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ABSTRACT

Three basic issues examined in this research include why superintendents are disturbed about teacher militancy; whether superintendents view teacher militancy as threatening to local decisionmaking, damaging to public support of education, adversely affecting professionalism, causing severe role conflict for administrators, driving out administrators from teacher organizations, adversely affecting the school organization, or threatening administrative authority; and whether superintendents suspect the motives of militant teachers and believe their militancy is "bad" for education in general. Results indicate that superintendents are divided in their attitudes about teacher militancy, but that the great majority are definitely perturbed by it. Superintendents interviewed were most concerned about public support of education; teacher radicalism and selfish orientation; administrator-teacher relations; and professional education.
(Author/WM)

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BULLETIN

VIEWS AND FEELINGS OF
SUPERINTENDENTS WHO ARE DISTURBED
ABOUT TEACHER MILITANCY

by

John Stuckey

Vol. 14, No. 1

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VIEWS AND FEELINGS OF SUPERINTENDENTS
WHO ARE DISTURBED ABOUT TEACHER MILITANCY

by

John Stuckey
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West Linn, Oregon

Individual Copy Price - \$2.00

WE THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS REPORT INTERESTING . . .

Both positive and negative views toward teacher militancy are explored in this revealing early-1970 study of a sample of Oregon superintendents. Dr. Stuckey answers with a qualified "yes" these crucial questions which were among several explored during his research:

- Do superintendents believe militant teachers are damaging public support of education?
- Is the balance of power shifting from the local to the state and federal levels?
- Are teachers losing sight of what it means to be "professional"?
- Is the authority and influence of administrators being eroded?
- Is the superintendent being "left out" more than he should?
- Are teachers more concerned with their economic welfare than anything else?

-- The Editors,

VITA

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INTRODUCTION

Background for the Study

Are public school superintendents upset and disturbed about teacher militancy? A review of the literature on this topic suggests that they are. Words which are used to describe superintendents' behavior include uncertainty, disagreement, apprehension, and confusion. Superintendents appear to be in opposition to the demands of teachers and to teacher militancy per se. If this is the behavior that can be associated with superintendents regarding teacher militancy, why does it prevail?

We have had no evidence from prior research which explains why administrators view teacher militancy with consternation. Neither do we know the extent of this consternation. We simply do not know what there is about this situation which prompts superintendents to be disturbed and upset.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to identify the feelings and views of superintendents who are disturbed about teacher militancy. Following are a series of questions basic to this research: Why are superintendents disturbed about teacher militancy? Do superintendents view teacher militancy as threatening local decision making, as damaging public support of education, as adversely affecting professionalism, as causing severe role conflict for administrators, as driving out administrators

from teacher organizations, as adversely affecting the school organization, or threatening administrative authority? Do superintendents suspect the motives of militant teachers? Do superintendents hold a conviction that teacher militancy is "bad" for education in general?

Research Design

This study was designated to identify the feelings and positions of a selected group of Oregon school superintendents toward teacher militancy. The study was especially designed to explore the views of superintendents who were disturbed about it.

A sample population for this study consisted of 15 superintendents. These superintendents represented a nonprobability sample from 48 persons who identified themselves as most disturbed and concerned about teacher militancy on a mailed Feelings Inventory to which 94 of 104 superintendents from unified school districts in Oregon responded.

The nonprobability sampling plan provided for superintendents from various geographical areas of the state as well as from different size school districts. The sample constituted 31 percent of those who expressed most concern about teacher militancy.

Each of the 15 superintendents was interviewed to provide more information about his feelings and views. The interview technique was relied upon heavily for obtaining information for this study. The technique permitted probing feelings that underlie opinions of superintendents and permitted flexibility in eliciting information. All interviews were conducted during January and February, 1970, and averaged about 45 minutes in length.

To assist in obtaining information during the interviews, nine fixed-alternative statements and 23 open-ended questions were developed and used (see Appendix A and B). Also employed were impromptu questions suggested by responses of the interviewees. Each superintendent consented to the use of a tape recorder by the researcher to record the interview.

A measure of central tendency and a measure of ordinal consensus were used for analyzing the data obtained from the structured portion of the interviews. Responses to the open-ended questions and the impromptu questions were not treated statistically.

The superintendents interviewed were located in nine counties in western Oregon. These administrators averaged over 10 years experience as superintendents, representing a range of one year to over 16 years. They were all male educators and had teaching staffs ranging from less than 100 to over 1,000.

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FINDINGS FROM THE FEELINGS INVENTORY

Presented in this section is a summary of the findings obtained from the mailed Feelings Inventory (Appendix A). Ninety-four superintendents of unified school districts in the state of Oregon returned the inventory. The response distribution from these administrators is given in Table 1.

