women should not have to lose their personal traits as human beings to secure a job in which they are both qualified and certified. Realistically, women might have to learn to play by the rules of the game which have been developed by males if they are to make inroads into educational administration.

Decision-making should be left to men, according to one of Mrs. Penny's fellow board members. She related an incident about her personal relationships on the board. There was a period of time during her first few months as chairperson of the board, where she encountered several dilemmas which required critical evaluative judgments and decision-making. To relieve her frustrations, she shared some of these laments with one of the board colleagues about the difficulties she was incurring in trying to reach recommendations and decisions that would avoid public outcry and upheavals. The co-worker replied, "Decision-making should be left to men. School administration is a man's world. If you are going to play in a man's world, you are going to have to act like a man and go ahead and make decisions without worrying about so many trivialities." She retorted to him, "Who says being a member of the board of education is being in a man's world! It is anybody's territory who wants to get into it!" She stated that this perception is one which all women administrators have to face daily because of their minority position. The public perceives women as being out of their places when they have been elected or employed in a field which is male-dominated.

In Mrs. Penny's final analysis of the causes for women's decline in public school administration, she posited the view that women will have to take their share of the blame for the decline. She cited several reasons for this view: women's negative attitudes and perceptions about other women's

abilities to be effective school leaders, and their inability to "stick together" as a consciousness-raising group to effect change in the public's misperceptions about women administrators. Traditionally, men as a group have looked out for each other in finding jobs for each other. She has often overheard men saying to each other, "If you help me, I will help you." Men are willing to serve as mentors for each other. Women usually do not serve as mentors for each other because they are jealous and envious of each other's positions. Since there are so few positions available to women, they are too busy tooting their own horns to find the time to assist one another. In her opinion, it is a sad state of affairs when professionals fail to foster mentor relationships. As professionals, women should be interested in the welfare, growth, and development of other professionals. She lamented her recent failure to be elected for another term on the school board. In her county, there are more registered women voters than there are men, yet women failed to vote as a block to continue her tenure on the board. She suggested that women must put women in positions of power and decision-making to secure women's equitable stance in every avenue of the social and economic life. Women's perception of their own leadership abilities must change; until then, the world's perception of women will not change.

Mrs. Penny's reflections on the problem of the decline of women administrators provided an overview of the various

psychological and sociological factors which have caused the continual maintenance of misperceptions about women administrators. Since Mrs. Penny is a college administrator and an elected minority school official, she has been placed in a double-bind situation to experience the reality of the misconceptions about women's ability to serve in leadership positions. From this position, she has been able to determine what the special problems of female administrators are and the extent of these problems. She also made suggestions for their amelioration.

According to Mrs. Penny's perceptions, the causes of the decline of women administrators are sexual discriminatory practices in hiring and promotions, the lack of an established networking system, and the entrenchment of the women's-place attitude among the public. Her suggestions for amelioration included (1) electing women to positions with power on school boards and as superintendents in order that these voices can influence male-dominated boards to hire women; (2) providing role-models for students to promote women's images as leaders in the schools; (3) revising women's negative attitudes about themselves and others; (4) establishing a system of networking or mentorships to encourage women aspirants to become administrators; and (5) attacking demonstratively, through organized group actions and public media, the negative perceptions about women's decline in the public schools.

Mrs. Penny's reflections provided an in-depth perception of the problem. The truth and knowledge shared through her experiences as a school board member and as its chairman have provided an illuminated view for the causes of the decline of female public school administrators.

Dr. Hightower, The Humanitarian

Dr. Hightower, affectionately known as "Dr. H." among his professional colleagues, is regarded as a bastion of humanitarianism in the school system and in the local community. As the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction at the elementary and secondary levels for the past ten years, his experience with women teachers, supervisors, directors, and principals has been extensive. Currently, he serves as the chairman of a state accreditation association and is officer on its regional board. He is an intellectual scholar, who speaks with much confidence, authority, and enthusiasm. He has been a frequent speaker at many state and national functions and is recognized as a very effective and capable administrator.

In the local school system, his genuine interest and regard for the health and welfare of his colleagues are highly noted. Wherever he goes, there is always a warm smile, a sturdy handshake, and a strong embrace for the females. In matters of conflict and controversy, he is an intent listener and questioner, hears both sides, and appears to be objective

in his deliberations and analyses of the problems. Remediation and solutions for the problems are rendered in just and humane ways. The teaching populace always state that Dr. H. will treat you fair and square in all matters pro and con.

In his personal life, Dr. H. is married to a working mother and is the father of four children. Two of the children are in college, while the others are in elementary and secondary schools. He is active in the PTA as an officer, in the Boy Scouts and a symphony group, and also serves as a lay minister.

Dr. Hightower expressed the view that the decline of female administrators was due to multidimensional factors - political, sociological, psychological, and economic issues operating in our society. He began by focusing on faults of educational systems. He stated that traditionally, education has led the way in the implementation of new laws which have so dramatically influenced our lifestyles. However, education has been slow to respond to sexual equity in the workplace. In order to circumvent legislation and the loss of financial support, educational institutions have played the game of tokenism or have written elaborate Affirmative Action plans which purported to demonstrate that the problem had been carefully considered and addressed. Such efforts of tokenism have served as the major stumbling blocks for women's advancement in education.

He centered the sociological and psychological dimensions of the problem upon the public's perception of women's effectiveness as an administrator, the role conflict of women as administrators and as homemakers, and the changing job description of administrators in society today. Women administrators, according to Dr. H., are very effective in the schools at all levels. At the elementary level, parents view women principals as being effective because typically they provide for the students the same kind of caring, mothering, and nurturing that the parents provide for their children. Parents are quick to sense these characteristics in female principals; therefore, they feel comfortable and satisfied about the abilities and effectiveness of women. Recognition of these traits, according to Dr. H., should not be construed as sexist or biased but as an expression of the reality of the situation. At the secondary level, the perception of women as administrators is vastly different than at the elementary level. The public perceives the secondary principal as being a man. Women are perceived to be out of their place in that role. Because of this belief, a faulty generalization has arisen in our society relative to women's abilities as effective administrators. The belief is that due to their physiological and psychological endowments, women are unable to administer at the secondary level. They are considered unable to handle disruptive, violent situations in secondary schools

and unable to implement effective disciplinary procedures. This prevailing notion embellishes the view that an effective administrator is one who can step into the middle of a melé and curb it instantaneously. An analogy most frequently offered by the lay public to give credence to this generalization suggests that a fist fight between two second graders is less threatening and demanding of a woman principal than a fist fight between two husky 16-year-olds. The public believes that a woman could handle the former but not the latter.

Dr. H. made the observation that some local boards of education have used the above generalization as a method of protecting women from such experiences and therefore will not hire them as secondary principals. This perception, in reality, has little to do with women's competency as decision makers or their ability to organize and administer an effective school. Handling discipline problems is just one minute responsibility of a principal, and usually this responsibility can be delegated to an assistant principal, who is often a male. Principals only get involved in discipline cases in which there are extenuating circumstances. Juxtapose the situation of women in law enforcement agencies with women in educational administration. Women police, for example, are constantly exposed to violence and society increasingly is accepting women law enforcers as a norm. Education needs to look at the law enforcement model and make the rational transfer to the belief that the prevailing concept of

of protecting women against violence in schools is outmoded and is also without valid justification.