1. Almost 80 percent of the superintendents were upset, disturbed, or confused about teacher militancy.

2. Nearly half (48.9 percent) of the superintendents viewed teacher militancy in their own districts with a moderate concern. Thirty-nine and four-tenths percent viewed teacher militancy with a low concern or no concern at all in their own districts.

3. Over 70 percent viewed teacher militancy in the nation generally with a severe concern or a high concern. Six percent viewed teacher militancy in the nation with a low concern or no concern at all.

4. Nearly 59 percent of the population opposed or strongly opposed teacher militancy, 22.8 percent were undecided, and the remainder were favorable or strongly favorable to teacher militancy.

5. The superintendents viewed teacher militancy in the nation as a whole with much greater concern and by a greater percentage than they did for their own school district.

6. Not all the superintendents who opposed teacher militancy were upset about it, and not all the superintendents who were upset about teacher militancy were opposed to it.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES TO THE FEELINGS INVENTORY

Item one: The word which best describes my feelings regarding teacher militancy is:		
	No.	Percent
upset	4	4.3
disturbed	56	60.2
confused	14	15.1
content	6	6.5
undisturbed	13	13.9
	93*	100.0
Item two: I view teacher militancy in my own district as:		
	No.	Percent
a severe concern	0	0.0
a high concern	11	11.7
a moderate concern	46	48.9
a low concern	26	27.7
no concern at all	11	11.7
	94	100.0
Item three: I view teacher militancy in our nation generally as:		
	No.	Percent
a severe concern	14	14.9
a high concern	53	56.4
a moderate concern	21	22.3
a low concern	5	5.3
no concern at all	1	1.1
	94	100.0
Item four: My position regarding teacher militancy is best described as:		
	No.	Percent
strongly opposed to teacher militancy	12	13.0
opposed to teacher militancy	42	45.7
undecided or neutral	21	22.8
favorable to teacher militancy	14	15.2
strongly favorable to teacher militancy	3	3.3
	92**	100.0

*One superintendent failed to select a category.

**Two superinterdents failed to select a category.

FINDINGS FROM THE FIXED-ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE STATEMENTS

Each of the 15 superintendents interviewed responded to the nine Fixed-Alternative Response Statements on Form A. A copy of this form is located in Appendix B. The response alternatives selected by the respondents, the Mean Response Scores (MRS), and the Agreement Scores (AS) of each of the nine statements are shown in Table 2.

The quotations presented in this section were obtained during the interviews and were included to provide specific indications of the feelings and views of the superintendents.

Statement One

One effect of the tactics militant teachers have used has been to anger the public with a result of damaging public support of education.

All but one of the superintendents felt that the tactics of militant teachers were damaging public support of education. The superintendents were upset because of this aspect of teacher militancy. The tactics used by militant teachers and their organizations caused upset in superintendents for yet another reason: the superintendents disapproved of the tactics per se. All 15 superintendents said they did not approve of teachers using the strike method of obtaining results in education. The superintendents reacted strongly and unequivocally when asked their view of the strike. For a further discussion of tactics, refer to Statement Three.

TABLE 2

RESPONSES TO FORM A: FIXED-ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE STATEMENTS

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Response Score	Agreement Score
1. One effect of the tactics militant teachers have used has been to anger the public with a result of damaging public support of education.	4	10	0	1	0	1.87	.40
2. The increasing power of national teacher organizations is threatening local decision-making and local responsibility for the decision made.	5	9	1	0	0	1.74	.46
3. Teacher militancy is leading to teacher unions and away from the concept of profession.	6	9	0	0	0	1.60	.60
4. The authority and influence of administrators are threatened by the militancy of teachers.	4	10	0	1	0	1.87	.40
5. Militant teachers are engaging in a plot to usurp administrative authority.	1	4	3	6	1	3.07	-.11
6. One effect of teacher militancy and teacher organizations has been that of damaging or even destroying the relationship between administrators and teachers.	5	7	1	2	0	2.00	.20
7. Teacher demands for involvement in decisions in curriculum matters are more acceptable to me than their demands for economic considerations.	1	6	3	4	1	2.87	-.09
8. I am concerned about the role of the superintendent in negotiations between the school board and teachers.	3	10	1	1	0	2.00	.17
9. I am concerned about the superintendent's relationship with teacher organizations.	4	11	0	0	0	1.74	.38

Statement Two

The increasing power of national teacher organizations is threatening local decision-making and local responsibility for the decisions made.

The comments by superintendents left no doubt that they were upset because local decision-making and local responsibility was increasingly threatened by powerful teacher organizations at the state and national levels. They saw local control of education being reduced or eliminated and they saw this as "bad." Their concern with this aspect of teacher militancy was centered largely on the philosophical concept of "local control," but it also included concerns about administration, finance, and operational concepts.