Dr. H. stated that the desire to protect women from violence in schools and the subsequent need to have men as administrators may have stemmed from premises operating within the homes. At the secondary level, parents have expressed both overtly and subtly their opinions concerning their children's educational experiences at school. Parents of these older youngsters have stated that their children need less mothering, caring, and nurturing and have pressed for more experiences that will motivate the students toward more freedom, independence, and decision-making skills and responsibilities. Parents expect and demand from secondary principals the traits of directness, forcefulness, and authoritativeness as indicators of an efficient and effective administrator. In Dr. H.'s opinion, women do not typically exhibit these traits as administrators. Nevertheless, in those secondary schools where women are principals, the schools are effectively organized and administered with the principals exhibiting traits of tolerance, nurturing, indirectness, and democratic procedures. Parents in those schools have expressed amazement and pride in success of these schools.

In summarizing women's ability to organize and be effective administrators, Dr. H. stated that as to basic

administrative aptitude, knowledge of curriculum, and knowledge of child growth and development, women are capable of doing this at either level. Women who can organize an efficient and effective school at the elementary level can also organize one at the secondary level. He said that within his 30 years of experience, this has repeatedly been done in many places in the nation.

Dr. Hightower views the issue of social role conflict between women as administrators and women as homemakers as one which continues to be a barrier for women being hired or promoted to administrative positions. In his perception, it is the belief of many of the powerholders in administration that women do not aspire or want to be administrators; female educators tend to be happy with an eight-to-five job with no responsibilities after the school day; and women with home responsibilities and the care of children tend to shy away from decision-making responsibilities. Dr. H. also made the following observation regarding the issue. In the principalships and at the central office level, an inordinate amount of time is required to attend various public relations functions, making appearances at sporting events, and participating in civic and social functions. Some women can make the adjustments to accommodate these responsibilities, but most of the female educators, especially those at the secondary level, are single. Whether this is justified or not, issues of availability and ability to accommodate are considered by board

members and superintendents when they consider applicants for the job. Legally, questions which are sexist in overtone and purpose are barred in interviews with perspective applicants; however, the information presented in the vita that might suggest family responsibilities, and child caring is carefully considered in evaluating the applicants' qualifications for the job. Boards of education make it explicitly clear that a successful superintendent must devote himself or herself full time to the job.

Dr. H. noted that women in educational administration have been placed in subordinate assistant principalship positions. In the last decade, in response to passage of civil rights laws (Title VI and Title IX), the number of women elementary and secondary assistant principals has increased significantly. This gesture has been an act of "good faith" and respect providing education with an increased number of "token" individuals to serve as role models for young impressionable girls. However, on the other hand, it has not given women the viability or status as decision-makers which is so desperately needed as women strive for sexual equity. Seemingly, these acts of "tokenism" are being used to keep women from aspiring to positions that men would like to continue to possess.

The problem of the decline of women has had a sociological impact on the economy of the American nation. During the 1970's there was much pressure upon education institutions

to increase the percentage of women and minorities in educational administration. As a slight increase in the percentages occurred, the threat of women securing more positions and thus replacing men in the seats of power influenced men to become more chauvinistic. Men increased their networking and mentorships in order to continue to place men in seats of power. Ultimately, this thrust by men obviated the earlier attempts made by women to secure administrative positions. The continual reduction in force of women has resulted in a waste of women's potential, reduced educational effectiveness, and produced low returns on the taxpayers' dollar. All of these factors have tended to lock many women out of the highest reaches of the economic marketplace.

Politically, economically, and sociologically, the position of the superintendent has drastically changed in its roles and functions in education. These drastic changes have influenced boards of education to look for applicants with different kinds of qualifications for the job than ever before. The ability to serve as an administrator hinges on more than the ability to establish an excellent instructional program, but rather on the ability of a scientific manager to effectively manage and utilize resources. Applicants who possess business-industry management skills of strategic planning, risk assessment, communication skills, and public policy skills are prime prospects for the job. In many of our larger systems in the nation, men who meet these

qualifications are being hired and not women because there are few women executives who have had these experiences or qualifications.

Some of the typical questions being asked by local boards to prospective applicants are the following: Can you develop a budget and get it funded? Can you get the schools built or repaired? Can you develop a plan for efficient management and production of your employees? Can you reduce the cost of maintenance? Can you direct? Administer? Delegate responsibility? Can you work effectively with governmental agencies? Can you deal with political factors? Finally, the question is posed: Can you develop and implement an effective instructional program?

Board members are looking for those applicants who are experienced and qualified to administer managerial types of administration. This current syndrome, therefore, obviates women. Dr. H. believes that few women have had training or possess skills as business or industrial managers. Most women in education have had the majority of their experience in the classroom teaching and have had little opportunity to secure the training which would qualify them for the new superintendency. If this trend continues, Dr. H. predicted, within the next 50 years, there will be few women in administration.

Dr. Hightower viewed the problem of the decline of women in public school administration from several dimensions:

psychological, sociological, political, and economic. Each dimension contained inclusive factors which have served as barriers to women's advancement in administration.

Sociological factors included the influence of the role conflict of women as administrators and as homemakers the concept of women's place in society as home bound rather than career bound, and the public's perception of women's ability to be administrators.

Psychological, political, and economic dimensions focused upon the public's perceptions of the physiological and psychological capabilities of women to administer a school, especially at the secondary level. It was also observed that despite political activism that promoted legislation against sexual discrimination in employment for women, sexual discrimination has continued to increase. The consequences of this discrimination has resulted in women's failure to obtain administrative positions. The by-product of these actions is an inefficient economy which belies the worth of a woman to make a major financial contribution to the nation's economy.

Dr. Hightower's perceptions focused on societal factors which have contributed to the decline of female educational administrators. His evaluation of the problem indicates to educators that lack of women in administration is a problem that affects all of us. When discrimination is practiced against any of us, no one in the nation can be assured of equal treatment. When the public schools set the example of the male

as being the best person for an administrative job, the initiative and motivation for female employees and students to aspire for leadership positions are stifled. When females' talents and intelligence are not used and wasted in the workplace as leaders, the quality of education and the status of the nation are in jeopardy. Erroneous perceptions of women must be dispelled in order for our nation to continue to develop as a leader in education in the future. Dr. H. could not offer any concrete suggestions for the solution of the problem. He observed that females have not yet arrived at their proper places in the administrative hierarchy, but there are some signs of progress. He cited the significant increase in the number of female elementary principals hired within his school system during the past four years. He urged the powerholders to keep pace by hiring females in those categories where they are lacking. This will surely send a signal to the public that education is finally taking giant steps in the elimination of sexual discrimination and the establishment of sexual equity.

Mr. Atlas, Builder of Foundations

Mr. Atlas is a black associate superintendent in the large administrative unit used in this inquiry. His major responsibilities are the interviewing and recommendation of personnel for employment and curriculum development. He is in a position of great power and authority in the school system.

Mr. Atlas has had 35 years of educational experience. His career ladder has included positions as high school science teacher, elementary principal, secondary principal, and assistant superintendent of curriculum. In the local community, he is recognized and respected as a political and civic leader. It is reported by many that when Mr. Atlas speaks, "the whole world listens!" He serves as chairperson of various local and state commissions, governmental boards, and collegiate boards. Recently, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by an academic institution for his outstanding contributions to education.

Commenting on his career in education, Mr. Atlas stated that his career began as a grave digger (standing at the bottom of a grave he had just dug.) From that position, he recognized the importance of life and the significant role of education in it. He began to consider education as a foundation of life. He has used this reflection as a stimulus to continue to promote the quality of education throughout his career.

Mr. Atlas initiated the dialogue by paraphrasing and voicing the question: "Why are there so many problems related to hiring female administrators in a school system?" He has often had to consider this question as he performed his duties of associate superintendent. He began his response by arguing that a school system must have leaders who are respected and accepted. He stated that, even though a system may have

developed a quality curriculum program, the program would have little chance of succeeding unless the public had confidence in its leaders for its implementation. He then went on to state that the public has not yet accepted the female as an administrator at the secondary or superintendency levels. He feels that females are qualified, are capable leaders, are effective disciplinarians, and are good communicators with their faculty and public. However, he stressed that what the public perceives must also be considered.

For example, the public (stimulated by media coverage and various polls) perceives the schools as hotbeds of discipline problems and violence. Most people do not think of a woman as a school disciplinarian (one of the major responsibilities of a principal). He sees the extent of public influence when a vacancy occurs for a secondary principalship. Reluctance to hire females is not based on their ability to plan and implement a quality academic program. Rather, females are thought to be unable to use physical dexterity to control discipline problems. Male applicants are considered better equipped to control older pupils' behavior by brute force and strict authoritarianism. Chivalry is seen as contributing to the preference of males for secondary principalships. Powerholders such as Mr. Atlas do not want the responsibility for placing a lady in the vulnerable position of needing to protect herself and the school family by physical means. This perception of leadership differs for elementary schools. Mr.

Atlas observed that elementary principals and teachers are viewed by the public as caretakers, providing a motherly approach in teaching children. Seldom in these schools are the principals faced with hostile situations that result in physical confrontations. Therefore, it seems permissible for women to be considered for employment as elementary principals.

Reflecting on historical factors, Mr. Atlas noted the effect of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement on educational programs. He sees the movement as directing attention away from violence in the schools. Focus was then placed on the indignities and inequitable treatment suffered by minorities, including females. The public became concerned about social justice and moves were made to correct some traditional wrongs by varied forms of activism. Women and blacks in every occupation and walk of life made significant gains in employment and promotion during this era.

Mr. Atlas has observed that the trend today has changed considerably for both groups. School boards and superintendents are no longer giving consideration for gender or color in the selection of personnel. These powerholders assert that "everybody has to be up to par"; "only the best will be selected for jobs." Mr. Atlas believes these kinds of proclamations are a "cop-out" to return to past discriminatory practices. He sees American society as wanting "things as they were long ago". This nostalgic mood can be seen in the architecture of homes and buildings, in dress, in restaurant

menus, and in decor in every walk of life. The masses of people are saying, "We have strayed too far; let us go back! Maybe from the past, we can find solace, strength and compassion." This mood has negatively effected the employment of females and minorities, and will ultimately influence the quality of the academic programs in the schools. Mr. Atlas suggested that Americans should never forget their historical past, but, as they walk toward the future, they should not stumble in a deep cavern while looking back at it.

Many females in Mr. Atlas' school system have been given credentials as administrators within the last decade. The personnel files contain many of their applications but many of them have not been considered for employment. Credentials do not necessarily make a good administrator. However, Mr. Atlas believes that administrators have to demonstrate specific leadership abilities in order to be tapped as leaders in the schools. Leaders should demonstrate the ability to make decisions in pleasant and unpleasant situations. Leaders must have the ability to plan programs and patiently wait as these programs evolve into fruition. Leaders must be emotionally stable and have power of vision. Capable leaders have the courage to demand that subordinates assume the responsibility for their own problems. In Mr. Atlas' perceptions, few women, even those with credentials, have demonstrated these viable characteristics.

Mr. Atlas also posited the critical view that women

educators have so many internal conflicts among themselves that their overall goals to be promoted and hired are probably invalidated. Women teachers openly criticize women leaders to others and to superiors. Females, supervised by a female administrator will often circumvent their immediate superior and go to the "top boss" in periods of critical decision-making. Furthermore, women teachers accuse female leaders of being "bitchy," "indecisive," "petty," and "leaderless". While these reports are few in number, Mr. Atlas insists that women should stick together as a group, because their "mouths" may be the downfall of all women in this era of conservatism.

In summary, Mr. Atlas perceives the decline of female administrators as caused by two major belief systems which are operative among Americans. The first belief-system refers to women's inadequate leadership abilities, including the inability to handle discipline, unsatisfactory relationships with peers and subordinates, and the inability to cope with stressful situations. Secondly, Mr. Atlas pointed out the significance of the move toward conservatism or the mood of nostalgia in today's society. Under the guise of chivalry and perfectionism, the administrative powerholders have used these belief-systems to bar female aspirants from employment as administrators.

Mr. Atlas also made the plea to educators to view the problem of the decline of female administrators as a vital component of a much larger problem in America, the problem of

the demise of human equity. The emphasis on human equity has eroded. "Where do we go from here?" Mr. Atlas volunteered no answers. According to him, "The jury is still out on this dilemma."

Mr. Solomon, A Philosopher of Education

Mr. Solomon was chosen as a subject in the inquiry because of his long tenure as administrator, his philosophical views, and his high regard among colleagues. Mr. Solomon is a 59-year-old black male principal who has worked in the school system for 35 years. For the past ten years, he has been the principal of one of the system's largest elementary schools. Prior to this position, he served for many years as an elementary principal of a small (seven teachers) school, and as a classroom teacher. He is married and the father of two girls who are in engineering school. In the local school community among his professional peers, colleagues, and the administrative staff, Mr. Solomon is regarded as a deep philosophical thinker, who is truthful, honest and has much integrity. If the administrative hierarchy wants to know the pulse of the school community or what the existing feelings of professional colleagues are on a matter of interest, Mr. Solomon is consulted for his advice and recommendations. The members of his faculty have high respect for his ability to efficiently organize and administer the school in an executive manner. There is a high degree of morale in the school because

of his democratic administrative leadership style. His faculty members are constantly reminded to be proud of their profession and are encouraged to keep it professional. I have known Mr. Solomon for about 25 years, and I am keenly aware of his attributes of erudition, professionalism, efficiency, and honesty.