Statement Three

Teacher militancy is leading to teacher unions and away from the concept of profession.

There was no disagreement and there was no indecision about Statement Three. Not only did every superintendent Agree or Strongly Agree that teachers were abandoning professionalism, but they were very upset about it. This statement was the only instance unionism and professionalism were referred to by the researcher during the interview, yet the superintendents brought up the terms time and again. Many saw teacher militancy destroying in a few years all the efforts and gains for professionalism made in the past decades. The superintendents reacted strongly, and they reacted negatively, as the following comments made by them indicate:

You have touched the heart of the matter as far as I am concerned. When I think of teacher militancy I think of labor unions, and when I think of labor unions I see the most selfish

of orientations. Perhaps labor unions have been necessary in other occupations--I'm not addressing that. What I am saying is that if teachers form unions they will destroy completely whatever positive image teachers now have and it will destroy the concept of teaching as a profession. . . . This concept is fundamentally critical in our society and in teaching.

I think it's very true that teachers are directing their efforts toward labor union concepts--to which I am strongly opposed. They are more concerned for economic gains rather than being concerned with the professional job as we have understood it for years that gives us the concept of a truly concerned, truly dedicated teacher. Militant teachers are selfishly oriented without giving any consideration whatever to the job they are doing with children.

Statement Four

The authority and influence of administrators are threatened by the militancy of teachers.

The one superintendent who Disagreed with the statement that the militancy of teachers threatens administrative authority and influence said this:

I don't think the authority and influence . . . is threatened-- I think it is probably strengthened because school boards are moving them [superintendents] into their camp versus allowing them to remain in a colloquium of efforts with fellow professionals.

Although the other superintendents agreed that their power and influence were being diminished, not all were upset by it. Several superintendents thought it might improve education in the long run. The following comments were made in reference to Statement Four:

I see this happening and I am upset. Administrators have been spokesmen for the problems of education, . . . and the bad publicity engendered by strikes or unrealistic demands . . . erodes the effect you can have on the public.

The topics and areas over which administrators have some control are being eroded by teacher militancy through consultation and negotiation.

I don't see this happening locally, but nationally it is.

Certainly, superintendents are losing some of their traditional authority. . . . But this could make for improved decisions in some cases.

All 15 superintendents agreed that in the area of salaries and other economic benefits their influence has been or will be severely reduced. Although this upset some, not all were bothered by this loss of influence.

Statement Five

Militant teachers are engaging in a plot to usurp administrative authority.

Not only did more superintendents disagree with this statement than with any other on Form A, but they also showed more disagreement among themselves than on any other statement in the Fixed-Alternative Response instrument.

Those that disagreed did so because the word "plot" was specifically used in the statement. These superintendents said that they did not see it as a "plot;" they did not believe teachers were deliberately and purposely conspiring to seize authority from superintendents. Most agreed, however, that in any case, administrative authority was being diminished as a result of teacher militancy. This position was stated by one administrator as follows:

By "plot" you are indicating they are making a definite move to usurp administrative authority. I don't think teachers and teacher organizations are doing this. The final result will be that, but as to plotting, I don't think so.

Another superintendent who disagreed on Statement Five said,

If teachers are running into walls of inability to work with us because superintendents just don't want to work with them, then . . . if the plot hasn't developed, it may.

The three superintendents who were Undecided on Statement Five differed as to why they chose that category: one thought teachers were plotting in some parts of the country but not in his local area; another thought they may or may not be plotting; and the third superintendent believed some teachers were plotting, but the majority were not. Interestingly, this suggests that some few superintendents may be suspicious of teachers generally.

Statement Six

One effect of teacher militancy and teacher organizations has been that of damaging or even destroying the relationship between administrators and teachers.

One superintendent who disagreed with this statement offered:

It isn't damaging the relationship . . . it's a different relationship than we have had in the past. I think administrators have as much respect for the practitioner of the art of pedagogy . . . as we've always had . . . and I think teachers have an equal respect for a good administrator.

Some of those who agreed that the relationship between administrators and teachers was damaged or destroyed made these remarks:

I think it's in danger . . . and I regret it.

I regret that it's true, and I'm deeply bothered.

I am concerned that the superintendent can't work effectively when he's excluded from what could be a close partnership along with the people in the classroom.

The superintendents who agreed with Statement Six were generally upset because of the deteriorating relationships between teachers and

themselves. This was particularly noticeable in the smaller districts, and it was without exception with older superintendents in these smaller districts. Several superintendents stated that their elementary and secondary principals were also quite concerned with this aspect of teacher militancy.

Statement Seven

Teacher demands for involvement in decisions in curriculum matters are more acceptable to me than their demands for economic considerations.

The responses by the sample population to this statement were similar to those of Statement Five. The MRS indicated the population to be "undecided," and the AS was a low negative number.

The superintendent who Strongly Agreed made this comment:

I can go along with teacher demands in curriculum because this is their area of specialty. Colleges and universities have been training teachers to complete this task for years and have been doing a good job at it.

The superintendent who Strongly Disagreed said,

There isn't much difference between them. Both are attacks directly at the administration of schools and at decision-making, and I firmly believe decision-making is a power of the board of education.

One administrator who selected the Undecided category stated:

My philosophy over the years . . . has been that teachers should be engaged in curriculum matters, but not from the point of their calling the shots.

Other comments in response to Statement Seven included these:

It is more difficult . . . to involve teachers in economic matters . . . but I can't question the right of teachers to become involved in both.

Teachers have a legitimate stake in both.

It seems to me some of the teachers' demands in the economic area have been very justified.

Teachers have the right to enter into curriculum, but it shouldn't be negotiated.

Three respondents indicated that they were upset when teachers demand anything. This parting from a traditionally subservient role by teachers was itself upsetting to these superintendents, without regard to the areas of the demands. However, 80 percent of the superintendents were not bothered by this. For this latter group, it was not a matter of teachers being involved in curriculum or in economic matters, but rather it was a question of how they were involved, how they behaved, and what tactics they used.

Statement Eight

I am concerned about the role of the superintendent in negotiations between the school board and teachers.

The concern indicated by the superintendents was consistent with their concern about role as reported in literature. The respondents, as indicated from the interview results, were divided between two potential role alternatives pertaining to the negotiating process.¹ Five superintendents favored participating as the representative of the school board, and ten favored participating as a third party (middle man), serving as a resource to both the board and the teachers.

¹ Negotiations are not legal in the state of Oregon. The terms "consult and confer" were used in Oregon law. The distinction between these terms was not rigidly observed by the respondents.

Not all of the 10 superintendents who preferred to be the middle man in consultations stated that this was their actual position. It is this distinction that caused upset to occur. Four superintendents who preferred the middle man role said they could not presently maintain that position owing to pressures from their board and from the teachers. Four others stated that the day was rapidly approaching when they would have to abandon their preferred position.

It was obvious that the role of the superintendent in negotiations (consultations) is one aspect of teacher militancy which has caused upset among administrators. Many of them prefer to be part of the staff, but negotiations preclude this in some cases. Some administrators felt themselves left out of the picture and others felt alienated from teachers because of negotiations.

Statement Nine

I am concerned about the superintendent's relationship with teacher organizations.

All 15 superintendents interviewed indicated a definite concern about the superintendent's relationship with teacher organizations.

The following concerns about teacher organizations were made by the superintendents interviewed: (1) superintendents strongly disagreed with the tactics and policies of the AFT; (2) superintendents believed the NEA and the OEA are rapidly adopting the stand taken by the AFT, and this bothered them; (3) superintendents were upset because they saw teacher organizations straying from the profession; and (4) superintendents viewed teacher organizations as interested only in salaries and other economic areas, and this upset them.

FINDINGS FROM THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

During the interviews, superintendents were asked 23 open-ended questions. These questions are located in Appendix C. The distinguishing characteristics of these Open-Ended Questions was that they merely raised an issue. They were not designed to provide or suggest any structure for the respondent's reply; the superintendent answered in his own terms and in his own frame of reference. The categorized responses to the Open-Ended Questions are shown in Table 3.

Because of space limitations, only a few of the open-ended questions will be presented in detail in this article. Superintendents' responses to these questions are representative of those given during the interviews.

Question 2

Some teachers' organizations explicitly forbid membership of superintendents. How do you feel about this?

One superintendent stated that he would prefer separate organizations. Three indicated that the idea of separate organizations for teachers and administrators was satisfactory with them if both organizations worked for the same goals.

Ten superintendents disapproved of being excluded from teacher organizations. Their concerns involved a loss of cooperation and mutual respect which results from separate organizations for educators.

TABLE 3
RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Yes	Undecided	No	Question
14	0	1	1. Do you see the role of the superintendent changing as a result of teacher militancy?
-	-	-	2. Some teachers' organizations explicitly forbid membership of superintendents. How do you feel about this?
15	0	0	3. Do you think teacher militancy will have an impact on education in the distant future?
4	8	3	4. Do you think teacher militancy will affect the school organization?
15	0	0	5. Do you perceive any positive value or good results from teacher militancy?
2	1	12	6. Do you see your position as becoming somewhat untenable because of conflicting expectations of your behavior between teachers and the school board?
15	0	0	7. Do you feel teacher militancy is a feature of the educational setting which must be dealt with?
13	0	2	8. Do you feel social pressure to oppose teacher militancy?
12	1	2	9. Do you feel personally able to deal with teacher militancy?
-	-	-	10. Do you feel militancy offers you only desirable courses of action, only undesirable courses of action, or a combination of both?
10	0	5	11. Is your behavior affected by teacher militancy?
15	0	0	12. Do you feel teacher militancy is causing changes in education?
-	-	-	13. Do you feel obligated to resist the change induced by teacher militancy?
3	2	10	14. Do you think this change threatens your status as superintendents?