In the dialogue, Mr. Solomon stressed that women are declining as administrators because of one basic major factor, socioeconomics, with emphasis on economics, by which he meant -- the reality norm in America today. He asserted that people are in business to make money, whether in an educational or a private institution. People are also seeking power which can be gained by accruing an excess of money.

An educational administrator, today, is making a salary which is commensurate with top executives in business and industry. Salaries range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year depending on the number of pupils in a school or within the system and other fringe benefits. The duties and responsibilities of these new executives have also significantly changed in the past 15 years. Administrators have a large support staff, large budgets, and vast communication systems at their disposal. The new image of the school executive has increased the competition for jobs. Perspective women applicants for leadership positions have been particularly stymied by the competition. Another effect of today's emphasis on profitability and money-making is a

decrease in the number of available positions in school administration. Administrators are reluctant to give them up either for retirement or to enter other professions. The high prestige and economics of being a principal or superintendent are valued. This also short-changes women in the job market.

Mr. Solomon also observed that when people start to make money and profit, a new hidden factor arises in social relations that society does not like to recognize. He stated that a few women may be welcome as administrators in school systems as tokens to show a community's liberalism. However, Mr. Solomon believes that too many women administrators pose problems for the community's power structure. This relates to his view that once a person gains control of a \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 building and controls a staff of 150 persons, that person has power and prestige enough to influence many societal issues in the community.

Mr. Solomon has seen the power structure act in ways to maintain the status quo of few women administrators. He described an existing situation in the system. About four years ago, the first female was elected to the school board and soon became its first woman chairperson. During her tenure, six females were appointed to principalships. Soon, unrest began among the white male assistant principals who began to question the other school board members about the new trend of filling vacant positions with women. White males felt they were being given low priority, having previously lost positions

to blacks and now losing jobs to women. Subsequently, a "whisper campaign" began to unseat the effective female board member because of her stance on sexual equity. The whisper campaign was a success, resulting in the defeat of the chairperson. The power structure was successful in its gains. Mr. Solomon was aware of myths or misconceptions about women's abilities as leaders, these include such beliefs as women have too many family commitments to be administrators; women cannot effectively administer a school; and women are becoming too powerful and are getting out of their proper places in society. Mr. Solomon labeled these issues as "false and archaic." They are often used by persons who do not acknowledge the real problem: women in seats of power take away the jobs of men. Mr. Solomon sees men as promoting the myths. Even though men give lip service to women being equal, when the number of women significantly increases in administrative positions, it causes intimidation and trepidation for men. Men seem not to know how to deal with it. Boys, as youngsters, were accustomed to seeing their mothers in submissive roles and their fathers in dominant roles. Men, therefore, cannot make the transfer in the reality of the job situation.

Mr. Solomon predicted that the number of women in administration will continue to decrease in the next few years unless some unforeseen force or conditions develop to change or counteract it. The hue and cry for sexual equity has been curbed by "Reaganism." President Reagan's new emphasis on

conservatism has changed the mood of the country. Twenty years ago in the era of Barry Goldwater, when efforts were launched to put conservatism back into American politics, it was considered by the public to be a dirty word. Conservatism is back in vogue today and has been placed back on the national agenda.

Women administrators, unfortunately, have been caught up in this mood. Dr. Solomon stated that he has seen no ground swell among community groups to rectify this injustice to women. He stated that if and when women are placed in positions of leadership, it will be for one of the following reasons: (1) men will want it; (2) men will see it as an advantage to them; and (3) the placement will enhance the male's image.

To rectify or resolve the problem of the decline of females in administration, two major suggestions were offered by Mr. Solomon: securing of mentors for aspiring female applicants and enactment of affirmative action plans. A mentorship relationship for women is difficult to enact because there are so few female administrators to implement one. To develop a mentorship, a powerholder selects an aspirant, to whom he or she can pass on the legitimacy and teach the role responsibilities of the job under the mentor's guidance. Men have developed a "good old boy" network to insure the legitimacy of the male in administration. Legitimacy begets

more legitimacy. The enactment of affirmative action programs by systems would provide a systematic method of hiring and promoting qualified and certified women to positions of power over a significant period of time. Such programs would provide for women the opportunity to progress through the administrative ranks to become superintendents.

Superintendents are usually chosen from the principalship ranks. Mentorships and affirmative action programs would greatly resolve this problem of sexual inequity in the nation today.

In summary, Mr. Solomon surmised that economic issues are major reasons for the decline of female administrators. While society may use myths as a camouflage for the real cause, the fact remains that when limited, powerful, prestigious positions with salaries in the upper income brackets are available, philosophy, creed, equity, and duty are no longer important. Money and power are the important entities. The power structure, composed predominately of men, will develop strategies to insure that the locus of power and money will remain within its boundaries. This has been historically true since the advent of women in public administration during the early 1920's. Women, using legal and political persuasion, ventured forth to increase their numbers as powerholders. As soon as some progress was evident, a wave of conservatism would sweep the nation, thrusting them back to where they had come from.

In order for women to change the present mood of conservatism, they must once again become angry, become organized, unite, and join forces with other minorities, to claim their rightful place in the society. It has worked in the past and can occur again. Women's progress as administrators resides in their own hands, not in the hands of men.

Mr. Silver, The Voice of Reality

Mr. Silver is the superintendent of the school system. His professional career spans over 30 years. He has held positions of teacher and principal at both levels, director of instruction, and associate superintendent. In his job roles, Mr. Silver has had his share of successes as well as conflicts with parents, community agencies, staff personnel, and teachers. He has also had considerable experience in counseling women for administrative positions as principals and at the central office level. He has had a liberal employment record for hiring female administrators. During his tenure, the number of female elementary principals has increased from one to seven. In other positions, including assistant superintendents, directors of instruction and supervisors, the number of women hired or promoted has been minimal. He attributes this to budget cuts which have drastically eliminated or reduced the number of available positions at the central office level.

Mr. Silver was selected as a participant because of his varied and long-term experience and personal attributes. He is the "voice of reality," known for his directness, forcefulness and ability to deal squarely with issues and problems. Mr. Silver commented that reality is the truth as he perceived it to be, not what he desired it to be nor what it might have been. This belief statement has been the backbone for many of his major decisions during his two terms as superintendent.

Responding to the question of the inquiry, Mr. Silver cited societal images of women as the major reasons for the decline of women administrators. He stated that the public perceives the male as the dynamic image in public school administration. Men educators are expected to occupy the leadership positions and to be the decision-makers. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be teachers, taking care of the children and managing the classroom. For these reasons, when women with credentials apply for administrative positions, they are usually not hired for decision-making jobs but are hired for quasi-administrative positions as supervisors. Mr. Silver believes the images of males and females have become established norms in our society and are difficult to eliminate. The public has become comfortable with the idea.