TABLE 3--Continued

Yes	Undecided	No	Question
6	4	5	15. Do you feel the change will affect your job or financial security?
9	4	2	16. Do you feel the change will dissolve informal groups?
0	1	14	17. Do you dislike the leaders of the militancy?
1	3	11	18. Do you view change caused by teacher militancy as criticism of your performance?
13	1	1	19. Do you think teacher militancy is increasing your work load and problems?
4	4	7	20. Do you think teacher militancy is threatening the values of our society?
11	2	2	21. Do you think you are adequately acquainted with the objectives of militant teachers?
6	0	9	22. Do you think your feelings and views have been ignored by militant teachers?
-	-	-	23. Will you describe in your own words what it is about teacher militancy that most upsets or disturbs you?

Question 5

Do you perceive any positive value or good results from teacher militancy?

All superintendents expressed a belief that there was a positive side to teacher militancy. Without exception, these administrators remarked that educators had achieved needed benefits in the area of economics. Salaries and related financial gains for teachers and administrators were central to all the responses. In addition, several superintendents said that the increased participation and dialogue by teachers was beneficial to teachers. One superintendent remarked, "For too long teachers have gone hat-in-hand to the school board--now teachers no longer have a subservient attitude, and this is good."

All superintendents, however, qualified their response to Question Five. The respondents hastened to add that there was a nagging question in their minds: Does the good overcome the bad aspect of teacher militancy?

Question 8

Do you feel social pressures to oppose teacher militancy?

The two individuals who said they felt no social pressure stated it was because teacher militancy had not yet had an appreciable impact in their district. Eighty-seven percent of the superintendents said they were subject to pressure from the local community to oppose the militancy of teachers. This latter view was expressed by some of the superintendents as follows:

I think there's quite a lot of pressure from the general public . . . because of the militant attitude of teachers.

Certainly there is pressure. It comes from all kinds of sources in the community: business, bridge tables . . . anywhere you talk to people.

Yes, and one reason is because it's easier to point the finger at one individual than an organization. . . . The public blames the superintendent for increasing cost of education because of teacher militancy.

I feel social and political pressure--perhaps more political than social pressure. I feel political pressure to oppose it . . . from our newspaper editor, our board, people downtown, the community. There is a pressure from the community level for me as the educational leader . . . to oppose their [militant teachers'] actions and become a demigod.

Question 9

Do you feel personally able to deal with teacher militancy?

Most superintendents who gave an affirmative answer to this question qualified their responses with reservations. For instance, the respondent would say, "Yes--so far," or, "I think so," or, "Yes, but teacher militancy has had little impact here." A superintendent who said "no" to this question remarked, "I wouldn't have any competency . . . in a truly militant situation." Other responses included these:

As for outright militancy, I would feel lost. I think . . . cooperation is the best method to run a district, and if I should lose the cooperation of my teachers . . . I think I would be lost.

I feel confident here to deal with the situation. If I were superintendent in places with real teacher militancy, I don't think I could handle it . . . because it's so big and so institutionalized that one can't deal with it on a personal level. I have success in dealing with people face-to-face, even militant teachers, but I couldn't do this on an institutionalized level.

When one considers the qualifications given by the respondents who answered "yes" to Question Nine, it is obvious that the category set is

inadequate for this question. The extent of teacher militancy with which the superintendent is confronted seems to determine if he feels able to cope with it.

Question 13

Do you feel obliged to resist the change induced by teacher militancy?

The category set used on other questions in this study proved inadequate for this question, because the superintendents said, "yes and no." They indicated that some of the changes being caused by teacher militancy were acceptable and some changes were not acceptable. The following comments are representative of those given by the interviewees:

Some of the changes I resist because they are undesirable.

I am resisting part of them.

I feel obliged to resist those changes which are disadvantageous to education and children.

I must study the change that appears . . . and if it aids education, I will go along with it. But just to make change for change sake I oppose.

Question 14

Do you think this change threatens your status as superintendent?

Two-thirds of the superintendents did not see their status as being affected, and two were undecided. The three who did think their status as superintendents was threatened by the changes induced by teacher militancy saw the threat as a future possibility rather than a present one.

Question 15

Do you feel the change will affect your job or financial security?

There was less consensus by the 15 superintendents on this query than on any other of the 23 open-ended questions. The responses which are quoted below represent the views of those representatives who thought their job or their financial security would be affected by the changes brought on by teacher militancy.

Yes, especially in the sense that the superintendent as a curriculum man is on his way out, and he will not have to be an educator, but a business manager.

I don't expect the changes to affect my financial security, but they could very well affect my job, because school boards as a group, like the general public, vacillate with the pressures.

It will affect my job because of the way I deal with the staff. It will affect my financial security because it is more difficult to run an organization in which there are other power groups operating, and as it becomes more difficult in handling other groups, the possibility of my failing or getting into things I can't handle are probably more possible. I don't feel a great deal of insecurity at this point though.

Question 16

Do you feel the change will dissolve informal groups?

These opinions were given in response to Question 16:

It may do this, but it hasn't yet.

I sincerely hope not.

It has affected this very much. One thing the militant teacher does is spread distrust. The innuendos, the reporting out of context, the giving of opinions out of hearsay and non-fact . . . disrupts the informal organization. The militant teacher thinks that if I play golf Saturday with three teachers, I am trying to use them.

I think this could well happen, but it hasn't here to any extent. It would sure bother me if it did.

Very definitely. Now superintendents can't communicate with teachers on a personal basis as was true at one time.

The militancy makes it more difficult for the superintendent to have lines that run all the way into the school . . . I still have been able to develop a circle of friends that transcend all these effects, but there are areas which we cannot discuss because of teacher militancy. I have teacher friends that come to my house--we do not discuss teacher salaries.

The superintendents were disturbed and concerned because of the effect teacher militancy was having (or was seen as possibly having) on the informal organization. This aspect of teacher militancy undoubtedly caused upset among these administrators.

Question 23

Will you describe in your own words what it is about teacher militancy that most upsets or disturbs you?

Superintendents' responses to this question were considered to be highly important, as the major purpose of this study was to identify the feelings and views of superintendents who are upset or disturbed about teacher militancy. Central to accomplishing this purpose was obtaining an answer to this question: What is it about teacher militancy that most upsets or disturbs superintendents?

The responses of all 15 superintendents who composed the sample population were as follows:

The threat of dividing the school community--and by that I mean the administration, the school board, and the teachers--into opposing interest groups.

The unreasonableness of their requests. I think militant teachers ignore the difficulties of financing. Their views are short, and they are perfectly willing to jeopardize the

standing of a school district in a community for the sake of getting higher pay raises now, or certain benefits.

I fear for local control, I fear for the citizens having a say about their schools.

I think the thing that bothers me most is the fact that we are unable to talk and resolve disagreements. Certain teacher groups are making demands and . . . are not interested in opinions of anyone else.

Teacher militancy appears to be an effort on the part of teachers . . . to become everything--the policy-making group, the administrative group, the decision-making group, and the practitioner group--all in one, and I can't conceive of all these roles being put together under the responsibility on one group of people.

The thing that upsets me most in my situation is very simply the fact that teacher militancy is destroying good relations between teachers, boards, and administrators. I am also disturbed because militant teachers have damaged the chance for budgets to pass this year, and also they have damaged the chance for a new tax base.

The falseness in many of the statements by militant teachers bothers me more than anything. The effort to disrupt for disruption sake bothers me. I frankly do not see a dedication to helping kids in militancy, and that bothers me a great deal.

The thing that upsets me is for teachers to move into a radical position . . . which results in them being suspect by the community. When people can't expect a teaching staff as one of their own, I think the position as teacher is in danger.

The greatest aspect of teacher militancy that disturbs me is their attitude that "this is going to be it, or else."

I feel teacher militancy is taking the job away from a professional team concept, . . . and all I'm going to do is be the man who sets up organizations. My job should be more than that.

I have been a strong believer in having a profession, and I have seen a complete reversal in the philosophy of the NEA, the OEA, and the AFT. More and more teachers are beginning to think of teaching as a job and not a profession. Teachers are thinking of salaries and not about education.

The break between administrators and teachers. I've always worked with teachers, but now they are pushing superintendents out. This will hurt education.

The fact that there are radical teachers who wish to run the team rather than work on the team. These individuals are completely against any administration, and these are the ones that I am upset about.

Their heavy emphasis upon economic matters rather than educational concerns. I would feel more comfortable if we were fighting for improved quality instruction. I think this is a philosophical concern but it's also political.

The thing that most upsets me about teacher militancy is that teachers do not have a feeling of responsibility toward individual students in the classroom that they used to have. This is terribly important philosophically, not to mention that public support is being lost.

The thing that most disturbs me is that there is the school board, school superintendent, and taxpayers on the one hand, and the teachers on the other hand who say "we are going to have these things right now." This is the greatest problem I've seen. Teachers want to change things immediately-- without any concern for anybody else, including children.