According to Mr. Silver, the public's image of women in society as the caretaker of the family and children has been one of the major stumbling blocks for women being hired as

administrators. The public perceives that women's roles as wife and mother conflict with effective administration. To be an effective administrator, one must be able to commit an inordinate amount of personal time to the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities of the position. Extended hours, attendance at out-of-town meetings and numerous public relations functions are required. Mr. Silver stated that he has observed that it has been difficult for married women who are in childbearing age to devote this amount of time to the job. For example, it is usually the wife and mother who is expected to take care of the sick child at home or to transport children to after-school youth activities. Successful married women administrators have been able to overcome the latter hurdle by mutually agreeing with their spouses to share equally in the child-caring and family responsibilities. Mr. Silver strongly suggested that aspiring female administrators should consider carefully how much time they can actually devote to administrative positions prior to entering the field.

Another societal image of women which has interfered with women being hired or promoted in school administration is the question of who is the major breadwinner of the family. Our society has decided that the woman's image as a nurturer and caretaker of the family invalidates her ability to be the major wage earner in a marriage. The man as the head of the household should have a greater salary than his wife and a job

with greater prestige. This prevailing norm is so strong in our society that many capable qualified women will not accept administrative duties or positions because they fear it will interfere with the solidity of the marriage and family. These women are content for the husband to pursue his career while they continue in their roles as the supportive, efficient spouse. The prevalence of their image of the male as being the major breadwinner in the family stems from our religious notion of female subordination. According to traditional interpretation of the Christian Bible, a woman's place in society is to serve man and to be submissive to him. From youth, women have been indoctrinated in the home and in church on their proper place. Religious influences are particularly significant in the South, the Bible Belt of the nation. These influences carry over into school administration by causing school boards and school committees to feel guilty and sinful for hiring women administrators. Also, the influences are evident in women's preference for jobs as teachers and refusal to avidly seek leadership positions. The consequence is a low percentage of women in administration, especially in the South.

The image of a woman's place also impacts on the assignment of women in some administrative positions as assistant principals. In large secondary schools that qualify for two assistant principals, if one of those positions has a woman in it, usually she has been assigned the duty of the curriculum advisor and the male will have the duty as the

disciplinarian. These "soft" assignments for women serve to protect women from conflict and subtle danger and prevent their being noticed by the hierarchy. Successful handling of discipline problems in a secondary school situation tends to be a sure stepping stone to upward mobility into the administrative hierarchy. Historically, few women get this opportunity. The continual nonassignment of female assistant principals to functions which are considered masculine such as discipline and management of bus transportation and physical plant facilities promotes the myth of women as being unable to be effective administrators.

Mr. Silver is thoroughly convinced that women are effective administrators despite the negative myths about their leadership ability and assigned societal roles. He made these two observations: (1) women are effective disciplinarians; and (2) women possess an array of leadership skills and techniques gained from their long tenure as teachers. Relative to the discipline aspect, he stated that one of the greatest strengths women bring to the administrative level is their alternate way of handling discipline. Women's temperament and ability to employ democratic procedures in times of stress and conflict offer successful methods of resolving problems. Even though the personal traits of temperament and tolerance may be culturally or psychologically induced, they assist women in being recognized as effective disciplinarians. Secondly, Mr.

Silver also noted the leadership skills of women educators. He stated that within his school system more women comprised the teaching field and remain in the teaching field much longer than men. This continuous on-the-job training of female teachers provides them with an array of techniques and skills to conduct effective learning situations. These same abilities are brought by women to the position of the principalship and are applied successfully in administration. In summarizing these observations, Mr. Silver astutely commented, "If there were more women administrators in North Carolina and in our nation, maybe discipline would not be the number one problem in our public schools for the past ten years as indicated in the results in the annual Gallup Poll."

Looking at the decline of women in administration, Mr. Silver emphatically reiterated that the greatest problem for women is public image. He did not think that the powerholders, who are charged with making the specific decisions for the employment of women, were the cause for the decline of female administrators. He thought the problem was a public one. For example, in his administrative unit, there is a School Committee structure. This committee, composed of lay citizens appointed by the local board of education for every school district, has been charged with the responsibility of recommending for hiring all personnel of the school system (with the exception of the superintendent's staff). Historically, these committees have not recommended women for

the top administrative positions because the local community has not been supportive of the concept. In order to reverse this trend and to influence public thinking, Mr. Silver suggested that where there is female representation on these committees, these women should take the responsibility to assume a leadership role to protect and insist that qualified women applicants receive fair and equitable treatment in selection and promotion to positions of administrative leadership. He predicted that until women in positions of power (school board and school committee members) assume this responsibility, the number of women will not increase in public school administration.

Overall, Mr. Silver is making the point that the problem of the inquiry exists because of our culture, which is consumed with old beliefs and prejudices which purport women's inferior status and dependence on men. These traditional beliefs about women's respective sex roles are persistent and deep rooted and therefore are resistant to forces of change. Mr. Silver asserted that successful women administrators have not let these beliefs interfere with their upward mobility. In the two-worker family, household maintenance and child care are carried out on an equalitarian basis.

Mr. Silver believes that the initial key to commence a new direction lies with women themselves, the individuals who possess the vested interest in the problem. He pointed out that women comprise the vast majority of the teaching work

force, have more registered voters, and possess the organizational abilities to achieve their goals. He asserted that women will have to learn to work together. He said it has worked before to achieve women's suffrage and can work again.

To summarize, dialogues from the participants in the study suggested that women administrators are declining in the public schools for the reasons listed in Table 2. These reasons have been classified as sociological, psychological, and economic.

TABLE 2

Reasons for the Decline of Female Administrators

Reasons	Sociological	Psychological	Economic
1. The belief in myths by powerholders about women's leadership ability restrict their entry into administration.	X	X	
2. Failure to elect or appoint women to school boards or to superintendents where they can influence other powerholders to hire women serves to limit women's being hired.	X		
3. Stereotypical images of women in roles and positions which project them as caretakers and nurturers, tend to reinforce myths about women and thus serve as barriers to their hiring and promotion.	X	X	
4. Failure of women to form advocacy groups or mentor networks have limited efforts to lobby against sexual discrimination practices counteract negative perceptions and encourage women to aspire for administrative positions.	X		
5. Changing responsibilities and job qualifications requirements for public administrators from those of instructional leaders to those of scientific business managers limit the number of qualified women who can enter the administrative workforce.	X		X
	X		X

Reasons	Sociological	Psychological	Economic
6. The reduction in the number of available administrative positions because of school mergers, change in mandatory retirement age and physical problems has increased competition among women and men administrators for the limited number of jobs.	X		X
7. Education's entry into a new era of revitalization in a period of conservatism has influenced women to return to the traditional role of teaching.	X	X	
8. Reactionary activities of perspective male applicants against established affirmative action programs have pressured school boards to hire more men.	X		
9. Sexual discrimination techniques employed by educational powerholders have resulted in lack of role models for students.	X		

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings from both sources indicated that (1) the decline of female administrators is a critical problem for American education; (2) the reason for the decline stems from various factors (discussed in the literature review and dialogues and listed in Tables 1 and 2); (3) the rate of the decline has been progressive for the past 50 years, and if this process continues unabated, few females will be in administrative positions in the next century; and (4) despite the invisibility and the entrenchment of the causal factors, they are amenable to change. Major factors are more descriptively listed in Table 3 and are discussed below.

Why is the Decline a Problem?

The decline of females in public school administration impacts negatively on the quality of American education, blemishes America's image of human equity, and contributes to the inefficiency of our economy by denying women equal economic participation.

American education has just entered a new period of educational revitalization and reform. Being fanned by the flames of conservatism, the country has entered into a mood to secure quality education. The tenets of this reform espouse a "back to the basics" viewpoint. Emphasis is on reading, writing, and arithmetic, increasing academic standards for

students, improving teachers' and administrators' qualifications, and renewing the teaching of traditional values and goals in education. Female administrators are being denied the opportunity to participate in the leadership roles to effect this reform. The loss of women administrators is a tragic and senseless waste of invaluable human resources. For American education to achieve the new standard, will require the total utilization of all its talented members. Missing in the team's efforts will be the special skills and competencies that women administrators provide.

The findings supported the view that women are effective leaders and that failure to hire women as administrators jeopardizes the quality of education. The literature review referred to several studies in which parents, superintendents, and community leaders regarded female administrators as effective in terms of their democratic leadership style, discipline, public relations, faculty-staff relationships, and school organization and planning. In fact, the literature indicated that women's leadership performance was equal or superior to that of men. As indicated by Mr. Atlas, it is a mistaken belief that women are unable to be effective leaders. The other dialogues with the participants in the study indicated similar points of view.

Another problem for the field of education is that failure to hire women administrators blemishes America's image of human equity. Despite the passage of Civil Rights laws, Title IX and

other regulations, women in the occupational workforce have not been treated on a par with males in regard to pay, jobs, and social status. The denial of women in the educational administrative hierarchy sends the message of the unequal worth of men and women to all segments of the general public -- students and their parents, children and adults, professionals and nonprofessionals, lower class and middle class. As observed and warned by Dr. H., the lack of women educational administration is a problem that affects us all. When discrimination in job opportunities is practiced against any of us, no one in the nation can be assured of equal treatment. When the public schools set the examples of one gender being unequal, the entire nation suffers.

The factors which contribute to the decline of female administration serve as obstacles to women's full participation in American economy. Consequently the efficiency of our economy is severely limited. Women, by being denied access to the higher paying positions, are restricted in the amount earned and in their productive potential. Dr. "H" referred to the denial of women to administrative positions as giving taxpayers a poor return on their dollar. The public taxes for education are geared to provide for citizenry with the necessary skills to be self-sufficient and make societal contributions. When aspiring citizens strive for opportunities to actualize their talents and skills and are denied entry into the workplace because of gender and other factors, their tax

money has been wasted or at least was not personally useful.

Also referring to the economic issue, Mr. Silver noted that women's failure to achieve administrative positions may be based on their perception that their income is only supplementary to the male breadwinner in the family. This is given as a reason for their assumed failure to aspire to higher positions. The literature review negated this perception. It was found that women aspired in large percentages to administrative positions. This fact is supported by the vast number of women who have obtained advanced administrative degrees to prepare them for prospective positions. The prevalence of such perception, as expressed by Mr. Silver, denies the legitimacy of women's work and levels of aspiration. When administrative positions are vacated, they are not strongly considered.

Overall, the decline of female administrators is a problem for the nation. In a nation that epitomizes human rights and equity, the denial of entry of women to administration makes a mockery out of this nation's reputation. It further reduces the overall quality of American education. When a significant group of employees cannot employ its skills, expertise, or talents, it is logical to project that the instructional effectiveness of education will be reduced. In a period of our history when it is vital that educators combine their expertise and knowledge to counteract negative attacks on the institution of education, it would behoove the powerholders in the

community and in education to recognize that a problem exists. To utilize all of the available human resources wisely to improve the quality of education is a laudable goal for the nation.

What are the Reasons for the Decline?

The findings of the inquiry indicated that the reasons for the decline are numerous and complex. The reasons, as previously noted, can be classified as sociological, psychological, or economic. The reasons can also be classified into internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to those characteristics which relate to women's self-perceptions of their societal role and expectations, personality traits (tolerance, nurturance, nonaggression), and individuals' beliefs about female administrative competencies. The external factors refer to societal myths, societal roles and conflict, job qualifications and requirements, and societal changes.

External Factors. The significance of external factors was cited in both the literature and the dialogues, reinforcing the validity of such reasons. The most frequently cited external factor for the decline is the belief in myths. The literature reviews indicated that the decline can be directly related to seven culturally based mistaken beliefs held by powerholders about women's ability to operate a school system. The research findings refuted the accuracy of each myth. Women

were found to possess the necessary credentials and attributes to be effective administrators. The data clearly documented that belief in the myths is a sociologically as well as a psychologically developed misinterpretation of facts and lack of acknowledgement. The dialogues of the participants revealed the invisible, yet deeply engrained nature of the myths. Because of their invisibility, they are resistant to forces to change them. They are also used as scapegoats to avoid addressing the real issue, which is women's threat to jobs traditionally held by men. As observed by Mr. Solomon, powerholders of the community and the schools tend to promote the myths to serve their own selfish goals. They do not want women to take away powerful jobs which belong to men. Mr. Silver also contended that myths have been used by powerholders to bar women from administrative jobs. However, he believes that these barriers can be overcome by women's taking the risk of confronting the issue directly, and engaging in bargaining activities with spouses and boards of education. Others also stressed the importance of dispelling the misconceptions. Since it has taken centuries for these beliefs to develop, it will take a significant amount of time to eliminate the effects of their existence. The problem will need to be addressed in advocacy efforts rather than being ignored as it has been in the past.

Another external factor has been women's limited election to seats of power where they can influence boards to hire

female administrators. According to Mrs. Penny, women on school boards can be the voice to push for women concerns. She stated that it was essential that women form advocacy groups to influence elections. She cited her own failure to be re-elected to the school board. Mr. Solomon supported this view and described how the loss of Mrs. Penny's position on the school board would negatively effect women's advancement in administration.

The Civil Rights Movement was noted as an historical event which may have served as an impetus for the decline. Mr. Solomon pointed out that prospective male administrators felt that women were given too much power during the period of this movement. Noting that women and minorities were steadily gaining power in administration because of school boards' implementation of affirmative action plans, white males formed their own advocacy groups and revitalized the "old boy" network. This act by the reactivist males was intended to re-establish their foothold in administration. They used lobbying techniques to pressure school boards and superintendents to return them to administrative positions, and their efforts proved to be successful. Consequently, women administrators were transferred to the central office to staff positions, pressured into retiring, or even fired. Prospective female aspirants are only reluctantly considered for the few vacancies in administration which do exist.