SUMMARY

Nearly two-thirds (64.5 percent) of the 94 superintendents who responded to the Feelings Inventory (see Appendix A) were upset or disturbed about teacher militancy. In contrast, only one-fifth (20.4 percent) were content or undisturbed with the balance expressing confusion about it.

The superintendents expressed much greater concern about teacher militancy in the nation as a whole than they did for their own school district. Only one of the 94 superintendents considered teacher militancy to be of lower concern in the nation than in his own local setting.

Over half (59 percent) of the superintendents who returned the mailed inventory opposed teacher militancy, whereas nearly one-fifth (18.5 percent) were favorable toward it. The remainder were undecided or neutral.

Twenty-seven percent of the 94 superintendents opposed teacher militancy but were not upset or disturbed about it, and 18 percent who were upset or disturbed expressed no opposition to it.

An analysis of the interview responses to questions dealing with administrative authority revealed that a very sizeable percentage of them (93 percent)² viewed teacher militancy to be threatening the authority and influence of superintendents. One-third of the superintendents felt that teachers were "plotting" to usurp administrative authority. All agreed, however, that it didn't matter whether or not there was a plot as the effect of the militancy would result in a loss of authority by administrators.

²The reader is advised that one member represented 6-2/3 percent of the 15-member sample population.

However, not all the superintendents were disturbed about losing authority; three stated it might improve education. Eighty percent of the superintendents were not disturbed by teachers' involvement in curriculum and economic areas.

Two-thirds of the superintendents interviewed reported that teacher militancy affected their behavior. The remaining superintendents indicated no behavior modification owing to an absence of significant teacher militancy in their local district. In dealing with teacher militancy, every superintendent indicated that both desirable and undesirable courses of action were offered to him. Although four-fifths of the superintendents felt personally able to deal with teacher militancy at this time, these same administrators indicated that they would be at a loss in dealing with extensive and persistent militancy.

The role of the superintendent was seen by 93 percent of the sample population to be changing because of teacher militancy. Administrative authority, labor-management tactics, teacher relationships, and types of leadership styles were identified as changing and affecting the role of the superintendent. Some superintendents were upset about these role changes; others were not. One aspect which did prompt upset and concern was the superintendent's role in negotiations. Most superintendents were upset because they viewed their actual role in negotiations as inconsistent with their preferred role. This role conflict was the present predicament for some superintendents and the anticipated dilemma for others. The role of the superintendent in negotiations was of concern to 87 percent of the interviewed superintendents.

The superintendents interviewed were upset with teacher organizations. Without exception, they admitted that their relationship with teacher organizations concerned them. Teacher organizations were blamed as being occupied only with economic benefits. Superintendents strongly disagreed with the tactics and policies being pursued by both the AFT and the NEA. Superintendents were also upset because they saw teacher organizations as straying from the profession. When asked how they felt about being excluded from teacher organizations, one superintendent approved, four gave qualified approval, and 10 disapproved.

Every one of the 15 superintendents interviewed said teacher militancy was causing changes in education. All thought teacher militancy was a feature of the educational setting which must be dealt with, and all saw both positive and negative values in the changes caused by teacher militancy. Two-thirds of the superintendents did not think the changes threatened their status. Seventy-three percent did not view the changes as criticism of their own performance. All but one indicated they did not dislike the leaders of the militancy.

When asked if they thought their feelings and views had been ignored by militant teachers, 60 percent responded "no." The changes were seen by 80 percent of the superintendents as not causing their position to be untenable. Most acknowledged their position might become untenable, depending on the action of the school board and the militant teachers.

Changes resulting from teacher militancy were viewed by 87 percent of the superintendents as increasing their work load and problems. Over half (54 percent) were undecided whether teacher militancy would affect the school organization. There was no consensus on questions dealing with

the effect of change on their job or financial security, and they were unsure about the threat of teacher militancy to values of our society. They admitted resisting some changes caused by teacher militancy but not others. Eighty-seven percent of the superintendents acknowledged that they were recipients of social pressures to oppose teacher militancy.

Every superintendent interviewed predicted that teacher militancy would have an impact on education. This impact was seen as involving local control, teacher unions, professionalism, and public support of education. The superintendents were pessimistic about this impact and indicated harmful consequences could result.

The following aspects of teacher militancy were identified by the superintendents as most upsetting and disturbing:

1. Militant teachers appear to be excessively concerned with their own economic welfare.
2. Teacher militancy was provoking or resulting in radicalism among teachers.
3. Teacher militancy was judged as adversely affecting professionalism.
4. Teacher militancy was regarded as adversely affecting administrator-teacher relations.
5. Teacher militancy was viewed as adversely affecting public support of education.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that superintendents are divided in concerns about teacher militancy, that the great majority are definitely concerned about it, and some are unperturbed by it. The superintendents who were disturbed about it were most anxious to discuss their concerns.