Over time, many external changes have also occurred directly in the nature of educational institutions. These changes have proved to be particularly problematic for women. The major changes have been in the administrative job image, job qualifications, and responsibilities, and in societal values that impact on education. The job image of the administrator of the 1980's is much different than a decade ago. The image of today is one of the "new school executive," symbolizing power, prestige, money, and security. The image has evolved because of the new job qualifications and responsibilities for the school administrator. Administrators must be able to manage large complex institutions, execute vast budgets, and wisely utilize resources. Instructional leadership skills have taken a back seat to business management skills of risk assessment, public policy, communication, and the utilization and employment of scientific management theories. The new school executive must now be a scientific business manager rather than an instructional leader. Few women have had the opportunity to gain the needed business courses and experiences. Their prior experiences have mainly been management of the home and the classroom as a teacher. However, as contended by Mr. Silver, women do possess the necessary training and experience to equip them for any administrative position. He cited the fact that women as teachers remain in the teaching field longer than men. This continuous on-the-job experience provides them with a unique

array of techniques and skills which can be adequately transferred to administrative positions. Women need to be given the opportunity to apply these skills.

Also, over time, the economic climate for educational systems has changed. Fewer administrative jobs are available for both female and male prospective administrators because of reduction in force. School mergers, economic austerity programs, decline in school population, fiscal problems, and the extension of the mandatory retirement age to 70 years have caused the reductions. These reductions have increased the keen competition between the sexes for the few available jobs. When vacancies do occur, few women are being considered for employment. The literature findings concluded that the reduction factors are so pervasive that if not curbed, the probability is that few women will be in administration in the next century. The dialogues of the participants in the study also considered the economic climate as a contributing factor to the decline of females. They stated consistently that the reduction in the number of available administrative positions served as a catalyst to the decline. Specifically, Mr. Solomon felt that the decline of female administrators was due primarily to socioeconomic factors, with economies being emphasized.

Both sources of the findings concurred on the significance of societal role expectations for women. There is a perception

of the women's place as opposed to men's proper place. Translating a "woman's place" concept into the field of education, women are expected to teach and manage the classroom, while men are expected to administer the school. Further explaining prescribed roles, men are expected to make the decisions while women are pushed to activate service roles of being passive and providing nurturance for students. These differing expectations have existed over time and are difficult to overcome.

The societal expectations have led to the assignment of the exceptionally few female administrators to elementary principalships rather than to secondary principalships or superintendencies. The public has accepted the elementary school principalship as a "woman's place." In this position, women can easily employ their socialized personality characteristic of passivity and nurturance to the young students. Discipline, the bane of public schools, presents no problem because women's democratic procedures can be readily adapted here. On the other hand, secondary principalships and superintendencies are taboo for women. In these places, where major educational decisions are rendered, women are considered to be out of place. The public's perception is that decision-making is a masculine responsibility, that administration is a man's world, and only men can handle discipline, especially at the secondary level.

"Tokenism" is seen as a part of the "woman's place" model syndrome. This refers to women's appointment to quasi-administrative positions as assistant principals or to central office positions as directors or supervisors. Such appointments are seen as methods to placate women's advocacy groups and to portray to the public and governmental officials that affirmative action plans are being implemented. Therefore, the public is lulled into complacency with the status quo. Efforts to advance women to higher level administrative positions are quelled. This practice also prevents women from being given the visibility or status as decision-makers. Rather, the few women in these roles are placed in the vulnerable position of working in an administrative atmosphere devoid of a professional support system which is needed in such stress-ridden occupations.

Internal Factors. The internal factors cited in the findings were (1) women's perceptions of their role in society and (2) the influence of female personality characteristics.

The findings are contradictory in the views regarding the influence of these factors. In one viewpoint, women's acquired personality traits (tolerance, nurturance, nonaggression) are considered positive qualities. Women who possess these traits were seen as able to employ techniques of compromise, cooperative efforts and nonaggression in crisis situations with adults and students. These are seen as unique and welcomed

effective contributions to educational administration. On the other hand, the opposing viewpoint suggested that women who exhibit traditionally feminine traits are considered ineffective administrators by the public and powerholders. The opinions are that women cannot handle discipline and that their discipline and that their tendency to openly display feelings is a sign of weakness, immaturity and poor leadership skills.

Research findings are more supportive of the positive view of women's traits, particularly for effectiveness in educational administration. The focus on female inadequacies came from evaluating female administrators using the male perspective as the norm. Contrary to old notions, female differences should not be seen as deficiencies. Mrs. Penny, the sole female participant in the dialogues stressed this point. She cautioned women not to try to give up their feminine qualities. She feels that powerholders look for these qualities in prospective female administrative applicants. She described an incident in which a female administrative applicant forgot to play the required role and was not hired because of it. Parents also expect these qualities in the female administrators hired in elementary schools. On the other hand, of additional significance are women's negative self-perceptions. As indicated by Mr. Atlas and Mrs. Penny, women must take their share of the blame for their current dilemma. These participants noted women's conflict among themselves and failure to help each other to reach the common

goal to be more fairly promoted or hired. They cited incidents in which women openly criticized each other's competencies to superiors, failed to form mentor relationships, or to vote or caucus together to secure sexual equity in the workplace. Women must grow to accept and learn the value of their uniqueness rather than striving to develop male leadership characteristics.

Women may be apprehensive about the demands and time commitments inherent in educational administration. An educational administrator is required to invest a vast amount of personal time and commitment in order to achieve a quality educational program. Because of family obligations and the rigors of the position, prospective applicants may feel that they are incapable of effectively managing these jobs. However, this issue of job versus family is overly stressed by powerholders and should not be thought of as a necessary hindrance by women.

Overall, gender is seen as the pivotal point for the sociological, psychological, internal and external causes for the decline of female educational administrators. Society has determined the role expectations, status, and norms for women as a group. These stereotyped characteristics have been embedded in tradition for ages. Women have been socialized to accept these conditions. When women depart from these established societal conditions, they are considered deviants.

Society has prescribed that the role of women in public education should be one of teaching. This role has been perpetuated by myths or mistaken beliefs held by the public, educational powerholders, and women themselves.

What Has Been the Progress of the Decline?

Contrary to popular notion, the decline of female administrators has been progressive for the last 50 years. The findings indicate that if the rate continues with rapidity, few female administrators will be in evidence in the next century. This additional finding from the inquiry provides yet another reason for the critical nature of the problem and serves as an impetus to develop plausible strategies to curb the decline.

The total percentages of female administrators at all levels of educational administration are the lowest they have been in the history of the country. Only one percent of the superintendents in our nation are women. The current status of women in education is particularly troubling when it is noted that in the earlier part of the twentieth century, women administrators held the majority of the higher level administrative positions. Their high visibility was contributed by America's engagement in the war, which removed men from the classrooms and administrative posts to the battlefields, and to women's activist groups' lobbying efforts to establish sexual equity in all spheres of the society.

The prognosis for change today is dismal. As predicted by

Mr. Solomon, the trend will continue unless some unforeseen force on conditions occurs which will counteract it. However, most of the participants failed to realize the gravity of the problem. They tended to be noncommittal, mildly compassionate, compassionate or totally unconcerned about the eventuality of women's absence in educational administration. Mrs. Penny expressed the greatest concern regarding this issue. She made the point that the problem is serious and cited numerous reasons for its cause.

The progression of the decline establishes the need for an immediate commitment from all educators, especially the educational powerholders and the lay public to engage in dialogue with each other to seek solutions to this problem. Since education is a major socializing agent in this society, its direction in ameliorating female injustice will be crucial. Leaders in education must take the prime responsibility for initiating remedies to resolve the problem. Until female administrators are once again restored to the status they once held in the earlier part of this century, the quality of educational effectiveness will suffer.

TABLE 3

The Decline of Female Administrators
A Synopsis of Major Findings

Findings	Societal Origin			
	Sociological	Psychological	Economic	
1. Female administrators are declining at all levels of administration. The decline has been progressive for the past fifty years.	X			
2. The rate of decline is so pervasive that it is predicted that female administrators will be obsolete by the next century.	X			
3. The decline adversely affects the quality of American education.	X			
4. The American educational system is characterized by continual segregation of women into teaching roles and denial of entry of qualified applicants to educational administrative positions. This affects our national interest and tarnishes the image of American education.	X	X		X
5. The reasons for the decline are varied and multifaceted, stemming from sociological, psychological, and economic factors operative in our society; the genesis for the reasons is gender.	X	X		X
6. The decline tarnishes the American ideal of human equity. Sexual equity is an American historical fundamental human right.	X	X		X

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE

The goals of the inquiry were to explore whether the decline in female administrators is a problem in American education; if so, what are the reasons for the decline and what could be done to resolve it. The findings indicated that the decline is a significant problem and that the reasons for it are varied (Tables 1, 2 and 3). This section of the inquiry addresses the implications of these findings and offers some suggestions for change.

It is evident that the hiring decisions of educational powerholders are affected by the applicant's gender. Women's likelihood of being hired for administrative slots is lowered by powerholders' myths or mistaken beliefs about women's administrative competencies and ingrained views regarding women's proper societal and professional role. Furthermore, those in power are predominantly male. Their lack of empathy, apathy, or unconcern regarding a professional woman's plight make these key planners particularly insensitive or oblivious to the fact that women administrators are decreasing in number.

In order to change the influence of the powerholders in the direction of hiring rather than not hiring more women administrators, the following recommendations are projected:

1. An extensive public awareness campaign should be developed by educational organizations and leaders who are sensitive to women's

concerns. Such a campaign would inform the public of the problem and its deleterious effects on education and welfare of the nation. The campaign should consist of publication, of articles in educational and other journals, incorporation of the concern into the formal directives of the organization, development of seminars and workshops to discuss the topic, and formal pleas made at school board meetings.

2. A similar campaign should be developed to attack the myths about female leadership competencies. Efforts should include publicizing of the successes of female administrators at all levels.
3. Women's advocacy groups should also commit themselves to efforts to elect women to school boards, school committees, and other decision-making bodies. These groups can play a major role in being vocal and supportive (monetarily and otherwise) during election campaigns.
4. School boards should review and enact affirmative-action plans to establish equity within their systems. Affirmative-action plans provide an organized method of hiring

and promotion of qualified females through the career ladder of administration.

5. Women administrators should establish mentorships to encourage other female aspirants to similar positions. The mentorships would also provide a needed support system for the few women in higher level positions.
6. School boards should be encouraged to wholesale-hire female administrators at all levels. This move would be directed at compensating for past inequities and would provide the much needed female role models for students.

The findings further implied the need to decrease the rate of the decline of female administrators. This is needed to insure that, contrary to predictions, women will not be removed from administrative ranks within the next 50 years. In order to work towards reversing the decline:

1. The progressive rate of the decline should be publicized or brought to the attention of school board members.
2. School boards and superintendents should be encouraged to hire and promote qualified female applicants immediately from their own ranks to fill vacancies -- thus the rate of

the decline within their local units would be lowered.

3. Educational associations should use their network facilities to encourage female applicants to apply for administrative jobs in great number. Powerholders would be made aware of the availability of the high cadre of potential female employees. The failure to find qualified applicants could not then be used as justification for nonhiring.
4. Powerholders should actively identify, recruit, and serve as mentors for the qualified female personnel in their school units.

The findings further suggested the potential yet unused influence of female educators. A part of the problem has been women's failure to acknowledge their own value and worth. They have accepted prescribed societal roles and have internalized the negative perceptions imposed by society. As a divided, self-defeated group, women are almost willing victims of sexual discrimination and occupational stereotyping in the field of education. Factors that should be put to effective use in seeking solutions are female educators' experience as teachers, their democratic style of leadership, their enormity as a group and personality characteristics of tolerance, passivity and

nonaggression. The following are specific measures women can use to initiate action:

1. Women's groups, as well as educational organizations, can sponsor and fund leadership training programs designed to teach women to recognize these narrow perceptions and provide them with strategies to overcome them.
2. Training programs for newly hired women administrators should be organized to provide them with the necessary skills and on-the-job techniques for effective performance.
3. Administrative units could sponsor supportive counseling groups to help women develop strategies to cope with their dual roles of professional and wife/mother.
4. Women should attend workshops designed to foster positive self-images. These workshops are usually developed by affiliates of the NEA and other professional organizations. Topics such as professional rights and responsibilities, public relations, stress management and techniques to secure jobs are addressed in these groups.
5. Women should join and participate actively in professional organizations. The exposure, experience and knowledge gained can provide

assistance when tackling administrative goals.

Overall, the findings clearly indicated that factors other than level of experience and qualifications are inappropriately applied when considering women for employment in educational administration. Women's gender is seen as a drawback to their potential effectiveness in the job. However, it is important to note that if employers viewed this issue accurately, gender would, to the contrary, be perceived as an asset for the successful operation of schools. Schools with female administrators were found to provide a higher quality of education because of the positive self-image of female students and good performance of students and teachers and positive school climate.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study has raised the questions of What, Why, and How to approach the complex problem of the decline of women in public school administration. From the body of research, several findings that explicate the absence of women in leadership positions as a result of sex role stereotypes, occupational sex typing, and sex role socialization have been reviewed. Moreover, this study has cited several common misconceptions or myths about female administrators and used appropriate findings to refute such misconceptions.

I am a female administrator who has for several years struggled for acceptance, recognition, and legitimacy within the administrative milieu. Therefore, my hypotheses and focus have emanated from personal experiences, frustrations, rejections, and victimization by inequities within the school system as well as society. To broaden my personal views, five of my colleagues, representing various facets of the public schools, were consulted regarding their own personal observations and experiences.

The two different methodologies were consistent in indicating the serious plight of female educators. They are restricted in actualizing their potential. The highest expectations of most will be teaching and mid-management positions in the schools. Despite traditional success as

educational leaders, and the enactment of federal legislation to rectify the problem, there are few female leaders in public school administration and these numbers are declining.

It is necessary for women themselves to play a primary role in attempting to rectify this problem. Recommendations addressed in this inquiry are a starting point. It has been said that courage is the price that life demands for granting peace. Those who know it not know no release from little things. The implication is that professional women must develop the necessary courage to educate the public and dramatize their plight.

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