It was concluded by the researcher that the perturbed group has considerable information about the actions of teachers throughout the nation and that they were especially sensitive about teachers' demands, negotiations, and tactics. Superintendents indicated greater concern about teacher militancy in the nation than they did about it in Oregon.

It might be concluded also from this exploratory study that superintendents are disturbed about teacher militancy because of concerns for the educational profession rather than for personal aspects. It will be remembered that the superintendents interviewed were most concerned about: (1) public support of education; (2) teacher radicalism and selfish orientation; (3) administrator-teacher relations; and (4) professional education.

Findings from this study suggest that such factors as change per se, status and prestige of superintendents, personal feelings, administrator's work load, and job security are not prominent concerns in the minds of superintendents.

APPENDIX A
FEELINGS INVENTORY

December 18, 1969

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
ENDORSEMENT:



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

1000 NE OREGON ST., PORTLAND, OREGON 97232
Telephone 503-464-1280

Dear Superintendent:

This is to certify that I am aware of the research being undertaken by John Stuckey. I believe that it is an important study. Mr. Stuckey will treat the information received from you in a professional and confidential manner. His findings should prove helpful to school administrators in Oregon and the nation.

Adolph A. Sandin

Dr. A. A. Sandin
Professor of Education

DEFINITION OF TEACHER MILITANCY: For the purpose of this questionnaire, teacher militancy is defined as the emergence of teacher aggressiveness and pressure by teachers for a greater share in educational and economic decision-making.

INSTRUCTIONS: In each of the four statements which follow, check the one response which best describes your position with respect to teacher militancy.

1. The word which best describes my feelings regarding teacher militancy is:

- upset
- disturbed
- confused
- content
- undisturbed

2. I view teacher militancy in my own district as:

- a severe concern
- a high concern
- a moderate concern
- a low concern
- no concern at all

3. I view teacher militancy in our nation generally as:

- a severe concern
- a high concern
- a moderate concern
- a low concern
- no concern at all

4. My position regarding teacher militancy is best described as:

- strongly opposed to teacher militancy
- opposed to teacher militancy
- undecided or neutral
- favorable to teacher militancy
- strongly favorable to teacher militancy

APPENDIX B

FORM A: FIXED-ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE STATEMENTS

FORM A: FIXED-ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE STATEMENTS

- | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | |
|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|--|
| () | () | () | () | () | 1. One effect of the tactics militant teachers have used has been to anger the public with a result of damaging public support of education. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 2. The increasing power of national teacher organizations is threatening local decision-making and local responsibility for the decision made. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 3. Teacher militancy is leading to teacher unions and away from the concept of profession. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 4. The authority and influence of administrators are threatened by the militancy of teachers. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 5. Militant teachers are engaging in a plot to usurp administrative authority. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 6. One effect of teacher militancy and teacher organizations has been that of severely damaging or even destroying the relationship between administrators and teachers. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 7. Teacher demands for involvement in decisions in curriculum matters are more acceptable to me than their demands for economic considerations. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 8. I am concerned about the role of the superintendent in negotiations between the school board and teachers. |
| () | () | () | () | () | 9. I am concerned about the superintendent's relationship with teacher organizations. |

APPENDIX C

FORM B: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

FORM B: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Do you see the role of the superintendent changing as a result of teacher militancy?
2. Some teachers' organizations explicitly forbid membership of superintendents. How do you feel about this?
3. Do you think teacher militancy will have an impact on education in the distant future?
4. Do you think teacher militancy will affect the school organization?
5. Do you perceive any positive value or good results from teacher militancy?
6. Do you see your position as becoming somewhat untenable because of conflicting expectations of your behavior between teachers and the school board?
7. Do you feel teacher militancy is a feature of the educational setting which must be dealt with?
8. Do you feel social pressures to oppose teacher militancy?
9. Do you feel personally able to deal with teacher militancy?
10. Do you feel teacher militancy offers you only desirable courses of action, only undesirable courses of action, or a combination of both?
11. Is your behavior affected by teacher militancy?
12. Do you feel teacher militancy is causing changes in education?
13. Do you feel obliged to resist the change induced by teacher militancy?
14. Do you think this change threatens your status as superintendent?
15. Do you feel the change will affect your job or financial security?
16. Do you feel the change will dissolve informal groups?
17. Do you dislike the leaders of the militancy?
18. Do you view change caused by teacher militancy as criticism of your performance?
19. Do you think teacher militancy is increasing your work load and problems?
20. Do you think teacher militancy is threatening the values of our society?

21. Do you think you are adequately acquainted with the objectives of militant teachers?
22. Do you think your feelings and views have been ignored by militant teachers?
23. Will you describe in your own words what it is about teacher militancy that most upsets or disturbs you?